

**EFFECTS OF OIL EXPLOITATION ON FAMILIES IN OGULAGHA  
KINGDOM, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

**BY**

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**CERTIFICATION**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my DADDY, the great 'I AM THAT I AM' and the lifter of my head

He whispered into my ears... 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon me" (Isaiah 43:2). I'M THE LORD THY GOD.

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Olaoluwasubomi Daniel GABRIEL-RAJI; Folaoluwagbade Esther GABRIEL-RAJI  
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## ABSTRACT

Oil exploitation has occasioned environmental degradation, conflicts, restiveness and insecurity in the Niger Delta region with resultant effects on family lives in particular and human security in general. Extant studies have focused more on environmental degradation, communal conflicts over land and violent agitations over allocation of oil revenues among members at communal level than on effects of oil exploitation particularly at family level in Ogulagha Kingdom. This study, therefore, was designed to examine the effects of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria, with a view to determining how their livelihood, education and health were affected.

The Radcliffe Brown's Structural Functionalism was used as the framework, while the mixed methods design was adopted. Convenience sampling was used to select 230 respondents to whom a self-designed questionnaire was administered. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 family heads, 10 community chiefs, 10 community opinion leaders, 10 representatives of youth groups and eight representatives of women association, the Chairman of Burutu Local Government Area and the traditional ruler of Ogulagha Kingdom with whom in-depth interviews were conducted. Key informant interviews were conducted, four each, with members of staff of Shell Petroleum Development Company and Nigerian Agip Oil Company, Niger Delta Development Commission and Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission. They also included two officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, two medical doctors, four officials of federal and state agencies on environmental impact assessment in Delta State. Eight Focus Group Discussions were held, one each, among the largest associations of men, women, boys and girls. Relevant reports and publications on the activities of government agencies and multinational companies were used to generate secondary data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were content-analysed.

Prior to oil exploitation, families in Ogulagha Kingdom flourished economically through fishing, farming, salt making, trade by barter, canoe carving and gin distillation among others. Oil exploitation activities led to poor livelihood and abject poverty. Economically, fishing (63.3%), a major means of livelihood for families diminished to 3.4%, and only made possible with modern fishing boats, which an average fisherman could not afford. Farming (17.8%), another source of sustenance for families dwindled to 2.6% owing to severe gas pollution. Families were further affected by health-related challenges, such as body itching, skin rashes, chronic cough, catarrh, diarrhea and cancer. Other societal effects included high rate of school dropout, prostitution among young ladies and incessant conflicts between the youths and oil companies. Palliative measures from government and oil companies in form of financial largesse and social amenities were inadequate to address the situation.

Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta depleted families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Nigeria socially, economically and health wise. Government agencies at all strata and multinational companies should develop well-targeted interventions at household level as well as resuscitate primary health care programme and provide social amenities to mitigate the negative effects of oil exploitation.

**Keywords:** Oil exploitation in Ogulagha Kingdom, Environmental degradation, family livelihoods

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

*“for many of us, the family is thought to function as a haven in a heartless world” (Janara 2001).*

Globally, the family institution has been undergoing rapid transformation as a result of social changes, modernisation, industrialisation and development. African families are no exception in this trend (Adepoju, 1997). The Niger Delta has been at the centre of intense human activities for ages with dire consequences for the potential of the environment to sustain wholesome human life (Ukiwo 2005; Iyayi 2005; and International IDEA, 2000). Whether it was during the obnoxious slave trade era, when the area served as the coastal port for human trafficking, or during the lucrative oil-palm trade period, when the elite in the region served as middlemen for exchange of goods and services, or even the present era of oil exploitation operations, the family institution in the Niger Delta has been ravaged by intense human activities (Okonta and Douglas 2001; Watts 2003; Jike 2004; and Omoweh 2005).

All stages of oil-exploitation activities, such as exploration, exploitation, refining and transportation are impacting negatively on the inhabitants of the oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta (Ikporukpo 2004). The family institution which used to be regarded not only as the cornerstone of society but also a revered institution for carrying out vital tasks of procreation, economic provision and socialisation of children, is the most affected at the moment (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000:464). Similarly, oil-exploitation by multinationals has annihilated all cherished, distinct and celebrated characteristics of the family value system which act as safety net in times of economic hardship.

In earlier times, the family was known for the provision of emotional, financial and material supports, essential for the growth and development of its members, particularly infants and children, and for the care of other household dependants. It was

also known for its vital roles in development (Adepoju and Mbuza 1997:41). Ikporukpo (2004:329) reveals that a total of 4,835 spillage incidents were recorded in Nigeria from 1976 to 1996, an average of 440 a year. Hence, nearly 2.5 million barrels were spilled and only 23 per cent of it was cleared. About 25 per cent of total oil spilled in the Niger Delta between 1976 and 1990 was in the swamps with 69 per cent offshore and 6 per cent on land. Infact, there is hardly any oil-producing community in the Delta region which has not experienced oil spill because these communities are hosts to numerous small oil wells.

It is notable that some of the strong features of families in the oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta region, especially in Delta State, are untold hardship and deprivation (Frynas 2000, and Anugwon 2004). In line with this, Ukiwo (2005) argues “with the onslaught of capitalist primitive accumulation, the dividing line between what could be termed natural and human agents of degradation is fast disappearing” despite the more than 30 trillion naira worth of oil and gas extracted from the Niger Delta region in 1956-2000 (Iyayi 2005), poverty level in the Delta region is among the highest in Nigeria (Osagie 2015:11; Scott Pegg and Nenibarini, Zabbey 2013).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Writings on the Niger Delta oil industry are diverse and extensive with a good number revealing the environmental impact of oil exploitation on the oil-bearing communities of the Delta region. According to environmental justice scholars and human rights advocates such as Okomah (1997), Human Rights Watch (1999), Kemedi (2003), oil exploitation is the most important cause of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta. Isumonah (2001) acknowledged that the commencement of oil exploitation in commercial quantity in 1956 signalled the start of extensive environmental degradation and poverty in the region. Ikporukpo (2004) further substantiated that oil exploitation has greatly affected the Niger Delta environment through deforestation, digging of slots and canals, gas flaring, oil spillage and violation of human rights.

Osuntokun (1999), Aregbeyen and Adeoye (2001), Okonta and Douglas (2001), Fatunmbi (2004) and Ojimba (2006) show that oil-exploitation contaminates the physical, chemical or biological characteristics of water, air and land (soil), thus constituting a nuisance, harm or injury to plants, animals and human health, safety and



welfare. In turn, these result in frequent outbreaks of varied skin and other strange diseases that are killing the people of the region. Other researchers (Homer-Dixon 1991; Agboola and Olurin 2005; Omeje 2006; Ifeka 2004; Ukeje 2001 and Frynas 2001) dealt with the repressive state and corporate security measures aimed at anti-oil-protesters in the oil-producing communities. They had shown that the emergence of environmental conflict in the Niger Delta is traceable to the social and economic effects of oil exploitation which is the cause of environmental tension, reduced agricultural production, economic decline alongside disruption of regular and stable social relations. The extant literature has neglected the effect of oil exploitation activities on the family. Consequently, this study examined the effect of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom of Delta State.

Most researches on the family institution, its challenges and wellbeing were based on broad issues affecting family size and parent's socio-economic problems (Ejiro, Omotor and Onoyase 2007). Olutayo and Omobowale (2006) focused their own study on the youth and the family in Nigeria. Haralambos and Holborn (2000), Shank and Danziger (2011), Ayodele (2016) studied family and migration problems in Europe, while Mokomane (2012), Ermisch and Marco Francesconi (2001), extensively investigated family poverty and social problems across the world.

Thus far, previous studies carried out by researchers about the threat of oil exploitation activities on families in Ogulagha Kingdom was not comprehensively done. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth study on the challenges of oil exploitation activities and ensuing conflicts involving families living in Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, in Burutu LGA of Delta State as case studies to assess and determine the devastating menace of oil exploitation activities.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The questions asked in this study are:

- What were the traditional ways of life of families before the advent of oil exploitation activities?
- What are the economic challenges caused by oil exploitation activities to families in Ogulagha Kingdom?

- What are the health problems confronting families as a result of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom.
- What are the relationships between conflict and the consequences of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the challenges of oil exploitation activities on families in Ogulagha Kingdom.

The specific objectives are to:

- (1) Determine family ways of life before the advent of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom.
- (2) Examine the economic challenges caused by oil exploitation activities to families in Ogulagha Kingdom.
- (3) Investigate the health problems confronting families as a result of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom.
- (4) Ascertain the relationship between conflict and the consequences of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research carefully documented Shell and Agip's numerous developmental initiatives in Obuguru and Yobebe oil bearing communities in Ogulagha Kingdom after the global Memorandum of Understanding was sign many years back. The researcher also carried out comprehensive study on the economic, health and violent effect of oil exploitation activities on families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State. A detailed research of the challenges of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom will serve as a reliable template for drafting relevant policy on sustainable family livelihood, prevent family health issues and suggest more meaningful development strategies for Ijaw oil producing communities.

Majority of the published academic researches regarding oil exploitation activities of oil producing communities are very shallow in findings, analysis, result interpretation

and conclusion. This incessant superficial research endeavor has continued to be a hindrance to reliable studies on the challenges of oil exploitation activities confronting families across the oil producing communities. Consequently, this research provides a robust and adequate understanding of the problems confronting families in the oil producing communities. More important, this research has arisen from the scarcity of literature on the problems of oil exploitation activities to families across the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom in Delta State.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to ascertaining families of Ogulagha Kingdom's ways of life and their general livelihood in Burutu LGA of Delta state before the advent of oil exploitation activities in 1914-1953. This study also focuses specifically on the economic, health and violent challenges of oil exploitation activities on families in Ogulagha Kingdom. Although oil-bearing communities are scattered across states in the Niger Delta region assaulted by appalling environmental destruction, this research was restricted to the oil-bearing families of Youbebe and Obuguru communities out of the 14 communities constituting Ogulagha Kingdom in Burutu LGA of Delta State. These two are the only oil-bearing communities in Ogulagha Kingdom. Shell Oil Company is situated in Youbebe community and Agip in Obuguru community.

### **1.7 The Economy of the People of Ogulagha Kingdom**

Economically, the occupations of the people in the Kingdom are fishing, hunting, trading and subsistence farming. Fishing is more predominant than farming though it is done at artisanal level. Most of the fisher folks in the Kingdom use canoes paddled or motorized with a 15 and 25 HP engine. Fishing is done all year round and the peak period is usually during dry season. Farming is done at subsistence level due to non-availability of land and the effects of oil exploitation including gas flaring on the land. Cassava, plantain and coco yams are the main crops produced in this area.

## **1.8 Population and Settlement Patterns**

No reliable population figures were available, but the estimates based on the number of adult males and females in the current year's nominal roll were 23,056. In the pre-colonial Western Ijaw Division where Ogulagha Kingdom was situated, the division consists of nine clans and the two third class township of Jekris, Sobos, Ibos and Nupes. These clans are Benni clan, Tarakri clan, Mein clan, Iduwini clan, Operemo clan, Seimbri clan, Ogulagha clan, Okporosa clan, Tuomo clan (WP.377 VOL II: 1a, 2).

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

In this research, there are vital definitions of terms which need to be explained for better understanding.

### **Family**

Family is a socially recognized group (usually joined by blood, marriage, cohabitation, or adoption) that forms an emotional connection among its members and that serves as an economic unit of society. The family is generally regarded as a primary social institution. The institution of family is a basic unit in the society, and the multifaceted functions performed by it make it a much-needed institution in a society. It is one of the oldest social institutions on earth. Family can also be regarded as a key social institution in all societies, which makes it a cultural universal.

### **Oil Exploration**

This is the search by petroleum geologists and geophysicists for deposits of hydrocarbons particularly petroleum and natural gas, in the earth's crust using petroleum geology. Visible surface features such as oil seeps, natural gas seeps, provide basic evidence of hydrocarbon generation be it shallow or deep in the Earth. Most exploration of oil depends on highly sophisticated technology to detect and determine the extent of these deposits using exploration geophysics. Areas thought to contain hydrocarbons are initially subjected to a gravity survey, magnetic survey, passive seismic or regional seismic reflection surveys to detect large-scale features of the sub-surface geology. Finally, when a prospect has been identified and evaluated and passes the oil company's selection criteria, an exploration well are

drilled in an attempt to conclusively determine the presence or absence of oil or gas. Offshore, the risk can be reduced by using electromagnetic methods.

### **Oil Exploitation**

This is the location, drilling, completion, and equipment of wells necessary to produce the commercially recoverable oil and gas in a field. It is an act of selfishly taking advantage of someone or a group of oil bearing communities in order to profit from them to benefit oneself. Exploitation simply involves taking unfair advantage of others. Exploitation can also be used in a way that means the use of something, especially oil for profit. The oil exploration and exploitation industry which is majorly centred in the Niger Delta region is without doubt currently the most important earner of foreign exchange to the Nigerian economy. Crude oil exploration and exploitation activities have been implicated as major causes of environmental degradation within the oil bearing communities of the Niger Delta.

### **Gas Flaring**

Gas flaring is the burning of natural gas associated with oil extraction. The practice has persisted from the beginning of oil production in Nigeria since 1956 till date. It takes place due to a range of issues, from market and economic constraints, to a lack of appropriate regulation and political will. Gas flares generate tremendous heat, which makes plant growth difficult, and the ecosystem and aesthetics of the environment destroyed during the laying of the pipelines. Flaring of gas causes vegetal re-growth problem, depression in flowering and fruiting in these crops and generally diminishes the value of agricultural productivity. Flaring releases air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and particulate matter in the form of soot.

### **Oil Spill**

An oil spill is the release of a liquid petroleum hydrocarbon into the environment, especially the marine ecosystem, due to human activity, and is a form of pollution. The term is usually given to marine oil spills, where oil is released into the ocean or coastal waters, but spills may also occur on land. Oil spills may be due to releases of crude oil from tankers, offshore platforms, drilling rigs and wells, as well as spills of refined

petroleum products (such as gasoline, diesel) and their by-products, heavier fuels used by large ships such as bunker fuel, or the spill of any oily refuse or waste oil.

### **Environmental Degradation**

Environmental degradation is the disintegration of the earth or deterioration of the environment through the consumption of assets, for example, air, water and soil; the destruction of environments and the eradication of wildlife. It is characterized as any change or aggravation to nature's turf seen to be pernicious or undesirable. Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as quality of air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution. It is defined as any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable.

### **Livelihood**

A person's livelihood refers to their "means of securing the basic necessities (food, water, shelter and clothing) of life". Livelihood is defined as a set of activities essential to everyday life that are conducted over one's life span. Such activities could include securing water, food, medicine, shelter and clothing. An individual's livelihood involves the capacity to acquire aforementioned necessities in order to satisfy the basic needs of themselves and their household. The activities are usually carried out repeatedly and in a manner that is sustainable and providing of dignity. For instance, a fisherman's livelihood depends on the availability and accessibility of fish.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Review of Literature**

The literature review is in this chapter, while the theoretical framework for this study is also provided. Extant literatures pertinent to this study are reviewed, starting from Conceptual Clarifications of terms, Historical Background of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State. This became imperative in order to bring to the forefront the rich historical, political and cultural endowments of the people in relation to the benefits and effects of oil exploitation activities in Delta State. These will better position the research inside the framework of the study. The literatures reviewed are organized along the following topics:

- (i) Conceptual Clarifications
- (ii) Historical Background of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State
- (iii) Environmental degradation and poverty in the Niger Delta
- (iv) Environmental Injustice and Conflict Dynamics in the Niger Delta
- (v) Understanding the Niger Delta Family Institution in a Changing World

#### **2.2 Conceptual Clarifications**

##### **2.2.1 Family**

The concept of the family has been given diverse interpretations by many scholars. According to Sait (1940:5), the family is a system of social relations springing from biological root of sex and reproduction. Haralambos and Holborn (2000:507) defined the family as a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes male and female adults who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship resulting in one or more children, owned or adopted by the sexually cohabitating adults. This definition shows the importance of various factors in the

establishment of the family. It also provides useful information on important roles of the family.

Haralambos and Holborn (2000:503) took an impressive step further on the vital socialization role the family plays in the society. Hence, they defined the family as “a corner stone of society and the most basic unit of social organization which carries out vital tasks like socializing children in pre-modern and modern societies”. The family can also be described as a core group of persons related by birth, marriage, or other means (such as adoption) who are commonly prohibited from marrying one another and who commonly reside in the same household. The family is both a subset of an individual’s total kinship network and a key unit of the household or domestic economy.

Family represents the basic unit of social organization, which encompasses social institution, social system and association which are components of social order. Essentially, the family is a symbol of social cohesion and morality, a place where social norms, values, beliefs, knowledge and practical living skills are impacted to the young members of the society. Although, family composition and structure vary greatly from culture to culture, in general, the closer the genealogical link, the more likely an individual is to be considered a family member.

Social scientists have opined that in all societies, the family is organized to perform a set of basic functions imperative for the continued existence of the society. Four basic functions are generally regarded as universal to the family in the past, and these are sexual/reproduction, economic/production, socialization/educational and status provision. It is important to clearly expantiate on these universal functions of the family one after the other for better understanding. The first universal and the most important function of the family is sexual reproduction. This function normally comes to play after a successful marriage must have taken place between the bride and the groom during a white wedding in the Western countries, which has also been extended to the African continents today. Although sexual reproduction before marriage has now been watered down with the present realities of modernization and industrialization, and societal regulating norms no longer counts as much, still, societies across the world over, especially African societies value marital union before sexual reproduction.



In Ijaw traditional communities across the Niger Delta, it was a serious taboo for anyone to engage in any reproductive activities before marriage. Infact, in the traditional Ijaw communities, Amakusowe (oldest elder), who presided over the Amagula (village court) normally handled issues of sexual reproduction before marriage as a criminal offense which customarily attracted many calabashes of gin and or palm wine as fines from both parties. Hence, all these traditional regulations have all been tilted downwards immediately oil exploitation activities commenced in in 1956, especially in Delta State.

The second major universal function of the family is economic cooperation. This function puts the family in a position of being the economic unit which provides survival chances for infants, children and adults. In the traditional African setting, the extended family unit conveniently performed the responsibility of being the trusted backbone of economic co-operation. This it does by serving as the major source of means of production. The extended family head owns the land, labour (these are children from his many wives) and the required native fishing and farming skills to blend surplus lands resources/streams with adequate labour force for abundant food production.

Across Ijaw traditional communities, the function of economic cooperation was the sole responsibility of the extended family structure for the continuous empowerment of the entire community at large. Being a patriarchal society, individual extended family heads diligently mobilized their numerous wives and children to achieve economic empowerment and maximum wealth creation for their households at each fishing season, aside from the little farming they do. The patriarchal family typical of African continent gives an ample evidence of a family in which coherence, stability and strength are assured through coercive control. The deep connection radiating between the family members is obtained from conforming to set family pattern/standard, irrespective of stronger ties of sympathy and affection (Sait 1940:5). This effective organization of individual household across traditional Ijaw communities was pivotal to financial abundance and peace which reigned supreme then because the extended family properly engaged all their able-bodied adults and children in effective fishing and farming without any hindrances whatsoever from oil exploitation activities (gas flaring, oil spillage on land and streams).

The breakdown of the extended family structure which all the members of the community communally controlled to the present Western nuclear family structure has largely added to the evolving drifts into poverty and social problems today. This new development comes with serious consequences of youths engaging in criminal activities to survive. As the present nuclear family structure causes more individuality across the continent of Africa, especially in the Niger Delta region, the ownership of the means of production has also become personalized, causing serious inequalities and lack to the general public (Olutayo and Okunola 1998).

Today, nuclear family structure has totally exposed Ijaw communities across the Niger Delta region to unredeemable individualistic family way of life. This is a setting where economic cooperation has become absolutely impossible and individual families no longer own and or control the means of production. Infact, combining abundant labour force for fishing harvest and good land for farming in achieving huge economic empowerment has become a thing of the past because every family now keeps to themselves.

Ijaw families today no longer serve as a safe haven for economic empowerment of adult male and female talk less of being each other's family's keeper, (as they used to enjoy in the traditional extended family structure), which has now caused unemployment, poverty and unprecedented violent conflict across the Niger Delta region, especially in Ijaw oil producing communities. The third universal function of the family is to socialize offspring's in the society by parents and elders. This becomes imperative in order for children to imbibe the necessary culture, values and norms which uphold their society. In the traditional Ijaw communities, the function of socialization was basically the sole responsibility of individual families in extended family structure. Families painstakingly socialize all the children in the household from childhood till when they are matured to have their own families.

Most importantly, the families were saddled with the responsibility of teaching male children how to fish, farm and to be responsible adults, using an extended family yardstick as a standard. The oldest woman in her own part saw to the teaching of young girls in the household on how to cook, take care of the environment and how to be responsible mothers in the future. All these teachings were always done with a deep sense of responsibility in order to sustain the continuity of Ijaw cultural heritage. No

doubt, this thorough socialization/education across Ijaw traditional communities was really responsible for the peace and tranquility that was enjoyed then by all and sundry before the commencement of oil exploitation activities around 1956. The beginning of oil exploitation activities across Ijaw communities in the Niger Delta was informed by the federal government's desire to open up the region in the quest for industrialization in exchange for petro-dollars from abroad. Delta State is regarded as the second largest oil producing state in Nigeria after Akwa Ibom State with an estimated oil production of about 346,000 barrels of oil per day.

Based on the foregoing realities, traditional extended family life and education naturally gave way to nuclear family structure, which is an extreme individualistic way of life. This was facilitated by new realities and challenges that came with oil exploitation activities. Now, individual families now work in industries, especially oil companies as a staff or casual worker, striving assiduously to cater for their children with little time to even socialize/educate them on the vital societal norms and values at different stages of their lives. Truly, this is contrary to what was obtainable in the extended family structure where children were educated to be of good behavior and serve their parents. Across Ijaw communities, parents have now shifted their major socialization responsibility to the schools alone. This invariably necessitated all the social ills that are currently bedeviling the Ijaw communities, especially Ogulagha Kingdom with dire consequences to Delta State and Nigeria as a nation.

The last but not the least universal function that exists in any family setting is 'status provision'. This function denotes that in any society, every legitimate child has recognized rights, privileges and chances for success accruing from the family's position in the society. The function of status provision naturally played itself out in the traditional extended family structure across Ijaw communities based on social and financial wellbeing of families. Before the commencement of oil exploitation activities in 1956, individual extended families took it upon themselves to lead their households by example through hard work from large scale farming and or fishing with huge financial achievements to show for it. Families financial attainments normally served as status provision for the extended family's children in Ijaw communities either their parents were alive or dead.

Across the traditional Ijaw communities, status provision did not necessarily imply that it was only financial back-up children enjoyed from their parents; they also enjoyed wealth of traditional knowledge. This wealth of experiences was based on accumulated past achievements regarding individual extended families chosen sources of livelihood such as trade, farming and or fishing. All these were abundantly transferred onto their children to succeed in any of their chosen choices of livelihood. In essence, the parents/family heads inculcated in their children deep sense of responsibilities for their individual financial success. Status provision in Ijaw communities also signified deliberate act of handing good characters to young adults from childhood in order to be good leaders of tomorrow through comprehensive training by extended family in the household.

Families led by example by deliberately eschewing every act of violence in all their dealing with their neighbors and acts of peace were seriously embraced. All these good deeds were all passed to their children from one generation to the other which created the enabling peaceful and progressive environment that Ijaw communities enjoyed before the commencement of oil exploitation activities. Today, oil exploitation activities have incapacitated individual families owing to poverty, leaving them with little or no capability to provide for their children talk less of leading an exemplary life. Financially incapacitated parents can not socialise children adequately.

It is imperative to note that all the above mentioned functions work together for the smooth running of the family institution. Therefore, any deficiency regarding the effective aforementioned functions of the family, will definitely affect the family institution invariably causing serious problems for the society at large. The family institution has really undergone considerable changes through the constant modification of its previous role as all-purpose institution. This shift in function is also part of a continuing process of social change in which transfer of function from one social institution to another takes place (Haralambos and Holborn 2000:256). With greater specialization of work demand required by expanding industrialization and the greater opportunities for extra-familial association provided through urban life, the power of the family upon individual values and behavior was lessened (Sait 1940:6).

The nineteenth century witnessed an increased in educational institution which has taken over the functions that were once carried out by the family. In response to all

these changes, the family underwent a process of adaptation that could be likened to that of a biological organism to a changing physical environment. This process of change and adaptation was occasioned by stress and uncertainty (Cohen and Connery 1967:6). The impact of industrialization has different consequences upon the various strata of the family in any society. The African families are doubtlessly under severe stress, from both within and without. The family institution has transformed over the years from the pre-industrial extended family structures to the present nuclear family type. Hence, all these stages of transformations deserve to be explained.

**(i) Nuclear Family:** Haralambos and Holborn (2000:504) defined the nuclear family as a universal human social grouping. Either as the sole prevailing form of the family or as the basic unit from which more complex forms are compounded, it exists as a distinct and strongly functional group in every known society. Adegboyega et al (1997:30) further noted that the nuclear family can be of two types- biological and social. The biological type is the primary unit consisting of two parents and their children (including any adopted child or children). On the other hand, the social nuclear family is usually created when two persons, of different sexes establish a relationship through marriage or by cohabitation. Often times, the relationship is transmitted into a biological nuclear family when the woman gives birth to a child.

**(ii). Extended Family:** Bell and Vogel (in Haralambos and Holborn 2000:504) defined the extended family as any grouping broader than the nuclear family, which is related by descent, marriage or adoption. Segre (1975: 431) clearly stated that the extended family characterizes the traditional societies and it provides social and ideological integration. According to him, the extended family also provides numerous ties between people by grouping them together and making them interdependent. Adegboyega et al (1997:30) claimed that the common types of extended family are; the three-generation type, where grandparents, parents and children live together. This type of family is usually found in rural areas but is seen in urban areas as well and is due to scarcity of accommodation and high costs of living for couples starting a family. Another type of extended family is “Kinship Family” which is larger than the three-generation family, has in addition other relatives belonging to the same household as members of the family.

Polygamous family is also a type of extended family which involves the husband having more than one wife and the husband lives with the wives or only with the most recently married wife while the other wives live somewhere else with their own children. It is important to note here that kingship and polygamous types of family were very common among the Ijaw traditional communities. Infact, as a strict patriarchal society, one major scale of measuring individual family heads achievements was based on the number of wives and children he possesses. It was also believed that the number of wives and children of any Ijaw family head often determined his wealth because a man's household helped out during fishing and or farming, thus generating wealth for him. Today across Ijaw communities, oil exploitation activities have suffocated extended family structure, leaving in its wake individualistic nuclear family structure with unprecedented environmental pollution, poverty and social ills.

**(iii) Matrifocal or Matriarchal Family:** this type of family is being headed by a woman. That is, a woman and her dependent children, sometimes with the addition of her mother. This type of family structure is really common now in Ijaw communities as a result of huge increase in the number of irresponsible men. The devastating effect of oil exploitation activities has rendered many able-bodied men jobless increasing the rate of divorce and separation causing many women to stay with their children independent of their husbands.

**(iv) Single-Parent Family:** this is a family unit headed by a woman or a man. The varieties of single-parent families include, those resulting from divorce, parent who never-married as well as a widow or widower. As explained above regarding matriarchal family setting that is being headed by a woman, single parent family in Ijaw communities is also mostly headed by matured women with their children living with them after separation or divorce. This type of practice is not really common among men.

**(v) Blended Family:** this is a family in which either parent brings with them children from a previous marriage. For some children, this expanded family network is a positive turn of events that brings with it greater adult attention. But for most, it presents a difficult adjustment. Blended family structure is a type of family setting that hardly exists in Ijaw communities because of its highly patriarchal composition.

**(vi) Bi-residential Family:** This is a type of family which consists of dual family with a singular head. This is clearly an advancement of the traditional polygamous family- which was ‘Co-residential in nature- that is, a man and many wives are residing under one roof. Bi-residential families practices, which has now become very common in Ijaw communities as the menace of poverty bites harder. It allows individual family heads to have as many families as possible, scattered around their communities. No matter the current challenges experienced by families in Africa, especially in Nigeria, they still struggle to provide the mutual framework for the emotional, financial and material supports essential for growth and development of their members, particularly infants and children, and for the care of other dependents. The researcher further carried out an elaborate research on the Ijaw people of Ogulagha Kingdom.

### **2.2.2 The Ijaw Ethnic Group**

The Ijaw/Ijo/Izon ethnic communities have lived in the Niger Delta, for over seven to ten thousand years. In 1500 AD, they were identified by Portuguese pilots as the largest ethnic group occupying all the coastal marshlands of the Nigerian coast from the Escravos to the Rio Real (Bonny/New Calabar) Rivers (Alagoa 2004:1). The Ijaw live in all parts of the Niger Delta, from the coast up to the point where the Niger River bifurcates into the Nun and Forcados Rivers and other tributaries of the Niger Delta from east to west. Isumonah and Gaskia’s (2001:24) in-depth study on the emergence of the Ijo ethnic group revealed that the Ijo/Izon were spread across Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Edo, Ondo and Akwa Ibom States both in terms of population and political significance. Although, till date, the Ijaw are predominantly more in Bayelsa State and scattered over 47 LGAs of the aforementioned States of Nigeria. Historically Alagoa (1999:97) stated that the Ijaw are significantly located in eight LGAs of Bayelsa State. They are; Ekeremor, Sagbama, Kolokuma/opokuma, Southern Ijo, Yenagoa, Brass, Nembe and Ogbia. In Ondo State, the Ijaw are found in Ese Odo LGA. They are also located in Warri South, Burutu, Bomadi and Patani LGAs of Delta State. In fact, they occupy ten LGAs of Rivers State – Ogu-Bolo, Andoni, Opobo, Abua-Odual, Asari Toru, Akaku Toru, Degema, Okrika, Bonny and Ahoada West.

The Ijaw are also deeply rooted in Ovia South and Ovia North LGAs of Edo State, as well as in Eastern – Obolo and Ibeno LGAs of Akwa Ibom State. Traditionally, the Ijaw are sub-divided into several clans, known locally as ‘Ibe’, the head of the Ibe/clan

and the chief priest are usually provided with an office for the effective running of the clans. Thus, the clan also has a clan spokesperson. There was an early evolution of a centralized monarch in the ancient commercial States of Nembe, Kalabari, Okrika, Bonny and Opobo where unified state authority was developed (Isumonah and Gaskia 2001:25).

However, Efere and Williamson (1999:98-99), also posited that the Ijaw territory was divided into three zones. These are Eastern, Central and Western zones by the Ijaw National Congress (INC) and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). The Eastern zone (all in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States) comprises (i) Andoni (including Ataba, Nga Unyeada, Eastern Obolo, Ibenu in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States) (ii) Bille (an autonomous Kalabari-speaking community) (iii) Ibani (Bonny Kingdom) (iv) Kalabari, (v) Nkoro, (vi) Okrika, and (vii) Opobo (which is also Ibani, was created from Bonny through the migration of one of the two Bonny ruling houses led by Jaja in 1869).

The central zone (mostly in Bayelsa State) comprises Abua (Rivers State), Akassa (Akaha), Apoi, Bassan, Boma, Engenni (also in Rivers), Ekpetiama, Epie- Atisa, Gbaran, Iduwini, Kabowei, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Koluama, Nembe, Odual (located in Rivers State) Ogbia, Ogboin, Ogbobiri-mein, Okordi Zarama, Biseni, Kou, Olodiana, Oporoma, Oyiakiri, Takakiri and Kumbo/Tungbo. The Western zones are Akugbene-mein, Apoi (Ondo), Arogbo (Ondo), Egbema (Edo), Gbaramatu, Iduwini, Isaba Kobowei, Kumbo, Ngbelebiri – Mein, Ogulagha, Obotebe, Ogbe Ijaw, Ogbolubiri – mein, Okomu/Gbaraun Fumpagba, Olodiana, Oporoma, Seimbiri, Taraki and Tuomo.

More importantly, Alagoa and Derefaka (2002:159) classified Ijaw languages into Ijoid and the Benue – Congo branch of the Kwa- Congo sub-family of the Volta family of the Niger-Congo phylum of languages. The Ijoid languages are divided into two: the Defaka and Ijaw. Defaka is a tiny language spoken in Rivers while Ijaw is a large language group spoken in Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta Edo and Ondo State. Williamson (in Alagoa 1999:93) based his findings on linguistic studies, he proved that the Ijaw language did not originate from Edo, Yoruba or Igbo, but its origin and existence over time has been traced to the Niger Delta region for a period of seven thousand years.

Doubtlessly, Isumonah and Gaskia (2001:30) opined that the Ijaw ethnic group, Edo and Ibibio are the oldest indigenous inhabitants of the Niger Delta, owing to the fact



that several Ijaw communities in the Western and Eastern areas traced their roots back to central Ijaw. Conclusively, Horton (in Alagoa 1999:93) suggested River Niger as the major route of early migration into the Niger Delta in the pre- Christian era.

### **2.2.3 Conflict**

The term conflict derives from *confligere*, a latin word which means “to strike together”. The word originally had a physical rather than a moral connotation (Albert 2001:1). Coser (1956) described conflict as a “struggle over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the ‘opposing’ parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals”. A conflict situation is where there is little or no cooperation between social entities.

Kreps and Wenger (2009:160) noted that conflict is interactional, and the potential for conflict therefore, exists in all social encounters. Specifically, they define conflict as a social process in which overt opposition occurs between two or more interacting units of social organization because of an event basically incident or occurrence that is related to the vested interest of these social units. The potential for conflict is inherent in all social system. Chaplin (1979:109) also defined it as “the simultaneous occurrence of two or more mutual antagonistic impulses or motives” while Wilson and Hanna (1990:255) claimed that the concept of conflict is a struggle involving ideas, values, and or limited resources.

According to Oyeshola (2005) conflict occurs when the actions or beliefs of one or more members of a group are unacceptable to and, hence, are resisted by one or more members or groups. Evidently, conflict suggests a state of competition and since there is no competition without some form of antagonism or desire to outwit the opponent, conflict therefore, makes meaning when understood as the manifestation of incompatibility of desires and interest (Williams 2006:13).

Nicholson (1971) stressed that conflict often occurs where there is interaction between at least two individuals or groups whose ultimate objectives differ. There is nothing wrong with conflict; it is a natural and inevitable human experience. Infact, David (2006) was of the opinion that conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. It is important to note that conflict is a critical mechanism by which goals and aspirations of individuals and groups are articulated. That is, it is a veritable

channel for the definition of creative solutions to human problems and a means to the development of collective identity.

Conflict can be productive and destructive. Conflict is said to be productive when it is constructively discussed by the parties amicably for the settlement of an issue, especially when the discussion leads to mutual understanding and development. Thus, a destructive conflict is usually characterized by violence whether in its physical, psychological or structural connotation. However, conflict is said to have become destructive when it exceeds the limits imposed by societal consensus.

Zartman (1994) observed that conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction. Environmental issues including water, food security/ scarcity, degradation of crop/ farmland and forest, aquatic life among other issues, all contribute to the likelihood of increased conflict as people of various interest groups compete to satisfy their basic needs. Otite (1999) revealed that conflict can also be a pragmatic avenue necessary to resolve diverse views and opinions. This means that conflict may not necessarily be regarded only in a negative light of dysfunctional or disjunctive process and a breakdown of communication as many scholars suggest. Thus, conflict is a normal process of interaction particularly in complex societies in which resources are scarce.

Sandole (1993) noted that conflict is a dynamic phenomenon, which consists of five stages- initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, abatement, and termination/ resolution. He further pointed out that the overall importance of these five processes of conflict/violent is 'peace'. Thus, the purpose of an individual or group in a conflict may not essentially be accomplished but it might be restrained by conflict through negotiated resolution of the problem. When individuals or groups are in conflict, there could be two main outcomes namely: "zero sum outcomes" and "Positive sum outcomes".

The former refers to a situation where one's loss equals another's gains, while the latter depicts a situation where both sides in a conflict gain (Druckman 1992:26). Otite (1999:19) further advanced Druckman's views that between these two positions, those in conflict normally compete and cooperate, and are left with various degrees of loss and gain. Hence, lack of conflict between and within groups would negate man's rewards regarding peace building in the society. After extensive conceptual

clarifications above for better understanding of the research, the researcher preceded to the historical background of the Ijaw people of Ogulagha Kingdom. This made it easy for a deeper insight on the way of life of the Ogulagha people many decades ago before crude oil was discovered.

### **2.3 Historical Background of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State**

Youbebe and Obuguru communities represent two major oil producing communities in Ogulagha Kingdom, in Burutu LGA of Delta State. During the colonial era, Ogulagha Kingdom was referred to as Ogula, perhaps owing to mispronunciation of the name of this Kingdom by the colonialists then. The Kingdom was domiciled in Western Ijaw division comprising of nine Ijaw clans and the 3rd class townships of Forcados and Burutu, which was gazetted in place of the former Forcados district in Gazette No.49 of the 20th of September, 1934. The alterations in the boundaries were gazetted and described in gazette No.11 of 1937.

*The Western Ijaw Division consists of nine clans and two third class towns of Jekris, Sobos, Ibos and Nupes. These clans were Bini clan, Tarakri clan, Mein clan, Iduwini clan, Operemo clan, Seimbri clan, Ogula clan, Okporosa clan, Tuomo clan (WP.377 VOL II: 1a, 2).* The elders in Ogulagha Kingdom emphasized that these communities were fishing camps/hamlets earlier, but adequate population then qualifies them as full-fledged communities. The intelligence report of Ogula 1930 hinges further that:

The increased population of Ogula invariably led to the expansion to the northly direction, and first resulted in the formation of the Obotobo and Sobolo/Sokobolo fishing hamlet. Ultimately the majority of the fishing hamlet eventually became permanent settlements; these were places that came into existence as a result of migration from the parent village of Ogula during certain fishing season of the year” (CSO 26–29183:30, 31).

These extensions produced Obotobo and Sobolo/Sokobolo village group centers, from Ogulagha village council, with the responsibility of dealing with minor cases, while serious issues were transferred to their clan parent village (Ogulagha). Traditionally, according to the elders, *the origins of these two communities (Youbebe and Obuguru)*

*should be traced to Ogulagha Kingdom. Thus, according to the people, “OGULAGHA” means ‘war no dey reach here’ (In-depth interview with an elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in September, 2017).*

*Archival intelligence report regarding the origin of Ogulagha is embedded with many controversial renditions and counter claims by the elders, because they are most reluctant to give information concerning their early history (CSO 26 – 29183:18). I faced this during my field trip in September 2017. Perhaps, this was hinged on a strong belief by an elder in the neighboring communities who claimed that: their ancestor (Ogula) “dropped down from the cloud”, and or that they originated through ship wreck many years ago (Key informant interview September, 2017), making it very difficult to grasp the exact period of their origin. Their ancestor (Ogula) is shrouded in mystery and there is obvious reluctance to give any information regarding his origin, even if this is known (CSO 26 – 29183:13).*

The Ogulagha intelligence report of 1930 gave many historical footings to their origin as gathered from many sources. The enquiries extracted from the village group council postulated that:

“their ancestor is one Ogula. He is said to have dropped out of a cloud. He dropped at Okibo (bush) opposite the village of Aggi (on the right bank of the Ramos river). He came with a wife known as Ereara. But later left Okibo and came to Ogulagha, where he died. Ogula advanced in his sojourns immediately his family increased. Till date there is still a fishing village on the site where Okibo was, now called Idumukpam. Later on Sobolo and Obotobo were formed as fishing villages. Afterwards people lived there permanently. Atiti is the ancestor of these fishing villages in the right bank of the Forcados River while Eben is the head of all clan heads. The descendants of Sabagoni son of Ogula split up between Ogula and Sobolo” (Ogula intelligence report 1930:8-9).

The elders also claimed that:

“To have a deity they all worshipped in the bush at the back of the village called “Olokumieyin”, an Amaseseoru juju which is the clan shrine brought by Ogula”. In addition, Ogula had four sons, Sabagoni, Ikiriaba, Orugbo, Abala and Akiri. Orugbo Abala founded a village known as Orugbo situated in Warri division. The descendants of Sabagoni and Ikiriaba claimed to have lost touch with Orugbo’s descendants. They never visited each other and could not start their own deity sacrifice celebration until they got a go ahead to do so from Orugbo community. They gathered annually in the past to celebrate the god of “Olokumieyin” led by Ziba as their Orukarowe (juju priest) but he was not regarded as the clan head” **(Ogula intelligence report 1930:8-9).**

After the narration of the story, conclusions were drawn regarding its originality. Still on the facts surrounding Ogulagha’s origin, the intelligent officer who compiled the report was skeptical about the authenticity of the above narrated story. He claimed that:

“the name of their clan deity called “Olokumieyin” does not sound like an Ijaw term so cannot be established”. He also noted that Okibo (bush) that they claimed Ogula dropped from, covers a wide area stretching to Ogulagha, which was occupied by the Iduwin clan fishing hamlets on the right bank of the Ramos River” **(Ogula intelligence report 1930:8-9).**

The second story was obtained from a 60 years old ousted warrant officer Laminghan, the Amasese of Ogulasowe (senior spokesman of Obotobo village group council) before he was convicted for the offence his family committed regarding the looting that took place inside a ship many years ago known as S.S. Martha Woermann in 1922. Laminghan recounted the origin of Ogulagha as he was told by his father that:

...their ancestor was one Sabagoni who came to this zone through a sailing ship from Germany that later sank around

the coast and all the survivors scattered for safety. Sabagoni, a wealthy man and the owner of the ship took with him a canvas in the absence of a mat which he could use to sleep wherever he went but settled in Brass Coast temporarily. He later walked a long distance till he got to the Island he named Ogulagha where he finally settled. Sabagoni was accompanied by some women who were survivors from the ship wreck and his offspring multiplied. He further went to Oruselemo (Ofogbene) where he formed another village. He also visited Obotobo creek where he established another village. Furthermore, he walked to Madagbo that is - Ogidigben native Court site and made a village there, leaving his own son called "Ikperi" there. Ikperi later had a son known as Ugborubo who founded Uremure. Ugborubo also had a son called "Waribobe" who came to Obotobo to marry a wife which resulted into the birth of Laminghan (**Ogula Intelligence report 1930 pg 10**).

The Laminghan story also never escaped the sledge hammer of the intelligent officer who compiled the Ogula intelligence report of 1930. He compared the earliest origin obtained from Ogula village group council postulating that:

"their ancestor is one Ogula who dropped down at Okibo (bush)" as being totally different from laminghan's story. Thus, he pondered that the elders and family heads in Ogulagha Kingdom easily referred to Sabagoni when unable to remember their ancestral origins and that Ogula was hardly mentioned, meaning that the former historical origin represented more like the Ogula people's ancestor" (**Ogula Intelligence report 1930 pg 13**).

In the quest for a reasonable and more acceptable ancestral origin of the Ogulagha Kingdom, the intelligence officer got his next story from Chief John Ogbe of Forcados.

This jekri story revealed that:

“At the period when slavery was at its highest, the Kroos were amongst those brought and sold. One of them was stated to have taken refuge at Ogulani (the Jekri term for Ogula). He married an Ijaw woman, and had a large family. At a later period, his descendants split into two distinct bodies, one section remaining Kroo and the other Ijaw. Originally the parent village of the clan was in the interior, but when news was received that the Olu of Itsekiri had formed a settlement at Ofogbene the Ogulanis moved near to him and placed themselves under his guide and control. They have, for this reason, been under Itsekri ever since. The villages of Obotobo and Yokiri (the Jekri term for Sobolo) are offshoots of the village Ogulani” (**Ogula Intelligence Report 1930:10, 11**).

This aforesaid report generated serious anger and utmost dissatisfaction from the Ogulagha people who claimed that they were never for once been under the Itsekiri. In his candid assessment to discern the truth about the story, which was substantiated with an assessment report on the Forcados district written in October, 1927, by the Southern District Officer then, *...the Ogula intelligence officer negated the said story that the term “YOKIRI” is of Itsekiri origin not an Ijaw word and that the Ogula “OKUN” meaning sea Ijaw. Hence, this sealed up the inauthenticity of this aforesaid legendary tale.* The intelligence Officer advanced his search regarding ascertaining the myth surrounding the Ogulagha Kingdom’s ancestral origin. Another version of the Ogulagha origin was also traced to a story that has to do with the war they fought with the Ogidigben people which goes as follows:

“Many years ago, when the people of Ogidigben were still at Ugborodo, a native of Ogulagha Kingdom named “Ide” a palm-wine collector went to the then vacant bush at Ogidigben to collect palm-wine. Some natives of Ugborodo went to meet “Ide” to buy palm wine from him, and an argument arose, and the Ugborodos complained about the poor quality of the palm wine, saying it appeared to have been collected by a slave, so did not taste sweet. Ide

retaliated, saying that the Ugborodo free born people were probably the cause of the lack of the sweetness. The parties quarreled. Afterward, the Ugborodos went to Ide to buy palm-wine, but he refused to sell to them. This invariably resulted into a fight and seven people were killed including one slave. Two of the Ogulagha people were seriously wounded, but they recovered (**Ogula intelligence report 1930: 13-14**).

It is said that peace was finally achieved in the area as one Okogodogbo of Ugborodo an Ogulagha man, living at Usele (Warri Division) with an Olu's son named Oritsemone became friends, shortly after the fight:

...Oritsemone informed the parties in crises that they should make peace and the two warring parties agreed. Peace was then sworn and achieved when a slave was purchased and buried alive. This sacrifice represented a peace agreement between the two communities and also signified an oath which sealed up an adultery agreement, meaning that, if an Ogulagha man commits adultery with Ugborodo man's wife or vice versa, no damage of adultery should be claimed because peace treaty had wrapped up everything with both communities (**Ogula intelligence report 1930: 13-14**).

The intelligence officer who anchored the Ogulagha report also refuted this story, claiming that it was very different from the two earlier Ogulagha's ancestral origins which seem very close to the reality. To him, there was no correlation between this particular story and the two aforementioned stories narrated above. He stated in his findings that the literary meaning of Ogulagha connotes "*a place of meeting without council members*" while "*Sabagony the eldest son of Ogula meant stranger*". He concluded his report by emphasizing that 'this narration above, with other stories given by different personalities, and the fact that *...the names of their ancestral shrines cannot be explained, led him to conclude that the clan ancestor may have been the native of Kroo origin*" from Liberia (**Ogula intelligence report 1930**).



One of the most educated elders and chiefs in Ogulagha Kingdom revealed extensively that ‘there was/is a general feeling among their neighbors that ...*they came through a ship wreck from Youbebe in 1921. Some people even said that they came during the slave trade and the slaves that came here founded Ogulagha. Some also said that Ogulagha came from Kroo in Liberia, which are all false (CSO 26 – 29183:10).*

According to the elder:

‘they said we came from Kroo, that we are not proper Ijaw, let us assume we came from Kroo, we are still Ijaw people’. The elder further said that there is even an Ijaw historical book from Ijaw migrants in the United States of America which confirmed that Kroo was one of the sons of the Ijaw who migrated in a different direction from the father and founded Libaria and Ghana. He claimed also that the Ijaw monitoring groups in the Niger Delta said they have discovered Ijaw in Russia which means that the Ijaw people are scattered everywhere. He stated further that ‘this thing I am saying is in second Chronicles and Second Kings in the Bible’ **(IDI with an elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).**

He substantiated his narration that:

...in 1930 to 1933, there was a district officer in Ogulagha, during the colonial era, who was writing down all the intelligence report of Ogulagha. The district officer claimed that Epremo, their neighboring community does not know anything about Ogulagha’s origin. According to him, all the above mentioned stories about them are false. He claimed that the Ogulagha people formed the history of Ijaw. To him, “Ijaw people came into existence when the community known as Ijaw in Israel was destroyed by a Partian King called Tiglet Pilesal in 732 BC. The place scattered, and the people in that place started using the name Ijaw! Ijaw!!

Ijaw!!! Until they got to Ogulagha Kingdom (**IDI with an elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017**).

The elder further claimed that:

“By the time Ijaw people came to the Niger Delta, the Ogulagha ancestor had two senior sons, one called Gbaran who founded the Gbaramatu clan, the other one was called Ogula who founded the Ogulagha Kingdom. There was nobody along Ogulagha Rivers and there was nothing like Forcados. That around the early 15th Century, the first Portuguese explorer that came through this river in 1472 wrote in the book he called *Es mirara Desitus ordis* and stated the position of Ogulagha as “Gwella”. He further emphasized that Obaro Ikimi, a renowned historian also said that Gwella was the position of Ogulagha, which was substantiated by Professor E. A. Alagoa. To him, a historian called ‘Talbot’ also wrote about the people of Western Nigeria, that after Ogulagha’s place of origin, one would see nobody until you get to Urhobo land which means that between here and Warri there were no other Ijaw and that Ogulagha was the only Ijaw that was there. That is our history. The man called ‘Ogula’ who founded this place was one of the senior sons of the founder of the Ijaw nation” (**IDI with an elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017**).

The archival intelligence report of May 1930 buttressed that:

With its parent village nestling on the left bank of the Forcados River Estuary, and its offshoot fishing hamlets, fanned by the Atlantic breezes, stretching along the foreshore of the right bank of the river, lies the Ogula clan.’ The area is approximately 67 square miles. The density of

the population including native foreigners is approximately 33 persons to the square mile (CSO 26 – 29183:4).

Nevertheless, on the historical origin of the Ogulagha Kingdom based on the Intelligence report in the national archives, Ibadan, emphasized that:

Ogulagha village can only be approached from Forcados during the calm periods of the high sea. The village was divided into two quarters – ETEMEBIRI (on the water going to sea) and ASISABIRI (cotton tree). Each quarter comprised of four families. These two quarters, together with a few small and scattered fishing hamlets formed the village group. The Obotobo village group lies on the right bank of the Forcados River Estuary. The founder first settled at a site called Obototo in search of a better fishing site and it is now known as Obotobo creek. Obotobo means “a village made in the bush”. This village group was made up of four quarters viz: Atitidumu, Torobobodumu, Besigbedumu and Bodokidumu and were distributed across the offshoot hamlet. The Sobolo village group which lies to the West of Obotobo village group was formed a year after Obotobo and comprised about sixteen fishing hamlets. Sobolo means ‘a good point opposite the sea’. This village group comprised of three quarters namely: Fekese-Dumu, Oferedumu and Ugborugbodumu. The Ogulagha clan was never related to any other clan or tribe, situated in the Western Ijaw sub tribe (CSO 26 – 29183:15).

An indepth interview with the former youth leader of Youbebe revealed that: *Youbebe means a place with canal while Obuguru means something that is “curved” like a Corner stone.* To him:

Youbebe and Obuguru communities were founded by the Ogulagha people and it cannot be separated from Ogulagha Kingdom because the men who went to these communities

to set them up as fishing hamlets were from Ogulagha Kingdom. As the early Ijaw people from Ogula/gha, we usually stayed very close to the sea, because our basic occupation is fishing (**IDI with the former Youth leader of Youbebe community during fieldwork in 2017**).

An indepth interview in Ogulagha Kingdom with another knowledgeable elder regarding the history of the community further refuted the ship wreck story that is being peddled around by the Ogulagha neighboring communities. He set the record straight that:

The woman who was there when the ship wrecked died 5 years ago! The Portuguese that came through river Forcados saw the Ogulagha people around 1460. In 1888, the Ogulagha people had a treaty with the Royal Niger Company which means they own land from Burutu down to the sea. The Ogulagha people are very good in navigation of ships so ship wreck would not have been an issue (**IDI with the most educated elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017**).

The foregoing diverse narratives about the true origin of the Ogulagha Kingdom can never be exusted because of the high value the indengens of this Kingdom placed on the heritage of their forefathers. The major take away is that the Kingdom was very important to the original settlers and it is still very unique to the present indigenes that are occupying it now. Most importantly, the Kingdom is very special to Nigeria because of its huge oil and gas deposits which will continue to bring billions of dollars daily to the Nigeria economy.

### **2.3.1 “Amagula”: The Political Foundation and Strength of the Ijaw People of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State.**

Among the traditional Ijaw people of Ogulagha Kingdom, the day to day administration of the village government was wholly controlled by clan government. *Managerially, Ogulagha community was divided into “quarters” and families, meaning several families would contain a “qua” (CSO 26 – 29183:25).* Intelligence

report acknowledged that the eldest man in the village was known as “Amaokusuowei”, he was also the village head of the community in conjunction with the Okusowe age grade formed the village council called “Amagula”, combining executive and judicial functions together; making local laws for their people as they pleased. *“Amaokusuowei” was never picked in line with hereditary hegemony or being a custodian of fetish shrines and juju deities of any kinds compared to other Ijaw communities like Tarakri clan, Mein clan, Iduwini clan, Operemo clan (CSO 26 – 29183:25)*. Hence, the major yardstick which determined who becomes an “Amaokusuowei” in Ogulagha Kingdom was based on an elder that possesses the historical wisdom of his people (Okaba 1999:166). The composition of the village council which is an amalgamation of different family heads, depicting the importance of the family in Ijaw communities. Intelligence report further ascertained that:

It is important to note that in traditional Ijaw communities, Ogulasowe act more like a judicial officer rather than an administrative member of the judicial village council. The title of Okusudenomo as the deputy village head constitutes a novel feature”, they are also very significant owing to the roles they play in the community’s village council. Importantly, aside from these hierarchies aforementioned above, Ogulagha Kingdom also thrived based on the different roles saddled by all individual members of the family institution, which made them very functional and responsible for the day to day administration of their villages. These responsibilities were entrenched in diverse age grades such as: Okusowe age grade which performed important roles of administrative organization of the village, and they were directly under the supervision of the Okusowe and their pre-occupation was fishing **(CSO 26–29183:27)**.

The Kalaposi age grade directly follows the Okusowe age grade. *This age grade consists of adult males consisting between the ages of 25 – 40 years; engaged in communal work mainly fishing and canoe pulling under the order of the Okusowe (CSO 26 – 29183:28)*. The 1930 intelligence report of Ogulagha further stated that Kalawo age grade was next in line to kalaposi age grade. *This age grade comprised of*

*adult males between the ages of 16-25 years, and they engaged in communal work in the village. Their responsibility also involved ferrying the members of the preceding grade when necessary (CSO 26 – 29183:30).*

*The Gegenkalawoma age grade comprised of youths around the ages of 10 to 16 years, saddled with the responsibilities of various communal works such as water carrying and other domestic duties (CSO 26 – 29183:32). The Ayepete age grade encompassed male children between the ages of 3-10 years. The village committed them also to domestic duties under the leader of their age grade (CSO 26–29183:33). The Owadere age grades were female helpers of the Okusowe age grade. These women had no traditional rights to be part of the village council's affairs, and rules binding on them must be respected so as not to incur the wrath of the Okusowe's (CSO 26 – 29183:34).*

*The Okusuere age grade contained elderly women who were above the age of child bearing. They were mainly the village midwives (Erezimeotu or Erezimere) (CSO 26 – 29183:34). The members of this age grade also performed an important role of cleansing of the village from smallpox and other ailments by sacrificing to the village gods in due season. The Iyorotu age grades were women between the ages of 30-45 years with the responsibility of fishing and its related businesses like basket making, cane-mate making for drying fish, fishing net making and so on (CSO 26 – 29183:35). This age grade takes orders from the Okusuere age grade.*

*Iyorawo age grade were women between the ages of 15-30 years, and their responsibilities were similar to that of the Iyorotu age grades, under direct supervision and control of the Okusuere age grade (CSO 26 – 29183:37). The kalaiyorawo age grades were girls between the ages of 6-15 years assigned with the domestic roles in the village under the order of their respective parents (CSO 26 – 29183:37). Next in line was the Gegenyorawo age grade, these were also girls between 3 to 6 years. This was followed by the Iyapete age grades which were infants of both sexes (CSO 26 – 29183:38).*

The village - group was divided into i. quarters ii. Families iii. And households. The quarters head was automatically the highest surviving ascendant and an Okusowe (elder). Similarly, individual family head in the village will definitely be an Okusowe. In the event of a woman (Owadere), occupying the position of the highest ascendancy,

the eldest man in the family would succeed her (**CSO 26 – 29183:30**). An average Ogulagha household (compound) contained an individual with his wives and offspring. Therefore, Okusowe representing each quarter was empowered to settle minor inter-family disagreements without essentially having to be referred to the village group council. It is imperative to note that individual families in the old Ogulagha clan played serious roles in the day to day running of their hamlets/communities.

These aforementioned various roles and responsibilities became necessary and important for Ogulagha to function effectively as a clan constituted with many fishing hamlets/communities. The above narrated political structures and formations which existed in the past centered on placing responsibilities on the shoulders of individual family heads (Okusowe's) which formed the Amagula (village council).

According to the **CSO 26 – 29183:33 intelligence reports of 1930**:

“authority was vested on individual family heads, for example, the highest living male ascendant in each family”. That is, be it Amakusowe, Okusudenomo, Okusowe, Ogulasowe, Ozibinowe, and Bebeorokeme, they all performed one role or the other to keep Ogulagha going forward from strength to strength. Therefore, no family could afford not to do the needful in training their wards concerning respect for the laws of the land and the constituted authorities in the clan. Hence, parents knew then that lack of proper socialization of their children to the clan's norms and values regarding not breaking the rules guiding the clan could demystify their hard-earned respect at the Amagula (village council) and other important positions they might occupy, because they (family heads) all made the rules guiding the clan together” (**CSO 26 – 29183:33**).

Traditionally in all Ijaw communities, the family was the most significant agent of socialization and key apparatus of instilling appropriate societal values including myth, proverbs, folktales, poems and social activities such as traditional dances, festivals and other religious rites were transferred through family education. These were the

mechanism and processes through which the younger ones were socialized into responsible adults. It also provided the avenue through which roles, customs and etiquettes of comportments were learnt' (Okaba1999:168). This assertion proved to be very vital and synonymous to parental peace of mind when they become old. This is in line with the 1930 intelligence report which revealed how the case of robbery involving a warrant chief's family resulted in the chief's conviction by the British colonial government; subsequently he lost his exotic position, coupled with the imposition of fine on him as a result of his inability to properly socialize his family:

Laminghan, Amasese Ogulasowe of the Obotobo Village Group Council was convicted and fined in the provincial court in connection with charges concerning the looting of a ship, the S.S. "Martha Woermann" (alleged to have been committed by members of his family resulting in the cancellation of his "warrant" **(CSO 26 – 29183:57)**)

This particular case in question must have been an embarrassing and degrading issue for the warrant officer (laminghan, Amasese Ogulasowe of the Obotobo Village Group Council) to bear considering his position in the clan then. This and other similar cases had completely brought blemish to the integrities of highly placed people in Ogulagha clan which was exactly why families properly socialize their children. Infact, if such case of robbery were to have been decided in "Amagula (village council) under the leadership of the Amakusowe" the culprits (laminghan, Amasese Ogulasowe of the Obotobo's family members that committed the crime would have been subjected to worst punishment.

*Expetedly, Amakusowe would have asked the family members involved to return all that had been stolen, this could also be quantify monetarily for the offenders to pay back (which is a typical example of an "early Roman law") (CSO 26 –29183:48).* Thus, if the offenders did not have financial strength to do so, a relative or a member of the accused family would be given as a slave to the aggrieved person/family and the person could be sold as a slave to recover what had been stolen, so that the accused family can serve as deterrents to other families who might be harboring such dastardly act in the future



### **2.3.2 Amakusowe: Making Judgments on Civil and Criminal Matters**

In earlier times, public proceedings on judicial matters formed major parts of the work of the village council, which was composed of individual family heads/elders of the village known as “Okusowe” under the management of the senior elder/president “Amakusowe” in the town court “Amagula” where decisions and judgments were pronounced. Importantly, civil and criminal matters were dealt with by the “Amakusowe” which always sit inside a house, but generally no special house was set apart for it (CSO 26 – 29183:42). Often times, a judicial council member (Ozibinowe) summoned the council to a meeting concerning any important issue at hand through the continuous beating of “a drum and a calabash horn” thus, sounding the name of each Okusowe through the drum signal, before taking his seat in the council chamber. This automatically attracted all the villagers to assemble together in satisfying their quest to getting the most recent information in the community.

Cases were heard in the council chamber in view of the public and the village spectators monitoring Amakusowe’s proceedings outside the chamber. With the assembly of judges (Okusowe’s), being ably represented by each quarter and family heads in the Amagula depending on the size of the village, the Amakusowe’s (elders) first duty was the appointment of a spokesman (Ogulasowe also known as Bebenemikeme), his duty was to sum up the evidence presented to Amagula. After the appointment, proceedings of the day would then commence (CSO 26 – 29183:42).

*On criminal matters: Both the accused and the complainant would deposit their hearing fees, which were the same in both cases and generally consisted of gin or palm wine, the quantity varying with the gravity of the case, which were consumed by the Amagula (CSO 26–29183:42).* The plaintiff then first stated his case, calling his witnesses if desired. He was then followed by the defendant. Amagula then considered its judgment through the Amakusowe.

*The winning party was awarded the cost of his fee, such as gin or palm wine that he first “put down” by the losing party. If the losing party were dissatisfied with the*

*judgments of the Amakusowe, he is at liberty to appeal to another Amagula (town court of another village) (CSO 26 – 29183:42).* Crimes in general, except that of murder, which was a capital offence, was treated mildly and division of crimes was much broader than it was in the case of the European native tribunals of the colonial system of government which the British colonial government replaced the village council (Amagula) for their own selfish interest in an attempt to destroy the Ogulagha peoples age-long conflict management and resolution heritage handed over to them by their forefathers.

On murder offences which happened to be the only capital offence in the chain of stipulated criminal matters often attracted death by hanging from Amakusowe. Prior to the decision of the Amakusowe, Okusowes of the clan would meet together in Amagula to deal with the case. The venue was always the village where the murder took place or where the victim hailed from. Thus, during the meeting, Amakusowe presided on the case and if found guilty, the culprit would be sentenced to death. The murderer was executed there and then in the village (CSO 26 – 29183:44).

*The process involved fixing firmly a high stout pole in the ground, and cross sticks were tied on it at intervals to form a ladder. This work was always carried out by “Ozighabakeme” (the executioner) under orders given by the Amakusowe with the support of the Amagula (CSO 26 – 29183:42).* Ozighabakeme then fixed a rope to the top of the pole. The murderer having compensated the relatives of his/her victim would climb to the top of the ladder after he must have eaten and drank. Ozighabakeme took down all cross pieces of sticks which aided him to climb. The culprit was then compelled to tie the rope round his neck and jumped down from the pole and strangulation resulted. No chance was given to the murderer to get away, and if he proved rebellious, he was forced up the pole; his relatives meanwhile would exhort him to get the matter over.

*After the death of the murderer, he was cut down from the pole, the body was marked in the same way as the victim the murderer killed and this was done by the relatives of the deceased, after which burial followed in the “bad bush” (Suebo) (CSO 26 –*

**29183:29).** The executioner “Ozighabakeme” received only food and drink for his services.

*Cases of Infanticide: which is the willful murder of an infant and Parricide: killing of twins were rare, while Matricide: that is killing under provocation in fair fight under intoxication, under jealousy were common, all these were regarded as pure murder and treated as such (CSO 26–29183:46).* In addition, *the case of manslaughter (Kisatuamienghaye) was treated a bit differently compared to murder. The accidental killing of a person was clearly distinguished from the crime of murder (CSO 26 – 29183:42).* For instance, if a person mistakenly killed another person, he would be held responsible for the death to the extent that he had to pay all the necessary compensations to the dead man’s family and further provided them with a girl from his own family as wife to a member of the deceased family. Thus, regarding the burial, the body of the murdered person would be buried with all honour in the customary way.

Furthermore, stealing (Furukeme): and like crimes were also not treated with kid gloves. *The offence of stealing was grouped into burglary and robbery but handled the same way. Amagula (council of elders) under the leadership of Amakusowe ordered the immediate return of the property stolen or return in kind of the things stolen to the incapacitated party (CSO 26 – 29183:42).* In serious cases, the offender is flogged using “a strong cane”, which often pierces the back of the offender.

*A man found guilty of Arson (Wariyomu) by Amagula was also punished by Amakusowe to refund the total cost of the structure he damaged to the victim. Also, the accused could be chained pending trial and suffered other ridicule (CSO 26 – 29183:49).* This offence can only be rectified only if a prominent and responsible person in the village interceded on his/her behalf. *Regarding Cases of Defamation or Assassination of character (Ekpegberi): this was considered a serious matter in any Ijaw clan. Because no worse insult could be imagined than to call a freeman a slave (CSO 26 – 29183:49).* This became frequent in the clan. In a related view, *accusing a person of theft was also treated with all sense of seriousness. Therefore, offenders paid dearly for it. Amagula ordered the accused to pay at least thirty cases of gin (CSO 26 – 29183).*

*Perjury (Ekpegberi): was not also treated nonchalantly; perpetrators were sanctioned by Amakusowe to pay a reasonable amount of fine such as five to seven cases of gin, which would go to the aggrieved party (CSO 26 – 29183:50).* Recurrence of such dastardly act sometimes attracted mild flogging and the offender would loss his reputation in everyday life in the village. Nevertheless, Offences like rape, adultery, abduction, sexual prohibition and offences against the law of consanguinity were grave crimes which Amagula handled seriously with all sense of responsibility (CSO 26 – 29183:52).

*Rape (Erekoribunu) cases can be categorized into two broad ways, namely – an underage and the one of matured or married woman. Amagula under the headship of Amakusowe passed judgment of severe flogging on the perpetrator (CSO 26 – 29183:56).* Thus, the person would pay all the local doctors expenses that the family of the girl must have sustained regarding the treatment of the girl. Raping of a married woman or matured girl was relatively different from that of an underage girl and it was often regarded as evil against the land of the ancestors.

*In the case of Adultery, Amakusowe ordered the accused to pay fine of twenty one cases of gin or the equivalent in cowries to the husband of the woman, after which pronouncements were made requiring the husband to severely flog his wife (CSO 26 – 29183:58).* The accused wife (adulteress) through the order of the Amagula will also be forced to do “Penance by confession”. This took place after flogging; the woman would then lie on palm Kernels with a pot of palm wine on her head. With regards to crimes against the laws of consanguinity and sexual prohibition, these were regarded as a serious offense.

The man or woman found guilty of adultery with a relative or one of his/ her own family members was sentenced to serious flogging by all members of his family. Hence, they must also undergo the “pepper torture” meaning grounded pepper was rubbed into the eyes and the body of the accuser coupled with the destruction of his house and properties; they were also driven out of the community as an “outcast” (CSO 26–29183:46, 47). The Amagula could pardon the culprits and allow them to return to the community after sometime

*Concerning divorce of couples after marriage, especially cases of adultery, recourse was also made to Amagula under the authority of Amakusowe who created avenue for the hearing of the parties involved and he ordered a reasonable amount of dowry to be returned (CSO 26–29183:46, 60). Relating to the refund of dowry, returning of dowry that was initially paid was not the major focus, thus, valuables regarded as appropriate which also included treasures presented by the husband to the wife during marriage, such as bracelets, coral, silk, cloths, handkerchiefs together with prescribed presents of gin to the girl’s parents and relatives and or loans made to them during burial and so on, must all be returned. It is important to note that ...if all necessary dowries were not properly paid to the first husband in installment; the divorced woman would not marry another man. If she did Amakusowe would give judgment of adultery to the woman and the second husband involved (CSO 26 – 29183:46, 50, and 51).*

*Concerning land matters, cases regarding land and other physical properties were presided over by the Amagula, after the accused and the accuser successfully defended their cases, judgment was made, leaving the offender with no choice than to pay his/her fine, which must be within two months (CSO 26–29183: 60). If the accused was unable to pay the fine, a member of his/her family would be redeemed by force through the help of capable strong youth of the village to the victim to be sold as slave to make up for the fine. Gift of six to twelve bottles of gin would be given to the victim as compensation.*

Ordeal (Apian): This was a major mean of deciding the denial of any wrong doing by the accused through the Amagula, which proved to be a successful measure in a genuine attempt not to wrongfully adjudge anybody. Intelligence report revealed that:

“Apian” involved three distinctive methods in order to sincerely discover the truth in Ogula. The first method involved “the passing of a sharp metal needle, dipped in a concoction made boiled roots, through the lobe of the ear, if the party was guilty the needle would not pass, but if not guilty it would pass easily. The second method involved the mixing of some oil together and pouring it inside a cooking pot with some leaves and a cowry on fire, when it was hot, the accused would be asked by Amagula to take the cowry.

If his finger got peeled off, he was guilty of the offence, but when he took the cowries and his fingers did not peeled, he was adjudged innocent. The third strategy of knowing the guilty person was to put a metal object on fire especially an axe head, when the axe head was very hot, Amagula would ask the accused and the accuser to take the hot object inside the fire, anyone of them that was guilty would get his fingers burnt, while the innocent was not hurt in any way (CSO 26–29183:46, 47).

Okaba and Appah (1999:154-155), elaborated further that meaningful judicial success continued to be inevitable in all Ijaw communities owing to the great support the people also got from Ama-ogbo (earth deity). They noted that Ama-ogbo (earth deity) represented general prosperity and strict dispensation of justice, which was achieved through oat taking. The ritual involved mixing a piece of soil dug from the ‘ground’ (a symbol of earth deity) in water and garri. If the suspect was guilty, he became unconscious after taking the concoction and his stomach would be swollen, thus, if the suspect was not guilty nothing would happen to him. This deity forbids incest, desecrating the earth through sexual intercourse on bear floor.

Although, the rulership at Amagula headed by the Amakusowe was originated around gerontocratic leadership based on individual family heads (Okusowe) from different clans that constituted the entire community, thus, the smooth running of their community was also rooted in the ancestral backings which Okaba and Appah (1999:153) referred to as “Amateme suo (city-creating destiny) which is among the primary forces which lies afar the spirituality”. To them, this aforementioned god represented the dead ancestors (living spirits of the community) who were the custodians of the Ijaw communities and they were typically behind the elders who regulated the wellbeing of their communities. In a related argument on the authorities responsible for the success rate that was attained by the Amagula, Alagoa (1972:18) substantiated this fact above that the drums praise poem of the town spirit is similar to the national anthem, for it epitomizes not just the yearnings and aspirations of the people but also refers to their past that made the ibe (clan) what it has become today. It is at such moments (most often annual) that the ibe or individual settlements strengthen themselves against the hazards of the future by formally reminding itself of the

achievements of its progenitors and the past glory and mercies of their deities Alagoa (1972:19).

Aside that, the Ijaw ancestors were providing ancestral supports for the Amakusowe as the headship of the Amagula, they also served as moral guardians. According to Ifie, there exist no strict distinction of influence between the living and the living dead; when on earth; the living dead were leaders of their family units. While in the spirit world, they do not cease to interest themselves in the general welfare of their descendants. They remain the custodians and executors of public morality and a strong factor of social cohesion (Alagoa 1987:67). These facts were also advanced by Okaba (1995:91) who established that the belief in the influence of the ancestors provides strong sanctions for public morality. As guidance of tradition, they demand a high sense of respect for the traditional laws and customs. Murder, sorcery, witchcraft, stealing, adultery, homicide, incest, and other social evils are all frowned at and culprits are severely punished. It is imperative to note that *...Amagula (people's court) was a success in the old traditional Ijaw communities, making sincere judgments on their people without anybody making recourse to violence under the able leadership of Amakusowe as the presiding and respected elder of the land (CSO 26 – 29183:52, 53).*

### **2.3.3 Cultural Beliefs of Ogulagha People**

The pre-colonial cultural environment of the Ijaw people of Ogulagha in the Niger Delta region was generally restricted here to mean their cultural affiliations, traditional religion, indigenous ways of living and marriage, style of burying of the dead, observance of deities, traditional health care, the cultural relevance of land (earth) and carvings. Across Ijaw communities, the people lived under the checks and protection of local deities, which served as a medium of community regulation (Omowe 2005:5).

Culturally, the regattas, fishing festivals, and masquerades that ignited wholesome experiences and lots of razzmatazz were one of the foremost modes of celebration in any riverine Ijaw communities and Ogulagha was not an exception (Anderson 1999: 127). In the traditional Ijaw communities, the arrays of shrines adorn virtually all handmade carvings in the region which was simply a reflection of the ancestral believes of the people, signifying their past incessant consultation of diviners who

helped them to commune with gods and or ancestors of various kinds on serious issues of bad fortune, infertility, ill health's and the likes.

Anderson further claimed that the Ijaw masquerades, dances, funeral rites were a true reflection of the 'ancestral creative beings (Anderson 1999:128). The importance of "dolphins" in Obuguru my study area for instance revealed the symbiotic relationship that existed between the natives and totemic dolphins. The Ijaw people of Obuguru had wonderful rescuing experiences many times their boat capsized in the deep sea when fishing. Thus, during a field trip to Obuguru, a fisherman recounted his experiences that:

At times you go see all this dolphins' dem go come around you like this. When dey round you which means na guardians den dey guide you, den no want those sharks to come eat you. Den go just come, den fit be 20 or 10 to come guide you. Den go just come rescued us to the shore for safety when our boat capsized (**IDI in Obuguru with a fisherman during fieldwork in 2017**).

Traditionally, there were two types of spirits that the Ijaw people held in high esteem. These were the bush spirit (bini oru) and water spirit (bou oru) who wandered through the forest. To them, the water spirit which could transformed into human form, portrayed the image of a beautiful light skinned woman with long hair while the bush spirit depicted a very ugly being with physical deformity coupled with a very dark skin and messy hair. Ijaw shrines were simply an image of ritual performance and masquerades entertainment. Shrines rejuvenation often took place during dry season with ritual pomp and pageantry such as drumming, singing, dancing, including elaborate drama of masquerades (Anderson 1999:129).

Bush spirits and shrines tend to be specific to Ijaw communities, perhaps because they offered protection to warriors in the past. Therefore, many bush spirits shrines were forbidden to women and non-indigenes. The Ogula intelligence report of 1930 revealed the importance of bush spirits to the Ijaw people, especially to the Ogulagha people as an age long practice. The report affirmed that:



“A deity was worshipped in the bush at the back of the village called “Olokumieyin”, an Amaseseoru juju which is the clan shrine brought by Ogula”. Ogulagha people gather annually to celebrate the god of “Olokumieyin” led by Ziba as their Orukarowe (juju priest)’ (**Ogula intelligence report 1930: 8-9**).

The Ijaw people of Ogulagha Kingdom also believed that water spirit was a benevolent being which could give children and great financial wealth, basically in the area of fishing and trading. Most water shrines in Ijaw communities were symbolic objects that diviners often found under the water, indicating an ancestral object with meaning. A visit to the water spirit shrines would often show revered objects on display such as tiny canoes, paddles, fishing spears and trade goods like plastics dolls, glass tumblers and China plates, these objects were secretly kept away behind curtains of white cloths or hidden between two white saucers (Anderson 1999). Hence, some of these objects seldom manifested as masquerades like Bini kurukuru, who was worshipped at several locations in the Delta region. In the Central Ijaw zone, water spirits typically approached men in visions and dreams, but it could also communicate through diviners and many of these were women. Importantly, Ijaw often used masked masquerades that incarnate spirits to punish criminals in their various communities or to settle disputes of greater magnitude (Alagoa 1967a 145-55).

The role of drum calls and songs during masquerades ceremonies cannot be over emphasized owing to the colours and positive effects this hype add to their displays throughout the Delta region (Anderson 1999:133). Masquerades masking or non-masking in Ijaw communities varied from community to community depending on ancestral believes and funeral ceremonies as the occasion dictated. Imagery signified masquerades in any Ijaw communities and many of it also dwelt in violence because of their attributive role of brandishing various blood thirsty weapons to chase onlookers. Some masquerades named “fanu pele (fence cutter), angala pele (mangrove cutter), pelekere-biye guru (when it cuts it is happy), and bigbebigbepele (cut without inquiring)” which depicted the fact that they were ready to attack anybody that stood their way (Anderson 1999: 135).

Eleke the most powerful mask in the Delta region is praised as Toru seigbe seigbe bite meaning ‘the cloth that does not fade while his son is called Indikoribo siko korigbe that is ‘you cannot catch a fish by the fin (Anderson 1999:135). According to Alagoa (1974, 1975), “several small terracotta found at Ke in the Delta region areas and dated to around 1000 AD, contained the seeds of the style and may have served as models for earlier masks”. Concerning performances of masking masquerades, it must not only accomplish the set dance arrangements, but must also create wonderful ambiance of enthusiasm which the occasion demands (Anderson 1999:137). The Ijaw also offered elaborate stories around masquerades to subdue hostile individuals in their communities, by narrating tales known as “egberi” that fitted into such individual’s action in line with full explanations on how a particular wicked spirit got its negative identity, tamed and suppressed for being bad, so as to compel the person in question to change from his/her bad ways to a good person for the benefit of their communities (Alagoa 1967b:155).

Traditionally, Ijaw people cleansed their communities around November every year; this signified the start of a new season by fortifying their shrines against impending dangers of pollution and or devastating epidemics which could result into loss of lives and properties. This they do by carrying out cleansing rites using “raffia masks which moved through the length and breadth of the affected areas with an objective of purging their communities from negative effluences of all kinds, left behind by the flood of the previous season. Hence, this preceded additional rituals during the dry season which was also a time when illnesses devastated their communities (Anderson 1999:140).

(Anderson 1999:133) further emphasized that in Ijaw community, sacrificial canoe effigies known as “ikiyan aru” are loaded with offering and carried through towns. Shrine members communicate their ancestors through a divination ladder and parade through town, using a small broom to sweep away diseases. Also, dry season lake festivals are also very important to drive away evil spirits. These takes place between three or seven years and it includes offerings at shrines. Customarily, the Ijaw communities also come together to worship their war gods (egbesu) who required annual festivals. Egbesu was a god that the Ijaw people so much believe in during serious crisis which could degenerate into war with any other ethnic group or neighboring communities.

Till date, the god of 'egbesu' which exemplifies the wrath of god in thunder and lightning has never failed in protecting its people in time of serious warfare. Some Ijaw communities also nicknamed Egbesu as 'Gbarada or Gburudu', represented by its totemic symbol of lion and leopard, meaning no one normally kills these animals or see them dead. "Egbesu is seen as a national deity and partner in the foundation of the Ijaw group across Delta region, combining both peaceful and warlike attributes" (Okaba and Appah 1999:153). But during crises, the people returned to Egbesu and other trusted traditional protective powers to pay homage for absolute protection.

Concerning the issue of destiny, Ijaw people of Ogulagha Kingdom accepted as true that every person has his/her guardian spirit known as "suoyogbesa" who normally accompanied the person into the womb before he/she was given birth to as a child and it also sustained the harmony of the body and spirit until they became separated by death (Okaba and Appah 1999:157). This guardian spirit also had what was similar to 'fie ye bo bra' (his speech before coming) which signified that all person born into this world have an opportunity through the spirit of "fie ye bo bra" (destiny) to certainly make a request either to be rich or poor, fruitful or barren, die premature or at old age and so on. When these entire requests had been made, the individual would be born as a child into this world, meaning that all his/her request would start manifesting one after the other. Although Ijaw people also trusted that bad destiny could also be changed to be positive if ancestors were consulted appropriately on time, this they called "bibi bari (reversal of bad destiny) (Okaba and Appah 1999:157).

The phenomenon of human destiny persisted across lineage and community levels which the people called "pelei suoyogbesa", the Ijaw people also had faith in "Ama suoyogbesa (village destiny) in alliance with "opu aduwei (village ancestor) this determined the inhabitants history and overall features. This fact above came up handy whenever the Ijaw people made inference to failures or success in any areas of life regarding their people (Okaba and Appah 1999: 158). The issue of reincarnation was also an important area of interest to the Ijaw people. There was a strong assurance by the Ijaws as regards the fact that if any member of a family died, he or she would still later return to earth through rebirth by his family lineage. Infact, Dime (1981; 37) affirmed this above fact with his submission that 'the suspensible world of the Ijaw is densely populated and there is a heavy traffic between the physical and invisible world as spirit beings travel to and fro... When there is wailing and weeping here on earth,

there is a naming ceremony with all pomp and pageantry in the spirit world and vice-versa’.

Misfortunes of all kinds known as” kiri-teme-arau” also centered on evil forces according to the Ijaws. To them misfortune could be as a result of one’s family inheritance (kiri-temearau) or through witch crafts Efin-Otu and or sorcerers (Sei-diriguwo-otu) of all kinds, but whatever form a misfortune manifested was as a result of individual’s destiny even though they vehemently detested it. Most significantly, the encroachment of the colonial masters was also a disaster to the wholesome cultural practices of the Ijaw people and these cultural practices and ancestral believes which were not only responsible for the regulations of their society, they also served as the sustenance of traditional heritage passed from generation to generation.

Today, the people were and are still under one form of traditional taboo/spiritual bondage or the other, traceable to the colonizer’s killing and eating of most of their totemic animals like dolphins, antelopes, tigers, pythons, crocodiles, foxes and so on, which was embellished with the tag ‘bush meat’ to prepare special delicacies. The unprecedented killing of these totemic animals were done consciously by the colonialists having carried out thorough intelligence report on the Ijaw people and their environments which confirmed the potency of their deities and gods, therefore, they came up with a destructive and dominance agenda through total destruction of these totemic animals and the Ijaw deities which made them to start incurring the wrath of their gods one after the other; this then led into hardship, destructive plagues and sudden death. Infact, Ijaw people started witnessing indescribable tragedies across their communities and they were also detached from their cultural believes and heritages which had shielded and gave absolute protection to them from ages past during war or any other forms of confrontational encounters. Thus, having succeeded in making them to be abandoned by their gods across their community, they finally bow to the superior gun boat diplomacy of the colonial masters.

#### **2.4 Environmental Degradation and Poverty in the Niger Delta**

A number of scholarly materials on environmental studies have clearly shown that environmental degradation and poverty in the continent of Africa especially in the Niger Delta are like Siamese twins which should not be separated from each other

with regards to the effects they have on man. According to Aworawo (1999) the beginning of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta can be traced to intensified human activities in the region, which has a very serious negative impact on the environment owing to the fact that the natural regenerative power of the environment cannot sustain the continuous negative impact of such intense human activities.

This fact is also supported by the report of Olaniyi et al (2008:357) that in any communities where oil prospecting activities take place, there is always severe problems of environmental degradation, ecological destruction and deprivation of the oil producing communities of their traditional occupation as a result of oil exploration and exploitation activities. Jike (2004) revealed in his study that oil exploration and exploitation is the single most important cause of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. The commencement of oil exploration in the 50s signaled the extensive environmental degradation and poverty in the region. He summarized his study that oil exploitations often come with tremendous impacts on the Niger Delta environment and these impacts include the clearing of forests, the digging of slots and canals, gas flaring, oil spillage and the violation of human rights. It should be noted that these aforementioned scholars' positions on environmental degradation above are imprecise, simplistic and it weakens the explanatory bases of the core impacts of oil exploitation on the family institution, as one of the earlier discoveries of man, necessary for adequate protection, nurturing and socializing of children to be successful especially in the Ijaw communities.

However, Barnett (2000:273) approvingly stated in detail the overarching effect of oil exploitation. For him, environmental degradation has effects or externalities that cannot be quantified. For instance, it has been established that increasing rate of pollutants induce cancer, causes biodiversity losses, and has effect on climate. Barnett further noted that these issues are already discernible in declining human continuous existence felt mostly by the already unsecured Delta region. Babatunde's (2009) study was centred on oil exploitation, local economy and conflict in Ilaje-Ugbo, Ondo State, Nigeria. This study revealed the challenges being experienced by the oil producing areas of Ilaje-Ugbo community which are richly endowed with abundant natural resources such as oil and gas deposit, as well as extensive forests and abundant fish resources. However, despite the enormity of its natural resources and over decades of oil exploitation, very little benefit has accrued to the region. Rather, oil exploitation has

led to pollution of the inhabitants' land and rivers leading to loss of income and opportunities for the people.

Research findings showed that many years of lopsided approach to development planning through government development commission such as NDDC in Ilaje-Ugbo in Ondo State has not yielded fruitful results that are socio-economically viable to the people. The study highlighted several development challenges facing the people of the oil producing areas. However, the most fundamental challenge to all of them is abject poverty which was caused by the destruction of traditional means of livelihood of the people. Direct observation by the researcher in the study areas of Ilaje-Ugbo in Ondo State revealed that oil exploitation activities have weakened intra-ethnic solidarity and relations, creating jealousies and dispute over host community status. The attempts to monopolise the political, social and economic benefits, which emanate from oil industry and development agencies have created divisive tendencies among the subgroup in (Ugbo and Mahin in Ilaje).

Babatunde (2009) also exposed in his study how oil companies created enormous division and disunity in the community by constantly manipulating local interest groups through divide and rule tactics. Most disturbing regarding the untoward activities of oil companies was their penchant desire of not honouring agreements. Chevron, Mobile, Texaco and other smaller oil companies have formed the habit of signing memorandum of understanding with oil producing communities of which the companies has never implement. Instead of honouring agreement, oil companies after gaining access to oil bearing communities surround itself with mobile police and military personnel and such agreements abandoned.

Direct observation of NDDC activities in the study areas confirmed that the commission has not made any significant progress in improving the living conditions of the people, nor the environmental conditions of the area. The researcher concluded her study with a meaningful suggestion that people-oriented policies and programmes should be devised by oil companies and governments at all levels in order to empower the people for better sustainability. Ojimba's (2006) research and other studies on the debilitating impact of environmental pollution which is the primary outcome of oil exploitation, lucidly explain the ills an average Ijaw family is exposed to on a daily basis. He argues that oil exploitation often contaminates the physical, chemical or

biological characteristics of water, air or land (soil) which causes nuisance, harm, or injury to plant, animal and human health, safety or welfare of the people.

Hence, Takebira et al (2021) affirmed that pollution infects the environment with materials that interfere with human health, the quality of life, or the natural functioning of the ecosystem which is the living organisms of the physical environment. He further noted that pollutants are divided into two categories (i) Biodegradable pollutants; these are materials such as sewage that rapidly decompose by natural process. These pollutants become a problem when added to the environment faster than they can decompose. (ii) Non degradable pollutants are pollutants that decompose slowly in the natural environment.

More importantly, Ojefia (1999) claimed that Nigeria's major oil producing States, especially Rivers and Delta States support about 300 major oil spills a year, often covering several miles which discharge about 2.300cm<sup>2</sup> of oil. This estimate would be much higher if it includes minor spills which are far more numerous and unreported. Ojefia further stated that the emission of carbon dioxide from gas flaring in the Delta region culminated into 35 million tons of carbon dioxide a year which means that the Delta region's oil fields contribute more to global warming than the rest of the world.

Ikporokpo (2003:327) approximately advanced that the Carbon dioxide content of gas flaring is 64 times greater than Carbon dioxide in the air. To him, gas flaring does not only affect plant production, soil characteristic is equally affected. He stated that there was a 100 percent loss in yield of crops cultivated within 200 meters, a 45 percent loss about 600 meters away, and a 10 percent loss about 1000 meters away from the flares. He concluded that the farther the crops are to the gas flaring site the lesser the adverse effect on the crops. Similarly, Omowe (2005:27) demonstrated in his study that gas flaring also caused palm trees located within the flare site to grow tall without bearing fruits and finally wither away, invariably reinforcing rural poverty in the Delta region. Roberts (1999) buttressed this fact that the two most politically salient incidences and sources of environmental insult and abject poverty in the Delta region are the pollution from oil spillage and gas flaring.

In view of the foregoing, Aregbeyan and Adeoye (2001:11) said it is often difficult to separate the effects of oil activities on the environment from the health of the

inhabitants in the oil producing areas. Thus, whatever affects the environment also affects the health of the inhabitants. These two scholars above corroborated further that food, including drinking water is the main source of exposure to many active ingredients, which are released into the atmosphere as a result of toxic by-products. These often pose a threat to both human and animal health in the Niger Delta. There were and are still frequent outbreaks of respiratory, varied skin and other strange diseases that are killing the people and causing miscarriages amongst women (Omowe 2005:27). The thrust of Osuntokun (1999) and UNDP's (2006: 87) works was a call for caution concerning pollution of the Delta coastal region and the increasing climatic instability arising from the impact of gas flaring which is a notable cause of global warming in the world today. They warned that there is a high possibility of the Delta region being submerged by water due to incessant rise in sea level.

Etikerentse (1985) in opposing the argument claimed that even in the best of oilfield practice, spillage of crude oil and the resultant pollution cannot be completely eliminated. It is therefore, the price that must be paid for the development ushered in worldwide by the petroleum industry and not even developed countries with their most sophisticated technology, have been spared. However, Okonmah (1997) contested Etikerentse's position, basing his views on a superior argument that though the price that must be paid by development ushered in world-wide by the petroleum industries is the spillage of crude oil and the resultant pollution which cannot be completely eliminated, even in the best of oil field practice. Nevertheless, the right to life should not be interfered with whatsoever, because it is supported by the Universal declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Okonmah further revealed that in actual fact, the government of Nigeria in conjunction with oil multinationals has violated this right as a result of unrestricted pollution and spillage due to oil exploitation in the Delta region till date. These threats to the environment may have far reaching effects on the lives of large groups of people directly or indirectly. Hence, no meaningful development can be achieved without meaningful consideration for environmental protection, as it is the environment that provides the means for human survival and development. Without mincing words, Mbugua (1997:139) accentuated that environmental degradation and poverty threatens the continuous existence of families today, as an old institution of social cohesion and



morality. Sadly, he noted that many African scholars seem to have done little or no research in this direction, (especially in the Delta region).

Importantly, degradation of the environment greatly lessens the output of the poor who heavily depend on it. Invariably, this makes the poor even more 'susceptible to extreme events such as metrological, economic and civil unrest' (Ojimba 2006:56, Isumonah 2003). Poverty also makes recovery from such events even more difficult and contributes to lowering social and ecological resistance. The central point of Ibeanu's (2002) research with regards to the impact of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta was his statistical breakdown which clearly depicts that the region needs urgent intervention from all concerned.

Ibeanu (2002) posits that youth unemployment is among the highest in the region. Only about 27 percent of people in the Niger Delta have access to safe drinking water and 30 percent of households have access to electricity, both of which are below the national average. There is one doctor for every 82,000 people in the Niger Delta, rising to one for over 132,000 in some areas, which is over three times the national average of around 1:40,000. This extreme poverty exists in a region that provides as much as 80 percent of government revenue. According to Adewuyi (2001:133), Nigerians' experiences have shown that natural resource endowment can determine the level of economic activities and income generation capacity of an economy, but not the standard of living of the people. He affirmed further that despite the contribution of crude oil to economic activities and government revenue in Nigeria, the developmental impacts of crude oil endowment, such as income effects, welfare effects and other socio-economic impacts remain an illusion.

In a related view, Frynas' (2003:65, 78 and 2004:535,541) separate studies on the fairy tales that come with oil fortunes in Africa, revealed that like other oil producing States, São Tomé e Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea is also suffering from the phenomenon known as the 'resource curse'. Instead of oil resources leading to a better economic climate and improvement in social welfare of most Sao Tomeans and Equatoguineans, it has only fostered economic underdevelopment and political mismanagement. This is because these countries' oil wealth is concentrated in the hands of tiny elites with thievish mindset.

Ebeku (2008:400) substantiated that in spite of windfall gains for the Nigerian Government as global oil prices have more than doubled in the past two years, the inhabitants of the Niger Delta remain among the most deprived oil communities in the world. 70 percent live on less than 1 U.S dollar a day, the standard economic measure of absolute poverty. Ifeka (2004) posited that the control of oil revenues by State and remoteness from people's local conditions, fuel arbitrary government, volatile and disorderly environment. She further said that no oil company seeking ventures in Africa practices a noble and transparent code of ethics and principles in order to have a competitive edge over its competitors.

World Bank (1996) established in their study with regards to the West African tropical terrain that environmental stress is centered on 'sensitive coastal eco-system' due to population increase. "About one third of the total population of the sub- region is concentrated on a coastal bank 60 kilometers wide". This stress has been complicated by industrial and urban development and has led to increasing pollution height, most especially in the Niger Delta region. Hence, the World Bank study was simply a distraction from the reality with regards to the conflation of population increase with stress in the Delta region. This study would have been better focused by finding out the devastating impact of pollution (on the inhabitants/families of oil bearing communities) which is a direct effect of oil exploitation in the Delta region, with a view to giving good suggestions on the way forward.

Ibeanu (2000) stated that Global trade has adverse effects on the Niger Delta. In line with this assertion, the former secretary general of the united Nation, Kofi Anan, cautioned multinationals against uneven distribution of global wealth which will only produce conditions that will undermine open world economy, perpetually creating more poverty in Africa (Barnes 2005). In a similar view, Ukaogolo (1999) observed that transnational oil companies in most African countries are beyond the control of the State. In fact, they have become 'imperium in imperio', that is, a State within a State, because they often subvert the sovereignty of the host State. He stated with regards to the Delta region that 'man is now a predator element for the environment, owing to oil multinationals use of corporate might and cover to traumatize the environment and rape the earth of its resources in the pursuit of riches'. He further said corporate recklessness and irresponsibility is at the heart of a number of malpractices on the

environment. It is imperative to note that the menace of corporate irresponsibility is not restricted to the Niger Delta alone.

Watt's (1999) study also revealed that in November 1993, a Philadelphia law firm filed a 1.5 billion Dollars law suit with 46 plaintiffs from the oil producing Orient region of Ecuador on behalf of 30,000 Ecuadorian citizens against Texaco International. The heart of the suit was focused on corporate recklessness. Specifically, serious illness, water contamination and severe ecological destruction were attributed to the super major oil company, as a result of 20 years of drilling which caused widespread destruction of the Amazon rain forest. Barnes (2005) observed that it is unfortunate that there are no structural mechanisms whereby multinational firms are accountable to the local public outside of the institutions of the State, even though they may provide jobs and contracts to the local service providers and other benefits that can help grow a local economy.

According to her, some corporations are well integrated into local communities, while others function within 'walled enclaves' that are intended to protect them from their communities of operation. Significantly, she further stated that modern business succeeds only if it engages with the totality of the society and only if it considers social and economic goals as interconnected. This implies that today's business environment cannot compete and survive unless it is integrated into and contributing to the full social context in which it operates. Leisinger (2004:318) also noted that "commerce with ought morality" was one of the "seven social sins". For him, people expect companies to provide healthy, fair and non-discriminating conditions of employment, and to protect the environment in their host countries across the world.

Isumonah (2001) suggested some commendable propositions which centered on an alternative constitutional framework for the oil bearing minorities as a result of endless environmental degradation and poverty bedeviling the region today. He stressed that the Delta region needs "economic, social, political and cultural self-determination" which might not come easily except the minorities are ready to achieve it with utmost determination headlong. Hence, he recommended an alternative constitutional restructuring based on economic resources in which emphasis will be shifted from distributive federalism based on just one resource to the development of a well-balanced economic structure.

Isumonah (2001) also suggested a democratically restructured democracy which will promote fairness, equity and justice and is pivotal to the needed peace and development in the Delta region. He conclusively advised that the promotion of good governance through group and communal responsibility for the generational utilization of resources are imperative. These contradict the prevailing situation where resources particularly oil blocks, are granted to some grand-patrons as their patrimonial heritage in order to strengthen ethno-cultural solidarity.

Environmental scholars such as Ikporokpo (2004:348), Agboola and Olurin (2005:168) concluded that despite the fact that Nigeria's environmental regulation laws are comparable with those of many Western countries; the State connivance with operating companies has led to blatant violations of its environmental laws. Invariably, environmental degradation becomes eminent. In fact, global trade institutions in Nigeria have evolved as if there were no environmental damage issuing from their economic activities (Agboola and Olurin 2005:169).

Mbonda (2004:285) stated that the greatest social evils in poor societies are oppressive government and corrupt elites. To him, the existence of poor people in a society can be seen as a consequence of unjust distribution of incomes or of inequalities. He further argued that dysfunctional institutions do not just fail to deliver services, but they disempower and even silence the poor through patterns of humiliation, exclusion and corruption. To him, poverty is not only a local matter, which can be solved through local justice, but also an international one which has something to do with global justice.

A lot of extant works on environmental degradation and poverty further revealed that irregular income distribution, unbalanced access to assets, poverty, resources and inputs are all causal reasons that often propel environmental degradation. Ojimba (2006) argued that once the cumulative causation process between poverty and environmental degradation sets in, risk and uncertainty over survival will definitely be deep seated on the economic activities of any society. Arnsperger (2004) concurred that poverty is an individual state of deprivation along a certain number of dimensions of existence considered objectively or subjectively to be crucial and not necessarily reducible to the classic dimensions of income.

Sen (1992) further supported Arnspenger's view that the individual's state of deprivation can be 'absolute', when an individual is positioned below a poverty line. Thus, deprivation can also be 'relative' when an individual is situated at the bottom of quality of life indices. Arnspenger (2004) clarified further that often times; an individual can witness both absolute and relative deprivation. Society can possess its own poverty threshold in congruent with its socio-cultural criteria.

Mbonda (2004:278) subscribed to the fact that "poverty is pain. That is, Poor people suffer physical pain that comes with little food and long hours of work; emotional pain stemming from the daily humiliations of dependency and lack of power; and the moral pain from being forced to make choices such as whether to pay to save the life of an ill family member or to use the money to feed their children". Duraiappah (1998) emphatically clarified the interconnection that is present between poverty and environmental degradation, thus, he claimed that endogenous poverty is caused by environmental degradation, while exogenous poverty originated from other sources than environmental degradation.

A profound scholar like Broad (1994) has also linked the relationship between environment and poverty in line with the fundamentals of the modern field of environment and development. In his study, he emphasized evidently that "Environmental stress" has a lot to do with the increasing demand on limited societal resources and that pollution is caused by the increasing living standard of the 'relative affluent'. Ojimba's (2006) submission was an absolute diversion from Broad's opinion that "poverty itself pollutes the environment, creating environmental stress in a different way. Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive" (this also explains incessant vandalization of oil pipelines till date in Ogulagha Kingdom of Burutu LGA of Delta State which is under study). In fact, the submissions of the above-mentioned scholars explicitly captured the helpless position families find themselves at the moment in the Delta region.

## **2.5 Environmental Injustice and Conflict Dynamics in the Niger Delta**

Scholars' opinions do not differ with regards to the importance of the environment in the life of every individual in the Delta region. This becomes imperative through the way the environment characterized the possibilities and restrictions of production and

social activities of the people. Environmental challenges and resource scarcities are closely related with the globalized character of capital, its contradictions being localized in its main theaters of operations in Africa, where people become the main victims, losing control over their eco-system and suffering the consequences of degradation, including being confronted with the violence of local and external agents bent on generating profit (Watts 2003).

Roberts (2005) gave a more succinct and in-depth understanding to this problem, when he said that environmental challenges pose major threats and challenges to security systems at local, national, regional and global level. Environmental conflicts, that is, conflicts caused by real or perceived resource scarcity which are rooted in negative environmental change, arising from (i) natural resource scarcity, (ii) differences in stakes in the outcome of environmental and natural resource management decisions, (iii) the threatened loss of resources with special importance to a group or community, such as pristine rain forest, valuable minerals and neighborhood serenity, (iv) the immediate monetary threat of delayed development and lost investments, should a government decision run contrary to the economic interests of particular groups or individual, and (v) uncertainty surrounding diverse environmental developments and actions.

These aforementioned five points which connote major channels that can generate environmental conflict between the host communities and multinational oil companies can be linked appropriately to major causes of environmental tensions in the Niger Delta. Ebeku (2008) aptly buttressed that continuous poverty with socio-economic disequilibrium and environmental degradation coupled with dismal performance of the government intervention bodies (OMPADEC and NDDC) in the Delta region, led oil bearing communities to re-focus their approach from non-violence strategy to being very violent presently.

Jerikre (2016) further stressed the positive impact of DESOPADEC's Development Projects on peace dynamics in Okerenkoko and Oporoza oil bearing communities of Gbaramatu Kingdom. These development projects strengthened the prospects for peace by reducing the individual and community's capacity to act in a violent manner. It has also provided opportunities for community members to increase their income. Infact, the market built by DESOPADEC in Okerenkoko community has increased economic

activities and promoted peace-building. Obviously, the commission understood the development needs of the communities through town hall meetings.

Field report further validated that there was significant increase in school enrolments after DESOPADEC's school intervention programmes. The researcher through field observation said inhabitants were convinced that the population increase in Okerenkoko and Oporoza was due to the completion of housing and other important projects in the community by DESOPADEC. Jerikre (2016) concluded his findings that DESOPADEC interventions have generated enormous peace-building outcomes and social stability in Oporoza and Okerenkoko communities of Gbaramatu Kingdom due to increased government development intervention. To him, DESOPADEC projects had, in several ways addressed the infrastructural deficit and also created a new sense of inclusion and participation of Gbaramatu people. This has further improved Government-community relations. The peace indicators and outcomes of DESOPADEC's development projects in Gbaramatu are so varied that heteronymous sources of conflict and tension have increasingly reduced.

Omowe's (2005) research on the Niger Delta revealed that environmental challenges in the Niger Delta should not only be restricted to the physical land, swamps, creeks and rivers alone, because it is totalistic in nature. They also include the cultural, social and economic environment of development. To him, these perpetual deprivations of the Delta region have resulted into two patterns of violent protests (overt and covert protests) which often take place in the region.

Omowe further stated that overt protest is an aggressive militant act of rebellion against the oil super majors and the State. These are always in form of legal actions, popular protests, vandalization of oil installations, the holding of oil workers hostage and the sinking of boats. Thus, in this type of protest, group leaders are visible but the motives behind their actions are concealed. Unlike overt protests, covert protests are non-violent approach against the State and the oil multinationals, and this can take the form of deliberate industrial accident, food poisoning in staff canteens, giving out intelligence report and so on. Often times, leaders in control of the protest are not visible.

In line with Omowe's views, Isumonah (2003) stated that the on-going raging violent protest/conflict in the Delta region should be linked to 'Internal and External factors' for a better understanding of the happenings in the region. Internal factors include oil workers and various individuals and categories of people including families in the host communities, while external factors include the ruling class both in and out of government who represent themselves, ethnic group or the multinational corporations. Hence, this state of conflict has been confrontational with negative impact on the economic, political and social aspects of inhabitants in the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general.

Odobo (2017) focussed his study on the nature and management of oil-induced conflicts in selected oil-bearing communities of Oben, Iguelaba, Ologbo, Obagie-Nokenkporo, Gelegele and Ughoton in Edo State. The researcher's findings revealed that all inhabitants of the foregoing communities know little about the environmental effects and other negative externalities of oil exploitation of crude oil without corresponding benefits for the communities where the resources are located. Many years of oil exploitation of crude oil has affected the pre-existing patterns of production and eroded traditional sources of livelihood. The people lived and sustain their families through farming before crude oil was discovered. The major crops of sustenance were yam, plantain, cassava, cocoyam and other arable crops.

Sadly, the commencement of crude oil exploitation necessitated a large portion of the people's land being converted for use by oil companies whose extractive activities also impinged on the quality of farm produce. The expectation that crude oil production will bring the much needed development and better life for their community was met with frustration and poverty. The researcher confirmed that as lack of access to oil benefits persists, it translated into constant protests and it snowballed into large scale conflicts. To assuage the pains of the oil-bearing communities undergoing environmental challenges and neglects in Edo State, EDSOGPADEC was created as a response to the yearnings of the local people yet; its interventions were inadequate in providing basic social amenities the people desire.

Odobo (2017) did justice to this research based on his field data which signified that oil induced conflict doesn't necessarily end up in violent conflict. There were some positive development generated by oil induced conflicts in oil-bearing communities of



Oben, Iguelaba, Ologbo, Obagie-Nokenkporo, Gelegele and Ughoton in Edo State. Continuous agitations and protests produced Corporate Social Responsibility from various oil companies exploiting oil across the abovementioned communities. Oil companies in Edo State now recognises the need to work conscientiously with host communities through regular interactions in order to identify basic needs of these communities and provide them with basic social amenities such as public schools pipe-borne water, town halls, health centres.

Oil companies also engage in provision of scholarship and skill acquisition programmes for the youths. Odobo conclusively suggested that various mechanisms in managing different sources of oil induced conflicts across the oil bearing communities in Edo State ranging from intra-communal conflicts, inter- communal conflicts, conflicts between oil bearing communities and the oil companies, and oil-bearing communities versus the government. The researcher claimed that all the four abovementioned oil induced conflicts across Oben, Iguelaba, Ologbo, Obagie-Nokenkporo, Gelegele and Ughoton in Edo State were all managed through Confrontation, Traditional Elders Council (TEC) (headed by the Amaokosowei of each community, under the leadership of the Oba of Benin), Litigation, Dialogue, Conciliation, Negotiation, Mediation, and Community Development Approach (through the provisions of some basic social infrastructure to assuage the feelings of inhabitants).

Frynas (2001) succinctly gave another divergent explanation to the current upsurge of violent conflict in the Delta region. He stated that the introduction of better financial terms for oil companies in 1986-1991 onward as a result of high global demand, led to the oil multinationals intensification of oil and gas production, the bulk of which was onshore. This has invariably increased violent conflict in many oil producing communities (especially in the oil bearing Ijaw communities across the Niger Delta region).

Onosode (1999) gave an instructive direction to the absence of a formidable conflict management framework to nip the challenges of contradictory perception that has debarred meaningful developmental initiatives in dealing with the Niger Delta crises till date. According to him, host communities employed reactive militancy, oil companies used a measure of corporate social responsibility towards their respective

host communities, while federal government both military and civilian employed non-stop coercive or 'command' intervention in dealing with incessant communal tension, often with bloody consequences.

Omeje (2006) offered noteworthy disclosures that in both human and material terms; the oil bearing communities have clearly suffered more losses through ecological devastation and violent crackdown on oil communities and anti-oil protesters by the State Security Service. He further said that the upsurge and intensification of violent anti-oil protesters since 1990's have compelled petro-business to explore new paradigm of security communitization, security privatization and security corporatization in the Niger Delta nowadays at the expense of environmental restoration. He said lovely as it might seem, these three security measures often resulted into blatant abuse, invariably complicating the security problems of both petro-business and the oil bearing communities through increased gun violence, pipeline sabotage by disaffected militant groups, communal and inter-group warfare and local terrorism.

Ogbugwo (2000) stated that the neo patrimonial tendency among incumbent power brokers to symbolize the State for all the wrong reasons, notable aggrandizement and display of wealth and power, inclusion and repression of critics and disloyal social forces are absolute disservice to the much needed peace in the Delta region. In truth, the potential benefits of links to the oil industry have exacerbated conflicts within and among the oil producing communities (Human Rights Watch 1999:8).

On the contrary, Ibeanu (2000:23) demystified one of the major 'make belief' propagandist explanations of the government that is often being used to conceal the truth from concerned Nigerians. According to him, the Nigerian State seldom says that "the salient reason for the escalation of conflict in the Delta region is the desertification of the oil bearing communities with monetary compensation paid by oil companies and government for exploitation rights and ecological damage". Ibeanu put the fact straight that local people/families are simply asking to have their devastated farm lands back in order to repose their lives and environment. Consequently, owing to continuous twisting of obvious fact in the Delta region, popular mobilization of members in the Delta region is the only tool of meaningful change, while elimination of deprivation is the people's key concern.

Ukeje (2001:349) stated that ‘for people whose lives are mired in drudgery and desperation, the offer of an exciting, risky and possible beneficial campaign of collective action may be a gain’. According to him, violence under this condition becomes the easiest of all options available to use for a disadvantaged group, because it does not have a high threshold of social transaction costs in terms of preparation. Okonta and Douglas (2001) subscribed to the fact that internal security of the State which should be for the elimination of forces and violence in the maintenance of internal order, by contrast becomes an unending cycle of conflict and violence. This invariably leads to decrease in the security of the environment and the ability of the people to protect their natural environment from growing through social stress and violence by the State. Obi (2000) argued with a deep sense of proportion that one cannot but agree with the position that the present situation of inequality of access to the national oil wealth by the constituent nationalities of Nigeria can only lead to distrust, fear, more intense struggles and further crises.

Asakitikpi and Oyelaran (1999) in a divergent opinion stressed that the real problem in the Niger Delta is structural rather than ethnic, because the socio-economic and special inequalities often found in the oil communities as a result of neglect by the federal government provides the milieu for the upsurge of violence in the region. Hence, the political structure in Nigeria is such that denies the minority group of the oil bearing communities to actively participate in formulating policies that affect their well-being. These submissions above, also clearly depict the occurrences in the Ijo oil bearing communities at the moment. Agboola and Olurin (2005) noted that during the contemporary days of liberation and globalization, that is, in the era of “huge business investment” by most Trans-national corporations (TNC) in Africa, a basic factor underlying security challenges is the tendency for the rate of capitalist expansion and exploitation of natural resources.

Agboola and Alabi (2001) and Adeyemi-Doro (2001) lamented that multilateral organizations clearly outstrip the regenerative capacity of ecosystems with extractive economic agents playing critical roles in environmental crises and the search for their resolution. This obviously explains a delicate eco-system of wetlands of the Niger Delta region. In respect of the above stated fact, Kemedi (2003) stated that since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the late 1950’s, the dream of oil as the commodity that would improve the lives of the people in the oil producing area has

degenerated into a nightmare. He further said that far from fulfilling the positive expectations of the people, crude oil has irrationally become a source of poverty and conflict.

Additionally, issues of unmanageable poverty and conflict are not restricted to the Niger Delta alone, these are also major challenges terrorizing the inhabitants of Cabinda province in Angola, where intense anger has erupted in violence against the oil industries and the national government over the unfair sharing of oil revenues, unemployment and the destruction of the living and productive environment (Le Billon 2001:79). According to Porter and Kramer (2002) multinational corporations occupy an anomalous position in the politico economic fabric of the African State. They are accountable to the State and dependent on it for their very ability to function. They pay taxes, a percentage of profits and even rents to the State and its elite leaders. Hence, these payments rarely trickle down to citizens in the localities where business is located, undoubtedly creating violent conflict.

Barnes (2005:245) article linked the close relationship between inequalities and violent conflict in the Delta region. Thus, she said no oil region in the world is inequalities obvious like the Niger Delta. Therefore, violence is often the response to perceived inequalities among receivers and non-receivers of corporate benefits. Barnes maintains that the most threatening problems facing the African continent today are poverty and inequalities and that it is only by addressing these problems at the most fundamental, structural, systemic levels that the world can have a chance to experience the kinds of security and instability that could be regarded as the world-wide circulation of peace and tranquility.

The Primary objective of Omeje's (2004) study was to debunk the assertion that all conflicts emanating from the Niger Delta can be said to be oil related. Hence, he revealed that contrary to the popular perception, that not all recent conflicts in the Niger Delta have their origins directly in oil, but for the unmistakably oil based conflict such as pipeline sabotage, seizure of oil rigs and hostage taking by violent protesters, the State mainly relies on military reprisal that may contribute to an escalation of conflict. He advanced that often times, local youths or communal conflicts are related to by the State through repeated 'oilification'. That is, through the use of very strong military suppression as a measure of conflict management. To him 'Oilification' most

remarkably thrives on pranks and propaganda, spin and deceit. Although, Omeje's laudable opinion was clearly stated, but he evaded the most salient issues of who (Families) really bears the brunt of oilification in his study, for a better appreciation of his commendable efforts.

Otite (1999) broadened our understanding that conflict frequently arises from the pursuit of divergent interest, goals and aspirations by individuals and, or group in defined social and physical environments. Hence, changes in the social environment, such as contestable access to new political positions, or perceptions of new resources arising from development in the physical environment, are fertile grounds for conflicts involving individuals and groups who are interested in using these new resources to achieve their goals. He stated further that, recognizing the inherent nature of conflicts in heterogeneous and competitive situations often make the people to be more or less convinced that their society is ongoing.

Barash and Webel (2002) supported Otite's opinion that conflict also occurs when different social groups are rivals or otherwise in competition. Such conflicts can have many different outcomes that is, one side changed, one side eliminated, both side changed, neither side changed, or rarely both side eliminated. They concluded that conflict can be resolved in many ways - through violence or by mutual agreement. However, Homer Dixon (1991) is of the opinion that the correlation between environmental factors and conflict in most cases is not necessarily as direct as it might be assumed. Nevertheless, he noted that the emergence of environmental conflict has been traced to the social effects produced by environmental tension, among which are reduced agricultural production, economic decline and disruption of social relations.

Albert (2001) claimed that "if disadvantaged groups and individuals refuse to consider open conflict, they deny themselves what sometimes is their most effective means for bringing about needed change". Roberts (2005) concluded in his study on the Niger Delta that so far peace committees, special task forces, arbitration and other conventional conflict resolution strategies have failed to mitigate the face-off between oil super majors and the Ijaw oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta because of deep seated skepticism and perverted distrust to the cause of justice. To him, concerted efforts should be shifted to the accomplishment of socio, economic and environmental

equilibrium. These will negate the habitual act of suspicion and uncertainty in the region presently.

Faleti's (2010), research which was based on Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of selected Multinational Companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria also established that oil exploration and production activities of the oil firms put them directly in the frontline of existing and potential conflicts which often pitched them against local populations, who see few or no tangible benefit from activities carried out in their communities. This has led to resentment, social discord and violence towards oil firms. Findings in the study area of Gbaramatu Kingdom revealed that in the past, oil firms did not consider conflict as a general liability for business interests. The initiatives to tackle it were circumscribed to the state. Business initiatives for addressing conflicts occupied a low or non-existent spot on the list of concerns. Not surprisingly, the mass of oil firms saw conflict as one additional operational cost and remained indifferent and passive, faced with efforts to end conflicts in the area until recently when conflicts encroach on business interests on a massive scale.

Faleti (2010) further claimed that oil companies has now reviewed its past initiatives and relationships with host communities in its areas of operation and embraced new model of community engagement known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative especially in Gbaramatu Kingdom. Field data exposed that the present engagement by multinational oil companies in Delta State in corporate social responsibility has yielded meaningful benefits through some financial investment on social amenities for host communities who were suffering from the impacts of oil exploitation, but a lot still need to be done. The researcher concluded and recommended that the likelihood for peace to be built and consolidated in the Niger Delta, (especially in Gbaramatu Kingdom) depends significantly on the willingness of the oil companies to share the burden of peace and development through huge financial investments on basic social amenities in order to make life meaningful for the people.

## **2.6 Understanding the Niger Delta Family Institution in a Changing World**

The Niger Delta region has undergone and it is still going through tremendous socio-economic, cultural and environmental changes, caused by continuous changes that come with industrial and the postindustrial period which is always at the detriment of

the family institution. Arcus (1992:390) claimed that changing social conditions embedded in the society today, always have a negative impact on individual and or family. These changing conditions (such as industrialization and urbanization were viewed as problems or problems creating situations because families appeared unable to obtain the same socialized behavior from family members as before and the Delta region is not an exception.

As a voluntary institution, the families in the Delta region are vulnerable to changing social conditions and these social changes perhaps create strains and tensions that disrupt family living and lead to circumstances where the learning from previous generations are no longer appropriate or sufficient, invariably these have currently plunged the region into unprecedented violence (Kirkendall 1973:390). Whenever social change does come about, it often leads the unprivileged class into a culture of poverty, set against the culture of dominance in that particular society.

Voydanoff (1990) noted that employment stability and security are important prerequisites for establishing and maintaining strong families. Thus, these are seriously absent in the Delta region today. Whiteman (2009) postulated broad changes in the Niger Delta economy, those which are structural changes and those resulting from technological developments; affect the number of the kind of jobs available to individual family, therefore affecting the ability of the family to provide basic security and stability needed for the wellbeing of their household.

Jike (2002:30) upheld Whiteman's view that in the Delta region today, many parents have been displaced from their farms as a result of industrialization and technological developments which ushered in oil exploitation activities. Invariably, these parents are incapacitated to provide for their children. That right from the family which represents the pre-eminent agent of socialization, the crack in the pattern of child upbringing has become quite evident. Parents have wittingly or unwittingly abandoned their critical role in the bringing up of their children. He claimed further that the current spate of truancy, juvenile delinquency, kid robberies and other social vices are a glaring indication of the depravity to which the Delta region society has finally sunk.

Arcus (1992:392) suggested that one important way to help families deal with a changing society was to help them become aware of and understand the value content

of their lives, that is, to help them become aware of the values which were the basis of their choices and decisions and to recognize how these values were channeled through their everyday activities. In his view, with ought attention to the values guiding actions, technology tended to outrun the ability of families to address potential changes related to this technology.

The family institution in the Delta region lives in a changing world and as a result of their interactions with that world, individual family is changing. These changes often create strains and tensions for families. Hence, Arcus (1992:393) in his study recommended that for families to cope with these strains and tension and to take greater advantage of their opportunities, serious attention must be given to the challenges posed by such issues as family diversity, family values and human rights. Also, provision should be made for sound and creative programs in family life education which will help families better to move towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century with greater confidence and strength of purpose.

Palermo (1996:51) in a contrary opinion claimed that the institution of family which ideally gives its members physical, emotional and educational support and teaches them high moral and civic values, is undermined not only by rapid and economic and technological changes, but by lack of personal and social responsibility of its member. However, Palermo (1996:55) agreed that indeed, post-industrial revolution has gradually minimized the functions of the family and created myriad social agencies, some of which have taken over the functions of the family. To him, the increase use of technology has contributed more today to unemployment and it has also greatly accelerated social mobility of families in search of greener pasture. Moreover, he posited that accelerated socio-economic changes among the family often create a sense of insecurity, frustration and certain disenchantment with life. It has totally disrupted the nurturing and loving care of the family and led some to a state of existential detachments from the society they reside.

Nowadays, people frequently lose their capacity to feel love for themselves or others. They are under the pressure of a society that consumes and then accept the new hedonist ethics. Adepoju (1997) opined that at the moment, family is in a flux and signs of trouble are widespread. Divorce rates continue to rise and the very meaning of the family being the agent of socialization has become problematic. To him, people “no



longer understand the moral meaning of the family institution due to the widespread tension and subsequent changes in our society.

In the Niger Delta region today, the three major important and united pillars of the family (blood, kingship, and neighborhood) in spite of all separating factors, are critically experiencing progressive crumbling and are seriously losing their importance as a result of pressure of societal change (Palermo 1996:56). Therefore, Kilpatrick (1992:246) affirmed that the increasing succession of new approaches to living in the postindustrial era, the migration of workers-blue and white collar alike, and the incessant search for independence and pleasure are important contributing factors in the progressive disintegration of the family as the first socializing agency. Doubtlessly, the crumbling of the family in the Delta region has brought about increased crimes and violence, physical and psychological abuse, violation of the rights of others, social imagination and affective deprivation. Violence, the extreme expression of hostility and irresponsible behavior, finds its abode in those members of society full of deep egotistic drives, who have lost a sense of responsibility and self-worth (Ukeje 2001).

The traditional functions of the family such as reproduction, biological maintenance, social control, status placement and emotional support have wholly dwindled in the Niger Delta communities. Lack of strength, due to very weak emotional bonds, family solidarity and shared moral values among family members have totally taken over the region. Pittman (1993:133) noted that without a strong base for which to build character, it is difficult for people to develop self-esteem and contribute to their communities.

Adepoju and Mbuza (1997) corroborated further that frail and faltering they may currently seem to be, families remain the only theater in which any society can realize its full capacity for good or evil, joy or suffering. Although, tension and problems may be part of family life, the interaction among family members is a good arena for the resolution of interpersonal problems usually encountered in daily life. In fact, it is within the family that individual often finds the moral and supportive strength necessary to achieve the reintegration of oneself. It is in the family institution also that people ought to acquire the sense of right and wrong too often lost during a transitional social life period. A nation is generally a reflection of its families, and the family of its members. As the dysfunctional individual cells and various organs create sickness in

the body, so also the dysfunction of an individual in a family creates the disruption of the family and produces a poorly functioning society. A family is not just an aggregate of biological related individual, it is a group held together by values, morals and religious traditions handed down from generation to generation (Palermo, 1995:67).

Marty (1995:16) substantiated further that societies must take note when its foundations are collapsing, and that the family is the foundation. To him, the family is the primary institution of passing civilized behavior to the next generation. "Its rapid collapse for more than 35 years is closely tied to a parallel explosion in social pathologies. He then suggested that restoration of the family's ability to produce virtuous human beings and citizens is essential for any society. He suggested further that for any society to do well, the first thing is to restore the collapsing family, and that the government should also take steps to strengthen the family institution in relation to its rivals. The policy that reinforces the traditional family and its ability to provide a moral education for children should be favored systematically.

Marty (1995:19) stated also that religion, along with the law, the family and the schools, has been one of the great institutions for molding character and instilling moral self-restraint for the members of any society. Religion, according to him, has been the foundation of morality and culture. And it has also been for most people, the foundation for morality in the society today. Lagree (2004:108) revealed that in modern time, the contexts of life are changing. Family structures are changing, the size of household is decreasing, maternal employment is expanding, a deep re-evaluation of the gender division is underway, there is a surge in the divorce rate, and the two-parent nuclear family model is more and more challenged. The scholar argued further that while technological changes create new classes of jobs and promote broader job opportunities, while transformation of labour market brings about new forms of employment and new job statuses, families continue to shape the fate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation (2004:109).

Marty (1995:15) in a wealth of research, conclusively postulated that the total collapse of the traditional family structure, startling in its rapidity, frightening in its magnitude is a disaster to moral education, and a disaster for society at large. He affirmed further that presently, the family is greatly weakened and much less capable of passing on a tradition of moral restraint or instilling in the next generation moral knowledge, habits

of virtue and the foundations of character. Whitehead (1993) agreed with Marty that there is a very strong relationship between the breakup of the traditional family in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the rise in crime rate in the society. He argued that most of the crime explosion in recent decade can be attributed to the rise in disrupted families today.

Conclusively, the literature on the impact of pollution, spillage and gas flaring as a result of continuous oil exploitations on the Delta region as a whole is extensive, robust and focused. We know a great deal on how oil exploitation is decimating the flora and fauna of the inhabitants of the Delta region, consequently making farming and fishing practically unproductive resulting in abject poverty for the people in the midst of plenty. Also, oil exploitations have also been fingered as a major causal factor of unprecedented diseases in the Delta region.

Many also argued winningly that non-stop impact of oil exploitation on the inhabitants of the oil bearing communities, owing to the fact that it is the only region where oil exploitation takes place within residential surrounding, which got to the peak in the 90's, is responsible for incessant youth unrest and violent conflicts which has portrayed Nigeria in bad light within and outside the country. Still, no harmonized work has been carried out in the area of the effects of oil exploitation on families in the oil producing communities of Ogunlaha Kingdom. As a matter of fact, there is hardly any specific research available, which wholly enables us to make sense of empirical data to support effective policy intervention on the social, economic and health effects of oil exploitation on the family institution in the oil producing communities of Delta State, especially violent effects of youth unrest till date.

As regards these shortcomings, this research makes use of fuller, extensive and robust approach in the study of the impact of oil exploitation on the family institution in Delta State with a view to providing solid understanding on the triggers of violent conflicts and pivotal aggravating impacts of oil exploitations. These will assist in the prevention and comprehensive management of oil exploitation and ceaseless future youth unrest which are really making lives unpleasant for families. This study would also promote harmonious relationship between stakeholders (families/communities, Oil multinationals, the youths and the Federal Government in general), which is pivotal for the needed and expected growth and progress across Ogunlaha Kingdom in the Niger Delta region, especially in Delta State.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.7.1 Structural Functionalism Theory**

Radcliffe-Brown propounded the theory of structural functionalism in the early 20th century. Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism theory came about as a disagreement against Bronislaw Malinowski's theory of needs which declared that cultural believes work together to sustain human psycho-biological needs. Radcliffe-Brown, objected to this assertion and said "the function of cultural social/societal institutions plays an important role in maintaining the entire society, not the satisfaction of individuals". He introduced the idea of social structure in his theorisation (Moore 1997:145). According to him, societal structures are combinations of association among persons which are independent of the individual members, who might occupy those positions. He further claims that societal structures do not exist alone but include all mutual and communal relationships. That is, they entail segregation of persons and groups by their social roles and the relationships between a particular group of humans and a larger network of connections (More 1997).

Radcliffe-Brown claimed that "the social institutions exist and may be openly verified, that people are also inter-connected by an intricate system of associations". The word social institutions conote a system of truly active relationships (Radcliffe-Brown 1952b:190). Radcliffe-Brown considers social institutions to be factually inevitable, tangible and a certainty. He further stresses that the strength of a structure is maintained by regular process of human and societal relationship and unity of purpose. The human relationship of any society is imperative and accountable for the successful functioning of the social institutions. In addition, a social institution has a kind of cordial relationship which could be taken as a functional relationship and defined as a condition in which all parts of the system work together with a sufficient degree of agreement or internal stability without producing constant conflict which can neither be settled nor managed (Radcliffe-Brown 1952c:181).

Radcliffe-Brown's provides a strong theoretical base for the explanation of the effects of oil exploitation on the family institution in Ogulagha Kingdom as noted above. Brown argues that the function of social institutions is the role it plays in maintaining the society. In this sense, all social institutions play an important role in maintaining societal equilibrium and harmony, such that when any part of these institutions are

affected or not well-maintained, the entire society and harmony are affected with dire consequences of dysfunctional society.

In a related view, Otite and Ogiwo (1985:78-203) extensively state that social institutions (family institution, religious institution, political institution and economic institution) play a significant role in the continued existence of any human society and the society will not function effectively and efficiently if there is no harmonious relationship between all these institutions. These scholars further emphasise that, if any of the aforementioned institutions does not perform its statutory responsibilities, the society will be adversely affected.

At the moment, families in Ogulagha Kingdom are embroiled in chaos because its social institutions are not functioning harmoniously, making violent conflict inevitable between families (especially the youths representing these families) and oil multinationals. This requires urgent attention from all stakeholders before the situation in the Kingdom degenerates into anarchy. In order to survive now in Ogulagha Kingdom, most family breadwinners have become very desperate in the quest for making a living and feeding for their children. Infact, extant research in the Niger Delta region such as Ikelegbe (2006) and kemedi (2003) revealed that parents no longer train or make deliberate attempts to hand over good characters to their children anymore.

Presently, children have few or no parents to look up to for good virtues. Most of what they see now is parents who are morally bankrupt and violent in nature, but unfortunately, have become role models to majority of youths. Infact, oil exploitation activities have constrained the family structure to become handicap in their socialization responsibility including providing for their household. Families are now very deficient regarding the delivery of quality status provision to any of their children across the oil producing communities in Ogulagha Kingdom.

### **2.7.2 Political Economy Theory**

The genesis of political economy that has now been embraced by all and sundry across the world today was dated back to the 18th century. Adam Smith was an 18th-century Scottish economist, theorist and author who was known as the creator of modern political economy theory. Smith's most outstanding work on political

economics was his 1776 book, called "The Wealth of Nations". Political economy is a multifaceted subdivision of social sciences. It focuses on the interrelationships among individuals, governments, and public policy (Hollander, 1927). Political economists study how economic theories such as capitalism, socialism, and communism work in the real world.

The field of political economy is the study of how economic theories such as socialism, communism or capitalism happen in the physical world. Smith's thoughts reflected in the work of Karl Marx in the 19th century. Karl Marx, a political economist and theorist like Smith, was significantly motivated by *The Wealth of Nations* and advanced the philosophy of Smith with his theory. However, though Smith posited that capitalism was best for the development of trade and industry, Marx objected and opined that capitalism resulted into an intensified desire to create a society that people are not equal in status, rights and opportunities which will ultimately result into disintegration (Steven 2016).

#### Karl Marx's Political Economy Theory of Capitalism

The term "capitalism" originated from the Latin word "*capitalis*," this means "head of cattle". Karl Marx who was born in May 5, 1818 and died in March 14, 1883, introduced the theory of capitalism socialism, communism and became renowned for it. He was a philosopher, author, social theorist, and economist (Singer 2000). Marx, in conjunction with Friedrich Engels, published *the Communist Manifesto* in 1848; subsequently, he wrote *Das Kapital* meaning 'capitalism' (the first volume was published in Berlin in 1867). Capitalism is a means by which the societies or government enable a person, group of persons or business owners to own the factors of production such as land, capital, labour and raw materials. Nevertheless, owners of the means of production (capitalists) engage employees (labour) who rely on paid income from the employer for survival. Employees cannot own means of production, but can only utilise it to achieve production as dictated by an employer (Roberts 2017). Capitalism is often being determined by demand and supply, rather than through a system where government makes economic decisions regarding production and delivery of produce. The best type of capitalism is based on the power of sellers and buyers, meaning that, an economy where the pressure of those buyers and those

willing to sell their product can determine the price of goods without confrontations (Caporaso and David 2005).

Capitalism encourages the ownership of raw materials and capital meant for production, which serves as an encouragement for participating in productive use of capital. Rather than engaging in serious trade and industry which is driven by the government in promoting necessary growth in the society as dictated by socialism or feudalism, capitalism pay attention on trade and industries decision based on free enterprise based on great profit, In addition, capitalism also encourages two or more group of employers or investors to contribute necessary raw materials, capital and labour in order to produce goods and services for surplus financial gains (Anderson 2010). Strategic combination of efficient productive machines and raw materials yields high-quality products and maximum revenue for a capitalist at the expense of the workers (Caporaso and David 2005).

Today, many of Marx's ideas regarding capitalism remain relevant, such as the emergence of mega-corporations, persistent unemployment, and the general struggle between Workers (proletariat) and employers (bourgeoisie). Marx predicted that because of capitalism's unrelenting quest for profit at the cost of the workers/ oil producing communities/families would invariable degenerate into incessant conflict (Stilwell, 2006).

Nigeria's political economic policy for running her fragile nation, especially the oil and gas sector can simply be described as capitalist economic policy but cleverly packaged to Nigerians by government as mixed economic policy. A mixed economy system encourages private ownership of business establishment to be possible side by side with a government own business enterprise. In a mixed economy system, government deliberately protects all private investments through business friendly government policies that are not antithetical to the community where businesses are established and the country at large. Governments also ensure that rules and regulations guiding business environments are obeyed (Sanford 2003).

In the case of Nigeria's oil sector, government rules and regulation have not been adequately complied with by multinational oil companies because agencies of government are corrupt and lack the will power to prosecute offenders. This has

become the reality across the oil producing communities in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom. The emergence of numerous multinational oil companies (SPDC, AGIP, etc) in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom, has made it the second largest oil producing state in Nigeria. Unfortunately, insufficient highly skilled indigenous technical expert for crude oil and gas exploration, refining, including poor regulations has hindered Nigeria from making astonishing financial gains in recent years. Unlike her counterparts across the world that are practicing effective mixed economy such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, China etc, where government deliberately own about 70% to 80% of critical production companies in the economy. This is mostly done for public good and prosperity in order to compel multinational corporations to comply with basic regulations.

Hence, lack of strong will power as a nation and poor planning in setting our priority right every time has tied Nigeria to oil multinationals from the West since 1956 when oil was first discovered in the Niger Delta region till date. Nigeria has not been able to break herself away from Joint Venture Agreement involving the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which holds 55%, Shell 30%, Total Energies 10% and Nigerian Agip Oil Company limited (NAOC) 5% many years ago. The 45% stake of these multinational oil companies combined with their technical capabilities simply depicts pure capitalist arrangement which minimally benefited Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State and Nigeria as a nation.

Importantly, Nigeria should emulate countries like Saudi Arabia's Aramco and Russia's Rosneftegaz. The Saudi Arabia's government own 94.2% share, followed by Public Investment Fund, Saudi Arabia sovereign wealth fund, which owns another 4.0%, while the Russian biggest oil company is Rosneftegaz which has about 70% of government stake. Saudi Arabia, Russia and china's political economy approach are proper mixed economy setting, totally devoid of capitalism because the government took the bull by the horn by taking over the exploration, refining and marketing of her oil sectors. For instance, in 1950s Saudi Arabia's government sent packing the four companies exploiting their oil, known as Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and Socony Vacuum (Mobil).

Nigeria must take full responsibility of her oil exploration, refining and marketing of her God given crude oil in order to make tremendous financial gains as well.



Indigenous and capable petroleum engineers and other relevant oil and gas trained professional should be immediately hired for gradual takeover of our oil facilities. The country should also be responsible enough to know that mixed economy connotes strict government regulations of private own companies, especially multinationals oil giants who must be made to obey oil exploration rules and regulations. The economic effects of oil exploitation activities by various multinational oil companies in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom has been huge as a result of destroyed families livelihood and environmental degradation. Infact, lack of strong will and the lackadaisical attitude by various governments oil regulation agencies at all levels due to corruption in making erring companies to face the law has portray Nigeria as a weak nation without focus.

In conclusion, Marx warned that if the bourgeoisie (multinational oil companies) continue to subject proletariat (workers, oil producing communities, poor families and youths) to constant pressure in order to make surplus gain, it will lead to a disastrous confrontation from the proletariat (the workers, youth groups, women groups, families, including the entire community). They will fight back and take over (the means of production) oil facilities which might be unpalatable for both parties. A stitch in time saves nine.

### **2.7.3 Frustration Aggression Theory**

The frustration-aggression hypothesis also known as the frustration–aggression–displacement theory was propounded in 1939 via monograph published by the Yale University Institute of Human Relations. The Yale psychologists behind the monograph were John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears. Their works is applicable to both human beings and animals (Berkowitz 1983). The theory posited that people or group of people can get frustrated and aggressive against other people or group of people when personal or group ambitions becomes unattainable. The theory asserted further that people or group of people do not just get aggressively violent against other people they believe are stumbling block against their aspirations/goals just like that, they initially show their anger through psychological frustration, thereafter, aggression which might be violent then follow. It is important to also know that people or group of people really do not get frustrated because of simple inconsequential issues that upset them, they only get frustrated against others anytime

they are convinced beyond doubt that their ambitions are being truncated by others (Dollard et al., 1939, p. 7).

Incapability to achieve one's desires as a result of weighty obstacles is regarded as the bane of frustration, which always results into pent up emotions that gets aggressively diffused to others (Breuer and Malte 2017). When these wants are persistently unachievable or unfulfilled, annoyance, sadness, depression and violent behaviour are possible outcome. The theory further stated that "the incidence of untoward character of the people all the time necessitate the continuation of frustration and always leads to some form of aggression (Whitaker, Melzer, Steffgen and Bushman 2013). The frustration aggression theory of 1939 originally opined that unattainable goals will give rise to frustration, while deep sense of frustration will normally result into violent aggression.

However, the theory has been readjusted because of numerous critics who disagreed that not all act of frustration aggravates an aggressive action. Therefore, Miller, Sears, Mowrer, Doob and Dollard (1941: 339) concored with their critics and bend backwards by affirming that although frustration will normally give rise to aggression in any society, but sometimes some act of frustration do not degenerate into an aggressive violent outcome because different people normally react differently when expressing their frustration (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer and Sears 1941). The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged; the aggression gets dispensed onto an innocent target. This theory was also used to explain violent public disorder and violent takeover of government with a view to substitute it with another regime. The foregoing acts of insurrection have always been used effectively over the years by minority groups who wish to challenge the status quo of economic and environmental injustice in their society (Breuer, Johannes; Elson, Malte 2017).

The proponents of frustration aggression theory further stated in 1941 that "frustration causes instigation to aggression but aggressive reactions to frustration are ordinarily not detrimental or disadvantageous to the achievement of individual or group goals (Miller, Sears, Mowrer, Doob, & Dollard, 1941: 339). In spite of the constant changes to the readjustment of its theoretical limitations that characterize its development, the frustration aggression hypothesis has been outstandingly applied to explain a wide range of behaviors in individuals, groups, and systems. Hence, it is safe to say that the empirical discoveries within the frustration aggression framework have greatly

advanced the understanding of human aggression and will continue to do so (Breuer and Elson 2017).

Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Robert Sears (1939) frustration Aggression theory clearly explains the incessant protests, confrontations and conflict by youths and families in Ogulagha Kingdom as a result of continuous effects of oil exploitations activities. Oil exploitation has resulted into many unfulfilled dreams, unfulfilled promises of compensations, very poor farm yield due to environmental pollution, fishing which is the major source of livelihood has also dwindled and unprecedented poverty. Invariable, individual family goals and aspirations were incompletely achieved despite wonderful promises by governments when oil exploitation started in 1956.

These constant disappointments have resulted into mental stress, personal frustration, anger and unprecedented aggression by the youths, especially families towards the government and multinational oil companies. Sutton (1991) buttressed that people/communities collective expression of violent rage against ceaseless oppression by the oppressors is an effective method for getting societal attention which has proved to be effective from time immemorial for correcting societal injustice. Financial assistance and social amenities provided by the government and oil companies has not really assuaged the feeling of oil producing communities, especially distraught families. Government at all levels should be more proactive towards doing everything possible in ensuring that all inhabitants residing in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom are economically, socially and medically catered for in order to have a Kingdom devoid of frustration, aggression and violent conflict.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher used exploratory and historical documentary research designs for this study. These research designs were used by the researcher in order to carry out a better research on the effects of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State. Exploratory research design which is also known as interpretive research design focuses on gathering primary and secondary data using an unstructured format or informal procedures to interpret them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011:26).

In addition, historical documentary research design was also employed in carrying out this research through secondary sources of data collection (Textbooks, reports and precedings, newspapers, diaries, committee minutes, memoranda, diaries, letters, autobiographies and archival documents) from the National Archives, University of Ibadan. This empowered the researcher more on relevant insight about the past history of Ogulagha Kingdom.

#### **3.2 Area of Study and Geographical Location**

Contemporary history established that Ogulagha community, now called Ogulagha Kingdom is made up of six constituents and satellite villages which include: Ogulagha main town, Youbebe, Obotobou I and II, Sokebolou, Yokiri I and II, Osain, Okuntu, Opeme, Obuguru, Abarabebe, Ogborugboru and Benibo8ye. The Kingdom has its headquarters in Ogulagha main town, which is the seat of monarch of the clan. The Kingdom is traditionally divided into three geographical zones: Ogulagha Zone (Ogulagha main town, Youbebe, Opeme, Okuntu Abarebebe, Beniboye and Ogborugboru); Obotobou Zone (Obotobou I and Obotobou II); and Sokebolou Zone (Yokiri I, Yokiri II, and Sokebolou). The members of these communities are of Ijaw extraction with a fair mix of people from other ethnic groups. The estimated population of Ogulagha Kingdom based on the last 2006 population Census in Nigeria was 23,056. The Western Ijaw division comprised of nine Ijaw clans and the 3<sup>rd</sup> class

townships of Forcados and Burutu was gazette in place of the former Forcados district in Gazette No.49 of the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 1934. Boundaries: The alterations in the boundaries were gazette and described in gazette No.11 of 1937. Area and population: The area of the division was given as 2351 sq. miles (WP.377 VOLII 1945).



Fig. 3.1: Map of Ogunlaga Kingdom's geographical location in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

### **3.3 Study Population**

The estimated population in Ogulagha Kingdom based on the last 2006 population census was 230,56. This was based on the number of adult males and females in the current year's nominal roll. This estimated population, constituted some percentage of the study population for this study. The researcher will sample families in Youbebe and Obuguru communities in Ogulagha Kingdom, Burutu LGA of Delta State. The selections of the two communities are imperative for data collection for this study because they host the two largest multinational oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom. Shell Oil Company is situated in Youbebe community and Agip is located in Obuguru community, both in Ogulagha Kingdom. Furthermore, the study population included staff of the Federal and State ministries of environment in Delta State on environmental impact assessment, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Staff in Delta State, National oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) staff, Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) staff, Nigeria National Petroleum Commission (NNPC) staff ), and staff of Shell and Agip operating oil wells in Youbebe and Obuguru communities in Ogulagha Kingdom. Efforts were also made to interview farmers, fishermen, women leaders, youth leaders, Burutu Local Government Chairman and the King of Ogulagha Kingdom.

### **3.4 Sampled Population**

The researcher used Systematic Sampling for the quantitative data (questionnaires) meant for this study. Systematic Sampling method was used to get 230 questionnaires from interviewees in accordance with the last 2006 Ogulagha Kingdom population Census which stood at 23,056. The researcher based the selection in line with the population of the study area and in agreement with Systematic Sampling.

In addition, the researcher further used qualitative data sampling techniques for this study. Convenience sampling technique was used to select sixty (60) Indepth interview respondents, Snowball sampling technique was adopted to choose 30 Key Informant respondents and eight Focus Group Discussions were conducted in Ogulagha Kingdom for this research.

### 3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample

The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select Youbebe and Obuguru communities out of 14 communities in Ogulagha Kingdom because these two communities host Shell and Agip oil multinational companies. Systematic random sampling was used to select 230 respondents to whom unstructured questionnaires regarding the effects of oil exploitation activities and environmental degradation against the families were administered. Systematic random sampling which requires selecting every one hundred and one person with the starting point of the selection, chosen at random based on the frequency interval of simple statistics from the population.

Systematic Sampling was carried out using the formula below:

$$f=N/sn$$

f= frequency interval

N= the total number of the wider population which is 23,056

sn= the required number in the sample which is 230.

Therefore, the frequency interval=  $23056/230 = 100.2434$  (which rounds up to 101)

As regards the foregoing systematic sampling, the frequency interval the researcher used in arriving at 230 samples of questionnaires is 101.

Convenience sampling was also used to select 20 families, 10 community chiefs, 10 community opinion leaders, 10 representatives of youth groups and eight representatives of women association, the incumbent Chairman of Burutu Local Government Area and the traditional ruler of Ogulagha Kingdom with whom In-depth Interviews (IDI) were conducted.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted through snow ball sampling technique, four each, with members of staff of Shell Petroleum Development Company and Nigerian Agip Oil Company, Niger Delta Development Commission and Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission. They also included two officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, two medical doctors, four officials of federal and state agencies on environmental impact assessment in Delta State. Eight



Focus Group Discussions were held, one each, among the largest associations of men, women, boys and girls.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher used quantitative, qualitative and historical archival documents for data collection for this (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007: 239). The researcher also engaged non-participant observation for data gathering within the framework of this research. The researcher also used secondary sources of data collection from documents on related works that were previously done on the subject of study to generate additional qualitative data. These included newspapers, magazines, seminar papers, journals, academic publications, internet-based resources, periodicals and historical archival documents.

### **3.7 Instruments of Data Collection**

The researcher effectively used both primary and secondary instruments of data collection in carrying out this research. The primary instruments used were quantitative and qualitative research instruments such as questionnaires, In-depth Interviews (IDI), Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Non-Participant Observations. The secondary instruments of data collections were historical archival documents in the National archives, University of Ibadan.

#### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

The researcher used unstructured open ended questionnaires to get families responses regarding the disturbing effects of oil exploitation activities and environmental degradation in Ogulagha Kingdom. Questionnaire was also used to ascertain the economic challenges, poor education and the unprecedented health challenges families were faced with daily in the Kingdom. 230 participants/respondents were selected from a wider population of 23,056 of Ogulagha kingdom using a systematic sampling method. Every one hundred and first person was selected with the starting point of the selection chosen at random.

How frequently systematic sampling was done was decided using the formula below:

$$f=N/sn$$

f= frequency interval

N= the total number of the wider population which is 23,056

sn= the required number in the sample which is 230.

Therefore, the frequency interval=  $23056/230 = 100.2434$  (which rounds up to 101)

### **3.7.2 Indepth Interview (IDI)**

This research instrument was used to interview 20 families in Youbebe and Obuguru communities. The researcher also interviewed 10 community chiefs, 10 community opinion leaders who are fishermen and farmers, 10 representatives of youth groups and eight (8) representatives of women association, the incumbent Local Government Chairman of Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State where Ogulagha Kingdom is located and the traditional ruler of Ogulagha Kingdom with whom in-depth interviews were conducted. In total, 60 indepth interviewees were conducted in Youbebe and Obuguru communities.

### **3.7.3 Key Informant Interview (KII)**

Key informant interviews were conducted in the study areas for key important personalities who provided vital informations to the researcher. Four (4) members of staff (each) of Shell Petroleum Development Company and four (4) staff members of Nigerian Agip Oil Company, four (4) staff members of Niger Delta Development Commission and four (4) staff members of Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission. Interviewees also included four (4) officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (DPR), two (2) medical doctors, four (4) officials of Federal Ministry of Environment and four (4) officials of National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency. The total number of the Key Informant Interviewees was 30.

### **3.7.4 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus group discussions were carried out in Youbebe and Obuguru communities to ascertain the effects of oil exploitation on the families, their economic livelihood, health challenges and environmental degradation in the study areas and how this development has really affected family life as a whole. Eight (8) Focus Group Discussions were held in Youbebe and Obuguru communities. One each, among the largest associations of men, women, youths and young ladies. This qualitative data

collection method was useful by the researcher to get the opinions of family groups, youth groups, women groups, fishermen Associations and farmers associations.

### **3.7.5 Non-Participant Observation**

Non-participant observation also provided the researcher with practical opportunity to observe Ogulagha Kingdom's family life. That is, their economic livelihood, social and culture. The researcher also visited their streams, primary schools, secondary schools, their farms, including observing their temperaments holistically. Audio tape recorder and field notes were used to documents observed details. These enabled the researcher to determine recommendations required to address families' present environmental issues, economic challenges and their deplorable health conditions in Ogulagha Kingdom.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative data were gathered with the assistance of unstructured open ended research questionnaires, Indepth interviews, Key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussions and observations, using Interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics; frequency tables' and percentages, while qualitative data were content-analysed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the result of data analysis and a discussion of findings. The results are presented based on the mixed method of data collection.

#### **4.1 Research Question One: What were the Traditional ways of life of Families in Ogulagha Kingdom before the Advent of oil Exploitation activities**

*In the past, Ogulagha Kingdom was known for its extended family structure, comprising a father, many wives and children living under one roof. It was a male-dominated society with the father as the sole decision-maker in the household (Ogulagha Intelligence Report of 1930, CSO 26–29183).* Field observations and interviews revealed that family life in the Kingdom revolves around the environment, as well as rivers and creeks which pose serious livelihood challenges to families, especially women and children.

All family heads in the Kingdom unilaterally restrict their wives and children from going to the rivers, sea and creeks for fishing. To an average family head, fishing is only meant for strong and capable male adults. Additional field data showed that the role of the father in Ogulagha Kingdom before the commencement of oil exploitation was to provide for the well-being of his extended family. In order to provide for his family, he would set sail at 5 to 6 a.m in a canoe on the river, having properly studied and ascertained that the tide river is very low. By 2.00 p.m, returns to shore with fishes for his extended family household to eat and sell.

The role of wives in an average extended family in Ogulagha Kingdom before oil exploitation activities started was to sell the husband's daily harvest of fish. The eldest wife was the leader of the fish selection and selling team, while the children were responsible for the washing and cleaning of the fishing nets in preparation for the father's next fishing expedition. Male child were given the privilege of assisting their father in fishing when they turned 16 years while the female, from the age of 15 years,

were restricted to assisting their mothers in selling fish in the market square. After sorting the fish caught by their husband, the first wife separates those for consumption from those meant for sale, and then apportioned them to the younger wives, who were an average of two to three, depending on the desire and wealth of the family head in catering to their needs. These younger wives were expected to give financial returns to the eldest wife who would give total account of daily fish sales to their husband. This family subsistent fishing craft, stabilised the Kingdom then because women, children and adults were all taken care of with the proceeds from fishing business in addition to subsistence farming that families regularly practised.

More importantly, immediately poverty set into the Kingdom, families lost their financial grip and they found it very difficult to cater for their households, consequently, women took to gathering periwinkles, snails and crayfish to assist their husband. This development gave the necessary opportunity for women to take the bull by the horn and push for financial freedom by engaging in some fishing if they wished, around the shallow rivers in the community. Hence, despite tremendous attempt by women to support their various families, still, the weight of poverty has not been subdued. Today, family poverty has been pushed forward to the children because many young ladies now engages in prostitution to get regular income from oil workers, while male children have now become social deviants in the Kingdom.

Infringements on family's ways of life, especially their economic well-being, commenced during the European incursion into the region in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The pre-oil economy of Ogulagha people generally was subsistence and non-monetised, with land as the major factor of production. Their economy was mainly based on salt production, gin distillation, hand-building of canoe, tapping of palm tree for oil, kernel and raffia palm for tombo production, fishing and subsistence farming (UNDP 2006), (Abi 1999:183, Omowe 2005:3). It is noteworthy that archaeological excavations have shown that clearing of forests for farming in the Delta region could be traced back to 2,800 years (Abi 1999:184).

Exploitation of natural resources for livelihood was guided by the principle of sustainability. This was practised in all cases whether it was communal land, streams or other natural resources. Omowe (2005:4) further asserts that exploitation of these natural resources was pivoted on native intelligence of natural resource management,

which helped to sustain regeneration of these resources in abundance. Hence, the family continued to be the main source of production and a centre of labour.

**Table 4.1: Demographic breakdown of traditional family occupations in Ogunlaha Kingdom**

<b>What was your traditional family occupation?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Farming	41	17.8
Fishing	146	63.5
Business	31	13.5
Others specify	12	5.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of 230, a total of 41 (17.8%) of family members claimed that farming was their original occupation, 146 (63.5%) indicated fishing, 31 (13.5%) stated that it was business and 12 (5.2%) denoted other types of livelihood as their means of sustenance. From the table above, fishing was rated highest as the major occupation of families today and next to it was farming. Notably, farming and fishing which used to be major employers of family's mature adults have been destroyed today by the severe impact of oil exploitations in Ogulagha Kingdom.

Allison-Oguru *et al* (1999:283) asserts that, aside from farming and fishing, the Ogulagha families engaged in secondary source of livelihood to remain employed throughout the year. These income-generating supplementary ventures were hunting, collection of *Ogbono* seeds, firewood, trapping snails while non-farming subsidiary occupations were bicycle repairing, goldsmithery and so on. To the authors, as a consequence of contact with the forces of the British rule in the 1900s, the pre-capitalist political, economic and socio-cultural structure of the people were demystified and replaced with structures that only catered for the interest of the colonial masters, which set the stage for barbaric exploitation of their natural resources, especially palm-oil.

The subsequent cruel manipulation of natural resources deepened horribly and became unbearable for families in 1956 and has remained so when oil exploitation activities started in the region and obstructed individual families' local industry. This was not only a reproach and a major weapon of pauperising the people, but also signified the genesis of families' violent confrontation against the exploitative activities of the colonial powers personified by Shell and Agip in Ogulagha Kingdom.





**Plate 4.1: Burutu Local Government Secretariat. This is the L.G.A where  
Ogulagha Kingdom is situated**

Sources: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 4.2: An Area View of Ogulagha Kingdom taken by the researcher on the Speed boat as he sailed to the Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

The Western Ijaw miscellaneous report indicates that *tombo* has been a major source of livelihood of Ogulagha natives from time immemorial. E.W. Cocks, the Secretary of Southern Province writes: ... “so much income is being generated by the natives on *tombo* which the district can annexe for the province”. He states further:

The method of ‘tombo’ tapping in this district from palm tree for about three months often yields about 350 gallons. An average of three men per village engaged in this work and 70 villages in the district, this gives a result of about 588,000 gallons per annum. Assessing the price at 3d per gallon would give a total value of £7350. In order to realize 10 percent on this figure, it would be necessary to place a licensing fee amounting to £10:10 pounds per village throughout the district. So, to collect this £735 which is 10 percent of £7350 would definitely arouse intense resentment among the natives (**Ijaw (W) 1, miscellaneous-C2: 131,141,142**).

Aside from the fortune families made from *tombo* tapping, using “*apale- a special sharp knife designed for this purpose and the Ongu - clay pot container*”, their economy also thrived perpetually on trade by barter. They were also engaged in subsistence farming (**CSO, 26 27342**). Around 1930s, they predominantly engaged in trade by barter by offering their own locally-produced commodities for needed commodities from traders who sailed to the Ijaw region from Lagos, Ijebu, Sobos and so on, in canoes on market days (**CSO 26, 27342:62**). The Western Ijaw Division Annual Report 1945 also acknowledges that the Ijaws are for most part of their lives fishermen and rely on supplies of foodstuffs by barter from the Kwale and Urhobo areas (**WP.377 VOLII: 4**).

In the traditional Western Ogulagha Ijaw region, trade by barter existed to a large extent among the people and their commodity currencies for barter were fish, crayfish, fish basket, fishing net, native fishing mats and native salt. These local commodities were in demand by other ethnic groups across the South-South and South-western part of Nigeria, such as the Itsekiris, Sobos, and Yoruba who mainly exchanged their own locally-produced products like starch, yam, cocoyam, plantain, cassava, *gari*, palm oil

and few foreign products. *The Ogulagha people were always at an advantage because the barter principles favoured them. They got more goods for their own few products (CSO 26-27342:63)*. Ibiomo *et al.* (1999:278) corroborate that trade was initially carried out by barter in the Niger Delta Region many years before cowry shell was introduced and later advanced to the use of manila and then currency.

The trade routes where barter took place were the Chanomi creeks, the Escravos River and Warri River. These routes contributed immensely to the success of barter business. The Gbaramatu Intelligence report explains:

The main trade routes around Ijaw axis were the Escravos, Sapele and Warri Rivers. The Escravos River became the major base location for exchange of goods for the Ijaw and other interested business minded individuals from Lagos, Ijebu, and Ondo without recourse to any conflict what so ever. And all trade with the township of Forcados and Burutu (where Ogulagha falls) was carried out by the Chanomi creeks (CSO 26- 27342:64).

Prior to colonisation, Ogulagha families were remarkably thriving in various economic activities:

The following are the chief local industries: canoe making industries, fishing, net making, palm oil and Palm wine. The Ijaw in this division are almost exclusively fishermen and this industry together with the associated crafts of canoe making and net making are undoubtedly the principal industries. Canoe making, fishing and net making are the most profitable industry and no necessity for further development as far as improvement is concerned (**Ijaw (W) W.I. 14. Vol II**).

*The Warri Province Annual Report of 1944 denotes that Ogulagha families' sources of livelihood were not limited to fishing. They included oil palm products, plantation of rubber, rice, cocoa, and fruit trees were planted and harvested all over the province (War Prof I- W.P. 235:4)*. In actual fact, interest in large scale farming by Ijaw

families became significantly recorded in the early 1940s. *The 1952 Western Ijaw Annual Report of Burutu further confirms abundance of cocoa trees reportedly found at the back of houses in some Ijaw villages. Oranges, grape fruit, mangoes, pawpaw and lime were also cultivated at the back of their houses as sources of revenue (Ijaw (W) 4, W.I. 335/2:23).* The report further claims:

In the upper Ijaw areas where farming is more practicable, rice was planted around the region, cassava and peppers were also planted in a reasonable amount by men and women for their uses on the banks of the river and creeks immediately the flood recedes every year and they sell them in the local market called Ogbe Ijaw market at Warri. **(Ijaw (W) 4, W.I. 335/2:24).**

As highlighted above, Ogulagha families moved from subsistence farming to commercial farming in various clans. Farming became another veritable option for most men and few women blended their major means of livelihood of fishing in shallow rivers with farming. These overthrew trade by barter, leaving families across the Ijaw Western region of Ogulagha kingdom to either engage in farming or fishing, or combine both. This development resulted in abundance of food for families; it also yielded a good source of income in the region **(Ijaw (W) 4, W.I. 335/2:33, 43)**. In fact, the success of farmers across Western Ijaw region in that era was so remarkable that the agriculture officer-in-charge of Benin/Delta province also gave out small number of rice plots in 1952 and 1953 for farming to boost the varieties of farm produces to interested farmers in order for them to achieve greater harvest in the Western Ijaw division **(Ijaw (W) 4, W.I. 335/2:33, 43)**. The quantitative table below captures this fact in Ogulagha Kingdom when the researcher inquired through questionnaires about the inhabitant's traditional family occupation in prior times.

#### **4.2 Research Question Two: What are the economic challenges caused by oil Exploitation Activities to Families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Across the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta region, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State, pollution from oil spillage has become worrisome for families that inhabit these communities. Research findings from NOSDRA during field

study revealed that oil spillage as a result of technical errors from Shell flow station resulted into about 584,000 barrels of crude oil being spilled into Youbebe community, while the continuous leakages from Agip oil company's manifold areas also caused a total of 532,000 barrels of oil in 2011 (KII with the director of NOSREA during fieldwork, 2017). In 2017, visual observation and indepth interview from resident families confirm that additional 823,000 barrels of crude oil was spilled by Shell into Youbebe community with a disturbing smell from dark harsh soil as evidence around the oil well vicinity (Indepth Interview with incumbent Chairman of Burutu L.G.A in 2017). The spillage was cause by crude oil which spilled from the company's oil well located inside the community.

Agip Oil Company further impacted the soil, creeks and the surface water of their host community with about 754,000 barrels of crude oil in 2015. This was directly spilled into Obuguru environments, destroying family's sources of livelihoods such as their farmlands for planting and sea for fishing. This absolutely caused abject poverty for families and many of them were helpless in providing for their children. The director of NOSDRA Warri division in 2017 added that *...even though oil sheen is an evidence of oil in any oil production site, it must be seen in very minimal quantity* (KII with the staff of NOSREA during fieldwork, 2017). Observations in the study areas showed that the devastating aftermath of oil spillage in Youbebe and Obuguru communities was very obvious because widespread sea animals like cat-fish, tilapia, shelfish crabs, tortoise, giant snails, and crayfish were seriously affected. These are local economic products and means of livelihood for Ijaw families.

According to Benedict (2011:201), spillage is common in the Niger Delta region and this is considered among the worst case of oil spillage and, by extension, the worst oil-polluted region in the world. He added that between 1976 and 1996, a total of 4,835 spillages were recorded in the Niger Delta at an average of 440 per annum. A total of 6,817 oil spillages occurred between 1976 and 2001, translating into 3,000,000 barrels of oil, over 70 per cent of which was not recovered (UNDP 2006).

Ikporukpo (2000) observes that 98 per cent of oil spillage cases occurred in the Delta region, especially in Delta State, instigated by prevalent transportation of crude oil as a result of oil wells scattered across the region. He traces the historical emergence of spillage to the Delta region, claiming that the three largest oil spill cases that ever

occurred were in 1979 in Forcados terminal, Burutu LGA of Delta State (location of Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, the areas covered by this study), where about 890,000 barrels of crude oil were spilled. The foregoing, coupled with research findings, exposed the beginning of devastating impact of oil spillage in the oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom of Delta State.

A key informant acknowledged the strategic position Ogulagha Kingdom occupies in the scheme of wealth generation for Nigeria:

There are 54 clusters of oil wells in this Kingdom and each cluster made up of 4 oil wells so multiply 4 by 54, which are 216 oil wells in this community. And you still have flow stations everywhere here; you have the Obra field flow station there, some are in Youbebe, while you have many in Obuguru. Oil wells are infact almost everywhere (**KII with a staff of NNPC in the DPR Unit, 2017**).

The revelation surely confirms the researcher's observation of high numbers of oil facilities in the study areas. Oil exploitation activities have become an avoidable problem that came with an attempt to develop and industrialized Ogulagha Kingdom. How families in the Kingdom have been surviving is better imagined.



**Plate 4.3: Shell's sludge dump site in Obuguru community: A source of ground and Surface Water Pollution.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017





**Plate 4.4: Shell signpost warning natives not to trespass on high pressure oil Pipelines in Youbebe community, Ogulagha Kingdom**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 4.5: Shell's corroded pipes meant for pumping crude from offshore into Yubebe community.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The pictures above indicated that oil flow stations are found everywhere in the study areas, namely on the farms, streams and creeks with grave consequences from spillage and pollution. As a result of unimaginable environmental devastation caused by Shell and Agip oil companies, the only oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom, the traditional ruler affirmed below:

I told you Shell came here in 1968 and it was in 1991-92 that Shell started some remedial work on the oil that was discharged into the whole of Ogulagha, which included Youbebe community, their station. It was filled up with sand by Shell and they planted grasses. Prior to that time, oil was being discharged through the small creeks here to the river. You can now imagine the level of oil pollution that such effluent would have caused from 1968 to 1991 (**IDI with the traditional ruler of Ogulagha Kingdom in Ogulagha main town, 2017**).

In another Indepth interview which corroborated the foregoing, an elder in Youbebe community, Ogulagha Kingdom precisely recounted the genesis of what could be called environmental injustice inflicted by Shell on host families in their Kingdom: “... before now, effluents from oil wells were being discharged into this Kingdom for about 20 years before some remediation work was done” (**IDI with a high chief in Youbebe, Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017**).

In upholding the foregoing, Benedict (2011:201) states: “... the anxiety and expectations surrounding the discovery of oil have dwindled in the oil producing communities because the general survival of families has been negatively affected by the discovery of oil till date”. Aghalino and Eyinla (2009:177) confirm that one of the negative externalities from oil exploitation activities is huge effects of oil pollution caused by continuous spillage. Benedict (2011:201) goes further that the most pervasive and predominant cause of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is oil spillage arising from oil exploitation.

In a different dimension, the submission of a staff in the Federal Ministry of Environment was that:

Spillages occur times without number in Ogulagha Kingdom because oil pipe lines have become so weak. Some of them have been in existence for over 40 years and there is no replacement with new pipelines which has been causing a lot of spillages that is affecting the people's farmlands, and even when they farm, they have nothing to show for it (**KII with staff of the Federal Ministry of Environment in Delta State during Fieldwork in 2017**).

Obviously, this is an indictment on Shell's operations in Youbebe because even Federal Ministry of Environment also perceived Shell as the enemy of the people's survival. Human Rights Watch (1999:61) supports this position that pipelines and numerous small networks of flow lines that carry oil from well heads to flow stations across the Delta region are the cause of many oil-pipe leaks everywhere. The report further affirms that many of these pipelines and flow lines are old and suffer from corrosion, having exceeded the standard 15-year lifespan. According to Agbakwuru (2011:1055), "the Delta region plays host to 600 oil fields of which 360 fields are onshore while 240 are offshore with over 3,000 kilometres of pipelines traversing the region linking some 275 flow stations to various export terminals".

Based on the forgoing, field observations regarding the corroded conditions as well as the number of Shell and Agip pipelines onshore and offshore in Youbebe and in Obuguru support Human Rights Watch and Agbakwuru's claims because the numerous pipelines crisscrossing these communities in Ogulagha Kingdom are observed to be so rusty and all eyes can see the spillage around the pipelines areas which dovetail into the high sea. In fact it would not be out of place to say that those rusty pipelines cannot be less than 45 years old, because respondents claimed that since Shell got to Youbebe in 1968, the pipelines have not been changed. This also means that no integrity test has been done on those pipelines till date by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR).

Visual observation carried out around the Shell and Agip manifold areas revealed that leaked crude oil had covered the two oil companies' manifold areas. These leakages were caused by rusted operational pipes leaking into the creeks, adjoining rivers and streams with polluted oily smell. In the two communities investigated, crude oil

contamination was present in their surface drinking water. There was also significant crude oil contamination of the soil in the two communities which showed that crude oil had penetrated deeply into the ground water causing serious contamination to the two communities' well water. Field observation also exposed a large span of contaminated blackish soil, close to the manifold areas in the two communities which respondents claimed was caused by incessant crude oil contamination over the years.

The field observations in the study areas clearly indicated ongoing entry of crude oil into the creeks, farmland and streams from many sources. It is disturbing to know that on a daily basis, families are exposed to petroleum hydrocarbons, sometimes at very high degree through unavoidable contacts from farmlands, when outdoor, on their drinking and bathing water (UNDP 2006). No doubt, family health has been adversely affected by exposure to hydrocarbons through multiple routes (UNDP 2011:183). WHO (2008) Guidelines for safe recreational water environment, object to the presence of hydrocarbons on water bodies on three grounds, visual impact on sight, smell and possibility of dermal absorption during contact through recreational activity such as bathing.

During an FGD session in Youbebe, one of the youth executives in the community decried Shell's exploitative activities:

If you want to describe the Shell oil company, it is between a lion and a dog, we do not have enough teeth to attack them, and so they have always attacked us'. Shell has colonized us in this place. Except what happened in the bible, when God miraculously changed the wicked Saul to Paul happens here, that is the only way they can favour us. Their intention is to suppress us. "Shell can be described as wicked oil company because when they ask you to climb a ladder, when you now get up, they will remove the ladder from you so that you will not have the opportunity of coming down **(FGD session in Youbebe, Ogulagha Kingdom with youth groups who were fishermen during fieldwork in 2017).**

Akpomuvie (2008) agrees with the submission that the deposit of crude oil in the Niger Delta region has become a source of sorrow for the oil-bearing communities because it has opened them up to devastating environmental pollution and degradation. Infact, oil spillage has become a recurrent problem, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom. Family groups complain about it:

Spillage is seriously affecting us here in this community. If you go around the primary school there, you will see the small canal that was dredged at the back of Agip flow station, so once there is any carry over from the oil company it will pour directly into the community and once it occurs, we cannot use firewood to cook because of the gas that would be in the air. It is a serious problem for us **(FGD session in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom with family groups who were farmers and fishermen during fieldwork in 2017)**.

Findings in Youbebe and Obuguru communities revealed an uncharitable trend by Shell and Agip as a result of oil spillage, making their host communities develop serious acrimony towards them. Okonta and Douglas (2001:89) claim that the actual figure of oil spills in the Delta region every year is about ten times the official estimate owing to the fact that Nigeria's crude oil is very light and evaporates quickly, making it difficult to track the volume spilt. A staff of NOSDRA affirmed this:

Oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom often delayed in reporting of oil spillage cases owing to deliberate attempt to evade fines because most spillage incidents were caused by equipment failure. This delay often results into huge disaster for the Ogulagha families because the spilled oil percolates deeply into the soil, water body and the entire environment before official report **(KII with a NOSDRA staff in Warri during fieldwork in 2017)**.

It is alarming to find out from resident families that after many years of avoidable spillage across Ogulagha Kingdom, the situation has not yet been rectified in most

communities. Apart from the unimaginable damage oil spillage and environmental degradation had caused families across Ogunlaga Kingdom, it has also made it very difficult for the future leaders of this Kingdom to access quality education. This fact is corroborated with the table below.

**Table 4.2: Demographic breakdown showing the educational background of respondents in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Highest level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	38	16.5
Primary school	50	21.7
Secondary school	103	44.8
Tertiary	37	16.1
Others	2	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>



Out of 230 respondents, 38 (16.5%) did not attend school at all, 50 (21.7%) of the respondents attended Primary school, 103 (44.8%) had Secondary school education, 37 (16.1%) had tertiary education, while respondents with other educational background in the Kingdom were just 2 (0.9%). The table is a clear reflection of the fact that majority of families and their wards who resides in Ogulagha Kingdom were seriously encumbered by oil spillage and environmental degradation which has now resulted into poverty. Incapability of most families with financial strenght to pay for their children school fees and proper feeding even from Kindagaten level has tactically excluded some children from receiving formal education.

The above table is a clear reflection of the fact that many youths in the Kingdom only had primary and secondary school certificates to work. The low educational background has made it very difficult for them to be gainfully employed as staff of multinational oil companies who are exploiting oil from their land. Sadly, the challenges of oil exploitation activities have rendered parents economically incapacitated to the point that sponsoring their children to school has become a dreadful experience for them.

The foregoing further proves that oil exploitation activities, having mortgaged the future of the older generations in Ogulagha Kingdom, are also capable of destroying the future of their children. Observations and qualitative interviews generated further confirmed that poverty level among families has been aggravated by high cost of living because of the inflow of non-indigenes employed by the multinational oil companies. This is a condition Human Rights Watch (1999) regards as labour aristocracy of high wages surrounded by a mass of unemployed or underemployed locals in an extremely-impooverished environment.

In-depth interview with the only pastor in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom revealed other economic challenges confronting families. According to him, *oil exploitation activities have caused poverty in Obuguru community today. Poverty has made parents to take a child away from kindergarten 1, 2 or 3 to the state government primary school which is free, just because the parents cannot pay school fee which is 900 naira per term (IDI in Obuguru during field work with a community leader and a pastor in 2017)*. The table above attests to this reality regarding the educational backwardness of respondents in Ogulagha Kingdom

The pastor further added that even though there are flow stations everywhere, people still do not have jobs. He further spoke on the ordeal of families in the community:

As a pastor, families normally come to me for prayers regarding jobs because people are facing hardship. I also pray for people against all sorts of diseases here like cough, rashes and so on as a result of oil exploitation activities. We only get rain water to drink and after the raining season, people go to Shell yard to get water. I used to bath with the available dirty water before and my body started bringing out some diseases as if fire burnt my body but after some time, my body got used to the bad water! **(IDI in Obuguru during field work with a community leader and a pastor in 2017).**

The pastor's lamentation above justifies Karl Marx's assertion that religion is the opium of the people. In fact, he declared that religion is an illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression alongside justifying the subordination of the oppressed and the domination of the ruling class. It is a misrepresentation of reality which provides many of the deceptions that form the basis of ruling-class philosophy and false class consciousness. Marx expatiated:

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It acts as an expression of real suffering and a protest against suffering, but it does little to solve the problem because it helps to make life more bearable and therefore dilutes demands for change. As such, religion merely stupefies its adherents rather than bringing them true happiness and fulfilment (Marx, cited in Bottomore and Rubel 1963).

The community leader/pastor's position could be linked to the fact that exploitation and alienation had been in existence for many years back in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom and invariably resulted in poverty for families because of the impact of endless oil exploitation activities. Families now find life so unbearable that

they desperately seek solace from their pastor by having faith that their condition would change for the better in the future. This also explains why the Federal Government that should be responsible for the protection of lives and properties of Ogulagha families has been indifferent.

**Table 4.3: Demographic breakdown of oil exploitation and challenges of Underdevelopment in Ogulagha Kingdom.**

<b>Has oil exploitation brought rapid development?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	119	51.7
No	111	48.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

119 (51.7%) of family members out of 230 said the commencement of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom has brought rapid development, 111 (48.3%) claimed that the activities have resulted into underdevelopment for them. Although the percentage of families that claimed that oil has brought development and families that disagreed with such statement was very narrow, still, it is important to clarify that the commencement of oil exploitation activities came with some form of development to families in the study area because after years of agitations, oil companies in conjunction with the government, provided Ogulagha families with the only cottage hospital it has, construction of the only secondary school and primary schools, provision of electricity (though erratic) through gas turbine including the provision of dirty pipe-borne water. But these social amenities are still a far cry from what is expected by families.

Hence, some families, having lost their means of livelihood and faced with the challenges of living in an overwhelmingly- degraded environment, claimed that oil has never brought development to them because what has been provided by oil companies is very inadequate compared with the amenities desired by families. Field observation and interviews revealed further that oil exploitation has destroyed families' means of sustenance and no major elements of qualitative development can be found. Against this background, oil-led development by the Federal Government is antithetical to its original role of being the protector of the people's well-being (Angelides 2012:10).

Findings further showed that spillage are caused mainly by human errors, including corroded pipelines that criss-crossed the oil-producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru, in Ogulagha Kingdom of Delta State, inability of the Directorate of Petroleum Resources (DPR) in enforcing government disciplinary rules which it formulated for the government to the later against erring oil companies has been worrisome. The DPR's formulated Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN), stated in section 4.6.2a, b and c, under Enforcement Powers and Sanctions. that: (a) All avoidable cases of spillage shall attract a royalty of not less than ₦500, 000, to be deducted at source and additional fine of ₦100,000 for every day the offence subsists; (b) The spiller (operator or owner of vessel) shall pay adequate compensation to those affected, and (c) The spiller shall remediate the polluted environment to an acceptable level as shall be directed by the Director of Petroleum Resources (EGASPIN 1999:390).

Findings further revealed that fines stipulated by Directorate of Petroleum Resources are inadequate considering the enormity of the offense committed by Shell and Agip oil companies. Oil spillages in Ogulagha Kingdom, for instance, not only impact severely on the economic activities of families, it also severely affects children of school age in age 1-10 years. These are sensitive formative years of kindergarten to primary school and the spillage sacks them from the only primary school available, invariably compelling the pupils to embark on compulsory holiday during each spillage episode until cleared. Atrocities like these should attract more than the meagre fine of ₦500,000 from oil multinationals. This and other acts of equipment failure should attract severe punishments of erring oil companies like Shell and Agip operating in Ogulagha Kingdom by DPR of NNPC, and if these oil companies refused to comply with the rules guiding its operations, they should be made to face legal proceedings in the court of law to address all acts of ill treatments by oil companies across the Niger Delta.

Even more worrisome is part “C” of the sanction which stipulates that “the spiller shall restore/remediate the polluted environment to an acceptable level as shall be directed by the Director of Petroleum Resources”. Thus, as beautiful as this clause reads, to date in the study areas visited, the incidence of oil spillage has never been remediated to its original state, indicating ineffectiveness on the part of Department Petroleum Resources officials not willing to adequately impose sanctions.

In fact, a staff of NOSDRA claimed that it will take at least 50 years before adequate remediation will be achieved in Ogulagha Kingdom based on the pre-spill and post-spill impact assessments carried out six months after the occurrence of oil spillage in the Kingdom by soil scientists, air quality analysts, hydrologists, zoologists and geographers. This fact clearly shows that Shell and Agip still need to embark on comprehensive clean-up of the Kingdom with adequate compensation for family groups residing in that locality, then imposition of appropriate sanction on erring oil companies. Findings further confirmed the total absence of surface fauna required for the proper growth of farm produce in Ogulagha Kingdom, leading to very poor farm yield in the Kingdom.

Twamasi and Merem (2006:99) asserted that petroleum exploration has obviously triggered adverse environmental impact in the Niger Delta (especially in Delta State)

through incessant environmental, socio-economic and physical disasters that accumulated over the years due to inadequate scrutiny and sanctions by appropriate government regulatory agencies, such as Directorate of Petroleum Resources (DPR), which has turned the region into an ecosystem under severe stress. In contemporary times, all aspects of the economic life of families residing in the oil-producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru of Ogulagha Kingdom have totally been diminished, resulting in protests and wanton violence, especially by youths representing their individual families. When the researcher made enquiries specifically from the executives of Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom over their efforts in getting Shell to furnish their community with basic and necessary social amenities, especially electricity, they retorted “*Shell has been operating in this community for decades without doing anything for us. The tap water Shell gave to us is not good for drinking because it is not treated. Even before they gave light to this community, it was serious protest we did. We wrote to them many times, we also demonstrated peacefully*” (FGD session in Youbebe with family groups during field trip in 2017). The researcher enquired further on how many times the entire community engaged Shell in peaceful protest before Shell connected them to electricity and the only road that linked their community to other villages. They responded that: *...Shell has been here for 20 years before they provided electricity, and that is the only thing we have gotten from Shell. We also protested before they constructed this access road. Even though Shell Oil Company is directly and mostly benefiting from the road now* (FGD session in Youbebe with family groups during field trip in 2017).

Still in terms of corporate social irresponsibility by Shell in their host communities, Chico Okafor reported the experience of the neighbouring communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State:

For the first time we got electricity having been without electricity despite hosting several oil wells. The electricity came from a gas turbine, driven by 930 KVA generator built by Anglo-Dutch oil giants, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), operators of the NNPC/TEPN/Agip Joint Venture. But the communities said the journey to being electrified was not easy because it took between a peaceful

demand and agitation for them to get the attention of the oil operators (Guardian of Tuesday, Oct 9. 2012).

Similar allegations are levelled by virtually all the oil-producing communities hosting Shell and Agip in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom (location of Youbebe and Obuguru communities, the study areas) which house majority of Nigeria's oil wells and gas turbines, making this domain one of the largest oil-producing communities in Nigeria. The attitude of the oil multinationals (especially Shell and Agip) in failing to provide necessary social amenities has totally relegated the economic well-being of families in all the oil-bearing communities of Niger Delta region to the background. In fact, community development has never been the main concern of multinational oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom.

In Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom, Shell's deliberate act of underdevelopment and subjecting families to endless woes is tantamount to corporate irresponsibility despite Shell's \$24 billion profit which came from upstream activities in 2011 (Shell 2011:16-20). In a related development, this persistent act of blatant indifference by Agip in the provision of social amenities has pushed families in Obuguru communities into serious avoidable protests against the oil company. They related their experience:

Two weeks ago, some journalists, Joint Tax Force (JTF) members and even our lawyer came here to see what we are going through before the whole community protested to Agip oil company's gate and it was covered by the media. We had protested to their gate before in 2008 and 2010. As at when the protest was going on; some corrupt chiefs in Ogulagha were having meeting in Port Harcourt with Agip to collect more settlements **(FGD session in Obuguru with family groups who were fishermen and farmers during field trip in 2017)**.

These family groups have established that they cannot be cheated with impunity forever. The unending and unconcerned attitude of oil multinationals towards the welfare of their host families resulted in untamed protests and agitation against Agip in



Obuguru, even to the point that some aggrieved members of Joint Tax Force (JTF) who were responsible for maintaining law and order in the community joined in the protest. Families in the oil-bearing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru of Ogulagha Kingdom has been rewarded with what Isumonah (2001) regarded as remedial tokenism. This was a financial token meant to compensate families for years of oil exploitation by Shell and AGIP since 1968, in spite of the fact that multinational oil companies profit after tax is yearly soaring higher without commensurate compensation to families for their degraded environments.

Shell declared \$16 billion as profit in 2017, the company declared \$21.4 billion as profit in 2021, this profit became doubled to \$42.3 billion in 2022. Infact, the companies profit in 2022 climed to the highest point in 115 years. Interestingly, the bulk of this profit came from Niger Delta, especially in Delta State (The Guardian Newspaper, 6, February, 2022, retrived 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)). Karl Marx's Political Economy of capitalism (published in Berlin in 1867) has fully manifested practically into the business environments in Nigeria even though she claimed to be practising mixed economy. Capitalism emphasises strict protection of business owners at all times, including allowing private companies to make astonishing profits at the espense of oil producing communities, especially families daily. Today, capitalist technocrats who own Shell and Agip will continue to make huge profits at the expense of the natives owing to Nigerian government's laissezfare economic policy devoid of properly regulation of her business environments.

The present poverty predicament of families across the oil producing communities in Delta State has also be linked to high level of corruption and misappropriation of financial budject meant for the development of the communities and her inhabitants. In 2009, Delta State government budgeted ₦30 billion for DESOPADEC, in 2010, ₦35 billion was budgeted for development interventions, while ₦28 billion was budgeted in 2016 for the oil producing communities of Itsekiris, Ijaw, Urhobos, Ndokwa, Isoko and Ogbara without corresponding development in the foregoing communities which constituted DESOPADEC (Akelemo, Edith, Otto and Ohale 2018). Therefore, Corruption and embezzlement by DESOPADEC directors, staff and political leaders in Delta State continue to hinder the necessary development oil producing communities and the inhabitants are yearning for.

Consequently, this has resulted into continuous feelings of alienation which culminated into incessant confrontation and violent conflict against the oil companies because of bitter sentiments by inhabitant, youths and families who believed that oil companies and the governments should provide all their basic needs. Staff of NDDC in Ogulagha main town shared his experience on the high rate of discrimination and inequalities that permeated oil producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru in Ogulagha Kingdom, which could also be linked to the incessant protest and confrontation going on at the moment. The difference between the Shell vicinity and the oil producing communities were so wide. *“Where the Shell workers are residing reflects a society that is worth living; good houses, water, electricity and everything is working compared to the society where Shell is taking oil from” (KII in Ogulagha Kingdom with staff of NDDC during fieldwork in 2017).*

Angelides (2012:17) and Onu (2003: 325) confirmed that though the oil-producing communities contribute about 65 per cent of Nigeria’s total oil production, residents/families are the least developed in the Niger Delta region despite living in most difficult terrain. Just as Shell was accused of military repression during any anti-Shell protest in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom, Obuguru family groups also claimed that Agip, in conjunction with Nigerian Army, invested heavily in the security of its oil facilities in their community. To them, any acts of protest from families or community members against the oil companies shall be crushed by Nigeria Army as instructed by Agip.



**Plate 4.6: NAOC Offshore Oil facility situated inside the sea in Ogulagha Kingdom meant for pumping crude from offshore into Obuguru community**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

During an FGD session in Obuguru community, the largest associations of men and women's groups claimed that *“Agip’s continuous coercive suppression pushed the whole community to engage the overzealous security agents of Agip (Joint Task Force) in counter-attack to express rejection of maltreatment in September 2017” (FGD session with the largest associations of men and women’s groups who were fishermen and market women of Obuguru community in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).*

Observations also confirmed the absence of peace in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom as well owing to continuous poverty and frustration expressed by family groups who continue to demand for more financial funding towards the provision of social amenities from the government and Agip. NDDC which is a government development agency has not justified the huge financial budget it got from the government. The commission received a total budget of ₦ 485.7 billion in 2021, ₦928.2 total budget was approved in 2022 while the total budget of 876 billion was approved in 2023 (Premium Times, 5th May 2023. Retrieved 19th of May, 2023. [www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news)).

Hence, despite these robust financial budgets of NDDC enumerated above, the lives of individual families has only been touched through a tokenistic gesture not meant for lasting developmental progress or intended to improve the lives of families. Obuguru community has only experienced minor developmental interventions either from NDDC, DESOPADEC and Agip till date which was too little too late. Today, the host community lack adequate medical hospital, secondary school, drinkable pipe-borne water, motorable roads and good supply of electricity among other things. All these and other acts of social injustice spark violent confrontations from time to time.

#### **4.2.1 Suffocating Menace of Gas Flaring in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Anywhere in the world where petroleum exploitation and development is taking place, gaseous, liquid and solid harmful wastes come with a huge impact on the environment (Obiajunwa et al 2001:61). Gas flaring is the preferred means of disposing waste gas associated with oil exploitation by the many multinational oil giants that operate across the Delta region at the expense of the huge economic benefits that come with harnessing this energy resource.

Dung et al (2008:297) established that Nigeria was ranked 7th in the list of ten countries responsible for 75 percent of gas flaring emissions in the world. The estimated economic benefits that are lost through flaring of gas in the Delta region \$680 million annually; while the environmental costs are yet to be adequately quantified (The Guardian Newspaper, 11th of December, 2022. Retrived 19th May 2023. www.guardian.ng). Between 1970 and 1986, a total of about 125.5 cubic meters of gas was produced in the Delta region, about 102.3 (81.7%) million cubic meters were flared while only 2.6 million cubic meters were used as fuel by oil producing companies and about 14.6 million cubic meters were sold to consumers (Awosika 1995).

In Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, the effects of gas flaring can be seen everywhere. Infact, the unbearable radiation by heat that is being generated by flaring funnels positioned across these communities left a lot to be desire by individual families residing there, posing lethal danger in form of non-degradable and persistent danger on their health, animals, crops, streams and their entire sea produce. Benedict (2011:202) emphasized that ‘chemical compositions of flared gas comprise of degradative elements such as hydrocarbons, Sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxide, carbon oxide, ozone particulate, photochemical ash and hydrogen sulphicide; these chemicals threaten the survival of both human and wildlife. Gas flaring has continued in Youbebe (by Shell) and Obuguru (by Agip) till date unceasing because these oil companies find it cheaper to produce oil in Nigeria by flaring the gasin order to reduce cost of production, coupled with the federal government’s inability to nip this menace on the bud.

Qualitative interview session through FGD regarding the risk of gas flaring depicts that individual families residing in my areas of study are definitely finding the threats of gas flaring extremely disturbing with little or no will power educationally to change this trend by pressing for charges against the federal government and oil multinationals (Shell and Agip) exploiting oil in their communities. The largest men, women, boys and girls groups claimed that ...*‘We are almost being suffocated by gas in this community everyday!’ (FGD session in Youbebe and Obuguru communities with the largest men, women, boys and girls groups during fieldwork in 2017)*. Disturbing lamentations like this is so constant in the mouth of individual families, especially in Obuguru community. They claimed that aside from gas flaring that the Agip flaring

funnel produces with painful socio-economic and health repercussions, it also discharges crude oil often due to equipment failure.

Onu (2003:325) diagnostically found out in his study that gas flaring and refinery effluents occurred regularly and these have subjected families to life threatening situations, causing damage to their aquatic and ecological lives. Infact, Watts (2003:5095) claimed that gas flaring which burns throughout a day at temperatures of 13-14,000 degrees Celcius releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming and flooding in the Delta region. Thus, positioning the region as the world highest provider of greenhouse gas, which surpasses all household gas usage of United Kingdom combined (Owugah 1999 as cited in Onu 2003:326).



**Plate 4.7: AGIP gas flaring furnace polluting the atmosphere with extreme heat in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

As at 2002, approximately ₦450 million worth of associated gas was being flared away freely into the Delta region environment daily. The annual loss is valued at ₦164 billion (Benedict 2010:208). Indepth interviewee in Ogulagha main town validated this fact that:

Gas flaring has been frustrating ogulagha Kingdom since 1968 when Shell came, and if the oil companies and the federal government has done somethings based on the level of economic benefits accruing to the oil companies, this community would have been like London. You see Agip there, the oil wells serving this nation are right on the sea. See Youbebe there with Shell flaring funnel, on Obuguru there are gas flaring going on (**Indepth Interview with the L.G.A incumbent Chairman during a fieldwork in Ogulagha main town, 2017**).

This statement, combined with comprehensive field observations testify to the enormous rate of flaring sites everywhere in the study areas with overwhelming consequences on individual families. One can visualize the danger of living in an area where poisonous hydrocarbon gases are discharged into people's environment every day without partaking in the oil benefits accruing from such degraded environment, except abject poverty and diseases. Today, gas flaring has raised the oil producing communities' of Ogulagha Kingdom's temperatures inhabitable and rendered the inhabitant's useless socio-economically. When an enquiry was made on their greatest challenges in the study areas, they spoke out that:Our major problem here is not mosquito; the gas flaring going on behind us here is our major problem. *The Hydro carbon effects coming out from that gas flare is terrible. If you even look at our roofing sheets they are rusting. The roofing sheets that are supposed to last for three years, always last for six months (FGD session in Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom with the largest men (farmers) and women groups (home managers) during fieldwork in 2017*).

In a related experience, a community leader in Obuguru community during an interview session recounted his ordeals below:



The only thing that we can count is the roofing sheets we use for our houses; in other community before they would experience anything like rust, it takes 20 to 30 years but in this community because of the gas flaring it only take three years. Like Agip, they have three gas flaring sites here now causing very serious damages for us daily! **(IDI with a community leader during fieldwork in 2017).**

These communities continued to bear the brunt of severe gas flaring challenges, which climaxed into the corroding of the roofs of their houses. Across the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, it was obvious for all to see that many of their roofs were indeed corroded. I could not even see a single house roof that was spared. Many oil producing communities inhabitants in the Niger Delta believe that gas flaring causes acid rain which often corrodes the metal sheets used for the roofing of their individual houses as a result of low content of Sulphur dioxide and Nitrous oxide in the gas content (NDES 1997, Human Right Watch 1999:73).

The report further exposed that “lack of technical know-how regarding appropriate channeling of these gas flaring into proper usage by oil companies often led to most of it burning away without sufficient oxygen mixed with the gas, creating smoke that is deposited on nearby lands and buildings and or visibly damaging the vegetation near to the flare”. In order for residents to save guide the effects of this corrosion on their roofs by gas flaring, they became wiser and they keyed into the old saying that ‘necessity is the mother of all invention’, by embracing an old roofing tradition of ‘thatching’, a roofing sheet made by locally sourced materials. Although *thatching* might not look befitting for modern roofing, especially for a building at this 21<sup>st</sup> century, thus, it saves money and lasts longer than the modern corrugated roofing sheets that cannot stand the test of gas flaring. Today, light pollution caused by gas flaring, as a result of the fact that night sky has been lit up by flares became a major noticeable environmental disaster across my study areas. The flares lighted up everywhere, even during raining season, making nocturnal animals to relocate to better areas. Today, animal hunting has been very difficult for local hunters.



**Plate 4.8: Shell's gas flaring site located in Youbebe community, Ogulagha Kingdom**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Yakubu (2008) stressed that gas flaring has contributed immensely to environmental pollution in the Delta region causing acid rain and its consequent impact on the soil and vegetation. It becomes even more dangerous for local inhabitants to survive due to enormous discharge of gas toxic fumes and soot into their atmosphere. Gas flaring in the Delta region has continued till date unhindered because it is cheaper to produce oil in Nigeria with gas flaring than any other reasonable countries of the world. This was caused by lack of political will to enforce available laws and invest in necessary capital on technology for the collection, processing and exportation of gas which would have increased Nigeria's foreign earnings tremendously (Benedict 2010:204).

These available guidelines regarding oil exploration, exploitation and gas flaring activities were stipulated in the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN) as issued by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), Lagos in 1991, which was revised in 2002. In this guideline, Section 5.6.2.2 which has to do with Control of Gas Flaring /Smoke stipulated that:

Flares shall be design for and operated with no visible (smoke) except for periods not to exceed a total of 5 minutes during any 2 consecutives. While section 5.4.4 postulated that gaseous contaminants emission from the NG, LNG, LPG, and GC&P Plants, comprising of particulate matter/dust, hydrocarbons, Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen and Sulphur Oxide, Mercury, Some organics etc, shall not be emitted directly into the atmosphere **(EGASPIN 1999:130 and 141, Section 5.6.2.2)**

Even though these guidelines are well spelt out in this aforesaid section, unfortunately still as said in the sections above, DPR of NNPC which represents the federal government of Nigeria in the area of rules enforcement have not done much regarding compelling multinationals to strictly conform to these rules. In developed countries of the world, multinational oil companies also feel so unwilling to follow laid down rules and regulations but they have no choice than to comply in order for such companies not to incur the wrath of the government in the countries. Surprisingly beyond the imagination of most environmentalists, scholars and the Niger Deltans, who thought that the dastardly act of oil spillage and gas flaring as a result of oil exploitation with

impunity by multinational oil giants in Nigeria flourish because there are no guidelines for sanctions; might be in for a surprise owing to the fact that page 389 of EGASPIN guidelines on Enforcement Powers and Sanction below also clearly affirm basic rules regarding the enforcement of sanctions which has not been followed to the letter by DPR of NNPC because the agency lacks adequate tools and manpower to carry out investigations properly and some of its officials are even corrupt. For more information, these rules are clearly stated below from section 4.0 to 4.7.1:

### **Enforcement Powers and Sanctions**

For the purpose of enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Guidelines and Standards, the following conditions shall apply; (a) any authorized inspector may, without a warrant: - (i) require to be produced, examine and take copies of any permit, license, certificate or other document; require to be produced and examine any equipment, system, sample or other item used in relation to the environmental nonconformance.

Where any inspector, has reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed against the provisions of the guidelines and standards; (a) the inspector may without warrant. (i) enter and search any oil and gas facility or structure, in which he has reasons to believe that an offence against the provisions of the guidelines and standards has been committed; (ii) perform or cause to perform tests and take samples of any substance relating to the offence which is found in the oil and gas facility or structure searched pursuant to article 4.2(a(i))above; (iii) Cause to be arrested any person or persons, whom the inspector has reasons to believe has committed such offence.

Any person or body corporate who:- (a) wilfully obstructs any authorised inspector in the exercise of any of the powers conferred on him by the Petroleum Act 1969 and subsequent regulations; or (b) fails to comply with any lawful enquiries or requirements made by any authorised inspector, in accordance with the provisions of article 4.1, iii. Commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding =N=500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both such fine, imprisonment and/or revocation of licence/permit.

If a person or body corporate knowingly or recklessly makes any statement in the purported compliance with a requirement or to furnish information which is false in a material particular, the person or body corporate commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not less than =N=150,000 or imprisonment for a term not less than two (2) years or to both such fine, imprisonment and/or revocation of licence/permit.

Any person or body corporate who contravenes any provisions of the environmental guidelines and standards commits an offence and shall on conviction, where no specific penalty is prescribed therefore, be liable to a fine, imprisonment and/or revocation of licence/permit. (a) where the offence is committed by a body corporate or by a member of a partnership, firm or business, every director and/or relevant management staff, shall be liable.

**Fines and Compensation shall be paid for the following specific nonconformance/ offence on conviction.**

Any person, body corporate or operator who fails to register an existing point source(s) within the period specified in 2.1.1 shall be liable to a fine of N100,000 per day for as long as the violation persists.

Oil/Chemical/Hazardous materials spillages: - (a) All avoidable spillages, when they occur, shall attract a royalty not less than =N=500,000, to be deducted at source and additional fine of =N=100,000 for every day the offence subsists; (b) The spiller (operator or owner of vessel) shall pay adequate compensation to those affected and; (c) The spiller shall restore/remediate the polluted environment to an acceptable level as shall be directed by the Director of Petroleum Resources.

**Effluents (Liquid)**

4.6.2.3 When the effluent quality of discharges is exceeded by twenty (20) percent of the allowed daily/monthly average concentration per parameter, a fine of =N=5,000.00 for every 50m<sup>3</sup> of water discharged is imposed. In addition, upon conviction, an imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years shall apply for a first offender.

## **Persistent Violators**

*Any person, body corporate or operator of a vessel or facility, who persistently violates the provisions of these guideline and standards shall have his lease, licence and/or permit revoked (EGASPING 1999:389, section 4.0 to 4.7.1).*

Laudable as these guidelines might read, it is still not legally robust and effective till date to instill the needed disciplines in order to deter super oil majors from continuous menace of oil spillage and gas flaring in the Delta region especially in my study areas (Youbebe and Obuguru communities in Ogulagha Kingdom). For instance section 4.3 which specified that any person or corporate body who fails to comply with any lawful requirements made by any authorized inspector commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding N500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both such fine, imprisonment and/or revocation of licence/permit seems very funny because this standing rule is just so mild for multinationals like Shell and Agip that earn billions of dollars every day in my study areas. Thus, most hilarious was the issues of two years imprisonment, how many oil multinational chairmen or managers have gone to the prison? Even the latest report about the impact of oil exploitation on the wellbeing of the Ogoni in 2012 by a team of experts, constituted by the President Goodluck Jonathan was followed with usual political rhetoric's which was devoid of cogent positive action, talk less of the committee's recommendations being implemented to the letter till date.

Twumasi and Merem (2006:99) sounded a warning to all that 'long term cost of not acting to prevent environmental degradation has been estimated to be about \$5.1 billion dollars per year, more than 15 percent of the country's gross domestic Product'. Before the emergence of EGASPIN as one of the major oil guidelines in Nigeria; fines for gas flaring was just a pittance of about ₦0.5 to ₦10 for every 1,000 standard cubic feet of gas as at January 1998 which even excluded NNPC, which was even at the detriment of inhabitants of the oil bearing Ijo communities across the Delta region by turning them into environmental refugees in their own land (Human Right Watch 1999:73). Benedict (2011:202) confirmed that gas flared no matter how minor in the environment, creates undesirable changes in the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the air, water and land with degradative impact on the flora and fauna of the ecosystem. These invariably disrupted the socio-economic life of the locals such

as farmlands, navigable activities and fishing, hence, making their survival terribly difficult.

#### **4.2.2 Environmental Degradation and Severe Financial hardship of Families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Economically, fishing and farming used to be prime activities in Ogulagha Kingdom. It was evident from research findings that these two sources of livelihood has basically stopped to be regarded as dependable means of income today because of severe effects of crude oil spillages across the Kingdom. Observation revealed also that when spills occurred on land but no remedial action is taken, the oil seeps into the ground and flows to low lying areas. This spread is intensified by rainfall, which enables oil to run off into nearby farms, ponds, creeks, including extensive mangrove areas along the creek channels. This has resulted into the death of mangroves which serve as the breeding and nursery grounds for most commercial fish species, invariably, causing very poor fish harvest for fishermen. It has been estimated that each square kilometre of mangroves can support a fishery production of 90-280 tons annually (UNEP 2001).

As a result of the foregoing, all the famous fishes within Ogulagha Kingdom collapsed due to incessant spills. This necessitated most families to abandoned fishing in search of other money making ventures. The fishes were either killed directly by oiling toxicity or escaped from the heavily oiled environment into relatively clean deeper waters downstream. Most importantly, the oil spillage has threatened to destroy an entire fishing culture, which constitutes a significant heritage, history and identity of Ogulagha families. There is a risk of local fishing knowledge being lost as oil exploitation continues unchecked. On the other hand, field data showed that when oil reaches the root zone, plants begin to experience stress and, in extreme cases, death follows. Plants looked stressed and yields are very low, while Root crops, such as cassava, often become unconsumable to farmers. All these naturally have an impact on the livelihood of families (UNDP 2011).



**Plate 4.9: Shell Oil Company's Spillage effect on arable land in Youbebe community, Ogulagha Kingdom**

Source: Fieldwork 2017





**Plate 4.10: NAOC Oil Company's Spillage Effect on Arable land in Obuguru Community, Ogulagha Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

**Table 4.4: Demographic breakdown showing families reactions about the levels of natural resources destruction in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Has natural resources like trees, mangroves etc., in your community meant for the production of local crafts and medicine been destroyed?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	138	60
No	92	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of 230, a total of 138 (60%) of families said valuable natural resources like trees and mangroves meant for the production of local crafts and medicine had been destroyed, while 92 (40%) of families claimed that their means of livelihood were not totally destroyed. Some families claimed they have not lost majority of their means of livelihood to the effects of oil exploitation activities, and indeed the huge presence of poverty which has become an obvious reality in the Kingdom says a lot about the deplorable conditions of the people. In specific terms, the table below clearly stated some natural resources that had been destroyed in Ogulagha Kingdom:

**Table 4.5: Demographic breakdown showing families responses about specific  
Natural resources destruction in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>If yes specify</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mangrove Tree	50	21.7
Crops	40	17.4
Farmland	50	21.7
Fishing	55	23.9
Water	35	15.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

50 (21.7 %) of families said their valuable mangrove trees had been destroyed, 40 (17.4%) of families lost their crops, 50 (21.7%) lost their farmlands to oil exploitation activities, 55 (23.9%) stated that oil exploitation activities were responsible for the destruction of their fishing area as a major source of livelihood, 35 (15.3%) noted that they had lost their ground waters to crude oil. This table reveals how important families value fishing as a major source of livelihood. Aside from selling fish as a means of sustenance, it also served as a source of protein and nutritional replenishment for adult and children. The destruction of farmlands, mangrove trees and other valuable trees in Ogulagha Kingdom is also a testimony to the reality in the Kingdom today why many families are hungry and poor.

Currently, families can hardly get any tangible crop harvest from their farm to support their family owing oil spillage. Mangroove trees and other valuable trees meant to generate money and for medicine to heal sick family members has also been destroyed, consequently causing serious hardship. Field data revealed that families have sustained huge economic losses and material deprivation in terms of jobs and income, farmlands have completely been useless in many parts of the Kingdom. Farmers crops die off after a year because of bad soil.



**Plate 4.11: Oily sheen permeated NAOC's offshore oil facility pollution of Ogulagha River causing the death of fishes and other varieties of aquatic animals.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

**Table 4.6: Demographic breakdown showing different sources of oil exploitation effects in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Since oil exploitation started, has any of the challenges below happened?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Destruction of family fishing areas	95	41.3
Destruction of farm land by oil and gas	85	37.0
Others specify	50	21.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 95 (41.3%) of families out of 230 claimed their fishing areas had been destroyed by oil exploitation activities, 85 (37.0%) said their farmlands had been destroyed by oil and gas flaring while 50 (21.7%) stated that their other sources of livelihood had also been destroyed. This table corroborated table 4.5 above, it further gives a clear manifestation of the huge levels of degradation and destruction caused by continuous oil exploitation activities which has destroyed families' means of livelihood and rendered them poor in Ogulagha Kingdom. In addition to the above regarding the devastation of oil exploitation activities, families in Obuguru recounted "*we dey suffer for many things here o! our fish pond for back there don condemn, crude oil don destroy them, the crude don also destroy our water, so water no dey o!*" (**IDI with families in Obuguru community during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom in 2017**).

Field observations in Ogulagha Kingdom, attest that the Kingdom is experiencing the impact of oil exploitation activities from two powerful oil-producing multinational companies (Shell in Youbebe and Agip in Obuguru). Osuji and Nwoye (2007:318) agree that the exploitation of petroleum hydro-carbons has been in the Delta region for years, and that "oil exploitation activities came with serious impact ranging from the barely tolerable ones to utterly disastrous effects decimating terrestrial, aquatic bio-data and mangrove forests which constituted major sources of families' sustenance". These researchers clearly explained the situation in the oil-producing communities across Delta State at present, especially in Youbebe and Obuguru; they showed the utterly devastating effects of oil exploitation activities in the host communities. A youth leader in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom further confirmed:

Around 1970s to 1982, life was a little bit better for us in terms of the fishing business. Fishes were not too far from the shore, but when oil came, there was oil spillage everywhere here and the water system was disturbed with so much noise. Infact, if you look deep into the sea, you will see from the distance about 200 pull well heads all-round the river (**IDI with Youbebe former Youth leader in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in September, 2017**).



Infact, the report of NOSDRA soil scientist in Ogulagha Kingdom revealed that the soil in most of the available family lands meant for farming in the Kingdom had been completely destroyed by oil spillage and that no tangible farm harvest could come from such soil, except water leaf (*talinum triangulare*) which grows better around gas flaring sites. Furthermore, men groups who were fishermen claimed that:

The hazards of oil most times cannot be contained in our community, so once oil spills into the ocean it often kills a lot of aquatic lives and this has been pushing the fishes down! down!! to a place where they can feel comfortable. This has reduced what we catch; therefore causing a lot of poverty in this environment because we can no longer train our children and many of our children have now turned into militants **(FGD session in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom with men groups during fieldwork in 2017)**.

This revelation indicates that oil exploitation activities have been significantly responsible for the destruction of the families' major source of livelihood and sustenance in Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom. Oil exploitation began in Youbebe in 1968 by Shell and got to Obuguru community through Agip in 1982. The forests and creeks of all types in the study areas, which used to provide important sources of food and income to families, have become an area of very low yields for both agricultural products and aquatic animals meant for the survival of families. In fact, environmentalists are of the opinion that excessive exploration and seismic activities have negative consequences for soil toxicity and quality of crops. This would adversely affect the quality, size and shape of traditional staples such as cassava, yam and plantain without requisite environmental impact assessment (EIA) (Benedict 2011:203).

An old fisherman lamented that:

Na here we dey catch fish before! But now fish don go inside! if you no get engine you no go fit manage, except somebody wey go far! to set net, I know dey hide my affairs

ooo! Somebody wey go help me make he buy Yamaha 15 horse power (₦350,000) for me make I carry go river ooo!!!, Na die I de oo! Egberifaae oooo!!! People we dey shop the money den de warri gbegegbe! **(IDI with an old community leader and fisherman in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).**

This was an agonising cry of frustration from a family head that thrived on fishing before the effects of oil exploitation activities completely destroyed rivers and obstructed his career. Families are now experiencing serious decline on their main sources of income due to continuous oil spillages and gas flaring. Personal observation revealed oily sheens all over the surface of the degraded high sea as a result of leakages from corroded oil-pipelines and oil wells from Shell and Agip in Ogulagha Kingdom. The effect of oil spillage has totally destroyed the livelihood of those who reside in the freshwater swamp areas (HRW 1999:97). Observation aboard a rented boat on the high sea also confirmed continuous flaring of gas which has become a terrible hindrance to fishermen.

In reality today, fishermen have to cope with the challenges of paddling their canoes offshore to catch fishes which have moved into the deep sea because of continuous oil and gas pollution whereas such activity was formerly confined to shallow waters. In order to catch more fishes, the fishermen had to raise money to buy engine boat (Yamaha 15 is ₦350,000 and Suzuki 15 horse power is ₦370,000) to power their canoes in order to navigate to the deep sea, but this is completely out of the reach of these poor families.

Findings showed that fishermen who were even able to hire an engine boat made very little gain from such exercise after deducting the cost of the hired boat in addition to the fuel consumed. In a desperate move to survive, but lacking powered boat, fishermen paddle their canoes into the sea where fishes are available, even though this exposes them to dangers such as canoe wreck or death. Family head and fisherman in Obuguru narrated his ordeal:

At times when we move in with canoe like that, sometimes our coming back na wahala because no engine to take us back and the sea don rough very well to come; so we go come pack all our fishes inside the net together, we go come carry rope tie everything inside the net on the boat. Any mistakes like this, the canoe go coverside because of heavy wave. So when the boat don coverside (capsized) for the river, na wave go fit carry you comot the place small, small!! Till God go help you reach the shore. If wave no dey that day, the person can die o! infact, people dey die well well ooo!!! **(IDI with a family member who was also a fisherman in Obuguru during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom in 2017).**

Additional information from a fisherman in Obuguru, Ogulagha Kingdom on coping strategy when canoes capsize and how victims escape sharks and other dangerous creatures in the ocean went thus:

“...na that be African man now! You no go fear them now! Our people self dey coverside (capsized) inside the sea and they still stay inside water for three days. At times, den go holds the boat to float with waves till one person go see dem and den go come help the person comot inside the river, na the person go sabi how he go hold the boat make he no sink and or die”. He further claimed that sometimes five to ten dolphins could come round to assist the affected person to the seashore **(IDI with a family head and a fisherman in Obuguru community during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).**

*Prior to when oil exploitation activities started in Ogulagha Kingdom, an average family made about ₦5,000-₦10,000 daily and hoped that the trend would continue (IDI with former Youbebe community youth Secretary during field trip to Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).* No family in the study areas was able to make adequate plan for the

future or save from the money made daily from fishing in the past because the awareness and the orientation were not available. Families in Ogulagha Kingdom were living from hand to mouth. Quantitative field data below also revealed that most family in the study areas lamented that compensations were not paid on their degraded farm produce in their various communities:

**Table 4.7: Demographic Breakdown Showing the Percentage of Commitment to Compensation by oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Does oil company pay compensation for degraded community?	Frequency	Percentage
No	164	71.3
YES	66	28.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

164 (71.3%) families complained that oil companies did not pay them compensations for destroyed means of livelihood, while 66 (28.7%) of families were compensated. The huge number of families not compensated, no doubt, resulted in incessant confrontations by families against oil companies in order to get compensation by force. This has resulted in many years of unhealthy relationships between oil companies and host communities in Ogulagha Kingdom. The researcher further investigated from families based on additional data below about those who directly received oil compensation from oil companies.

**Table 4.8: Demographic breakdown showing the beneficiaries of compensations  
by oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Who receives compensation on behalf of the community?	Frequency	Percentage
The King	20	13.0
Chiefs	19	12.3
Family head	11	7.1
Youth leaders	27	17.5
Others, specify	77	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 20 (13%) out of 154 respondents claimed that the King in Ogulagha Kingdom collected the compensation given on their degraded community by oil companies, 19 (12.3%) families agreed that chiefs were the beneficiaries of the compensation, 11 (7.1%) family heads collected the compensation, 27 (17.5%) of respondents claimed that compensations were collected for environmental degradation by youth leaders while 77 (50%) of families stated that oil companies paid compensation for their degraded environments to other people.

It is important to note from the breakdown above that about 50% of families claimed that compensation for their degraded environment was given to wrong people. That is, people with no legitimate right to collect such compensation on behalf of family members. This affirms that, in Ogulagha Kingdom, compensation often does not get to families that are really suffering from degraded environment. It regularly ended up in the pockets of impostors who do not care about alleviating the sufferings of the host families and their degraded environment.

*Presently, fishing which used to employ many family members in Ogulagha Kingdom has been seriously affected by oil spillage, while gas flaring is another problem (IDI with a community leader and Pastor during fieldwork in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).* It was even most disturbing for the researcher to know that Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), which was saddled with the responsibility of alleviating the sufferings of the inhabitants of the oil producing communities across Delta state were also unperturbed about their predicament.

This assertion was based on the disturbing disclosures from the DESOPADEC community liaison officer, who said that *“investing money on fishing engine boat in Ogulagha Kingdom in order to increase fishermen’s daily fishing income is just a waste of time and money because fishes in the Kingdom has ingested lead, therefore whoever consumes it will have cancer” (IDI with DESOPADEC liaison officer during fieldwork in 2017).* Research findings and observations have further revealed that the foregoing information offered by the liaison officer, had been spread across the society among those who buy fresh sea foods like fish, and shrimps from Ogulagha



women, now preferred frozen fish, meat, chicken and turkey because of the fear of not developing cancer from toxic fish consumption (see UNEP Report 2011:175).

Additional challenge that can be linked to continuous family poverty in the study areas based on research finding was that fishermen were polygamous in nature because their major livelihood which is fishing requires many hands to pack from the boat, fish sorting, fishing net washing, fish drying, preservation and selling of the fishes in the market in exchange for money. Ogulagha fishermen believed that many wives and children are required to cope with the cumbersome requirements of fishing in the season of abundance. Another reason why Ogulagha fishermen are polygamous in nature was because of the cold weather and rivers they catch fishes from on a daily basis. Hence, owing to the slump in fishing business, poverty deepened everywhere in the oil-producing communities, especially in Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom. Human Rights Watch (1999:96) logically confirms the development that low fishing and farming yields in the oil-producing communities were interconnected with the beginning of oil production by multinational oil companies across the host communities in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 4.9: Demographic breakdown showing families responses if oil effects have been rectify in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Has oil effects in your community been rectified?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	14.3
No	197	85.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

Notably, 33 (14.3%) of families out of 230 claimed that oil effects in Ogulagha Kingdom has been rectified, while 197 (85.7%) disagreed. Based on the above, it was easy to confirm that most families' degraded farmlands, streams and their environment has not been reinvigorated after the severe damage caused by many years of oil exploitation activities. In fact, after each episode of oil spillage in Youbebe and Obuguru communities, families are deterred from cooking with firewood owing to the huge volume of crude oil that had been spilled into their community.

Any attempt by resident families to cook at this period of spillage results in serious outbreak of fire across the entire community. For this research, enquiries were made from family groups during a focus group discussion session on how they cook their food during spillage episode in their community. Their response goes thus: “...*we often go to Ogulagha main town (a neighbouring town) to cook, and return to the village after eating each day during any spillage incident*” (***FGD session in Obuguru, Ogulagha Kingdom with family groups during fieldwork in 2017***). Similarly, in order to avoid the danger of fire outbreak, they painfully consider an option of going hungry for days without any tangible meal in their stomach. Another option open to them is to paddle their canoes to Ogulagha main town to cook their food and take it back with them daily, until the effect of spillage subsides and this can last for weeks.

Field interview revealed that majority of families inhabiting the oil-producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru in Ogulagha Kingdom have not benefited much from the government and oil companies' development initiatives. Still, the incessant effects of on-going hydrocarbon pollution families are experiencing daily from oil spillage due to equipment failure, pipeline vandalism and human error continue to be a challenge with most incidents along major pipelines and manifolds (UNDP, 2011:101, 150).

In a related development, another major cause of poverty for fishermen in Ogulagha Kingdom was the high rate of compromise and sabotage by community youth leaders. Research findings revealed that Ghanaian fishermen with well-equipped fishing trawlers were found operating in connivance with some youth leaders who are also fishermen depleting the scarce fishing locations of the whole Kingdom. The conspirators claimed that:

Life is very difficult ooo!!! Ghanians are also looking for an alternative on how to survive, so you don't blame them for coming here. Actually, some of us invited them to come and fish so as to pay us some money. So anywhere we cannot get to in the ocean with our small canoes they can get there and some of our people can also buy fish from them instead of all of us to be waiting for a loan that will never come to buy engine boat **(IDI with Youbebe community youth leader during field trip in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).**

Although some covetous youths who invited Ghanaian fishermen into the Ogulagha waters to fish claimed to have a good reason for doing so, their action has inflicted more hardship on families who rely on fishing in the Kingdom's waters to survive. This means that the inequality and relative deprivation presently going on in the study areas can be divided into two parts: (i.) the inequalities families suffer from multinational oil companies and (ii.) the inequality families are exposed to by few unscrupulous elements who want to make money at the expense of their people. These elements exist virtually everywhere in the oil-producing communities in the Delta region with little or no confrontation from their people. A respondent decried the development: These greedy perpetrators always invite Ghanaian fishermen regularly come and fish in this Kingdom because *"they are getting ready 'cash' from them, if that cash stops, they would send them away. Someone will just wake up and say I need 10 million and he will go to any length to get the money by force"* **(IDI with the King of Ogulagha Kingdom during a field trip in 2017).**

Field quantitative data below also reveals that most of the family members have never secured any permanent job with the oil companies to cater for themselves and their families after their traditional means of sustenance were destroyed by oil exploitation activities based on the table below.

**Table 4.10: Demographic breakdown of families regarding job placement in Oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Does any member of your nuclear family have a permanent job in any of the oil companies in this community?		
No	151	65.7
Yes	79	34.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 151 (65.7%) family members, out of 230, has never been employed by any oil company while 79 (34.3%) said none of their family members had a permanent job in the oil companies. This table is a clear indication that, despite the destruction of

means of livelihoods of many abandoned families as a result of years of oil exploitations activities by Shell and Agip in Ogulagha Kingdom, many of them were still left unemployed by oil companies to date. However, the table below indicates that most family members are currently strggling to keep body and soul together by working as manual labourers:

**Table 4.11: Demographic breakdown of family beneficiaries of labourer’s job in Oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Does any member of your family or you work as a</b>		
<b>Manual labourer on any oil company-related project?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	124	53.9
No	106	46.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

124 (53.9%) of family members out of 230 benefited as labourers from the oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom, while 106 (46.1%) never benefited at all from

labourer's job. The table above reveals that, although family members who benefited from labourer's job from oil companies were much more than those that never benefited. The oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom were not properly guided about the consequences of employing many family members as labourers to feed their individual households in their own land even when some of them are now graduates. An insensitive action like this by oil companies has resulted into continuous bitterness and violent conflict. Additional findings and data below confirmed that the family heads benefited more than other members of the family regarding the labourer job provided by oil companies.

**Table 4.12: Demographic breakdown of beneficiaries of labourer's jobs in Oil**



### Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom

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<b>If yes, who benefited the most</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Husband	45	35.7
Wife	10	7.9
Child	40	31.8
Others specify	31	24.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>

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Husbands who benefited the most as labourers in the oil companies were 45 (35.7%) out of 126 respondents; as well, 10 (7.95%) wives benefited, 40 (31.8%) children benefited, 31 (24.6%) of other people in the communities benefited as labourers. This table exposed that many husbands and children from various family settings were offered labourer's job opportunities more by Shell and Agip oil companies in Ogunlaga Kingdom when their means of livelihood such as fishing and farming were destroyed. Unfortunately, the arrangement above was lopsided because Ogunlaga women who are naturally gifted in the act of saving for the raining day for their various families based on findings, compared to men, were given very low opportunity to earn enough money for their families. The data below further shows that the employment benefits offered by oil companies were also just for a very short period of time as illustrated by the table below:

**Table 4.13: Demographic breakdown of the beneficiaries profited from labourer’s Job in Oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

The period family members benefited from labourer’s job	Frequency	Percentage
1-6months	43	27.7
7-12months	51	33.0
1-2years	25	16.1
Other specify	36	23.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

43 (27.7%) out of 155 family members were hired as a manual labourer between 1-6 months, 51 (33.0%) family members worked as manual labourers between 7-12 months, 25 (16.1%) of family members were hired as labourers between 1-2 years and 36 (23.2%) of other family members also got manual labourer's job. These indicators confirmed that even though some family members and children were hired as manual labourers in oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom after the destruction of their sources of livelihood, their period of engagement was very short. Family members who were hired as manual labourers for a period of one to two years were even very minimal. Consequently, the engagements of able body men in Ogulagha for a very few periods of years will naturally lead to poverty, frustration and confrontation at the slightest provocation. The wages family members realized as manual labourers from oil companies below also calls for concerted efforts from all and sundry:

**Table 4.14: Monthly demographic breakdown of money realised from labourer's job from oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>3d. If yes, how much has been realized</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
₦10,000 to ₦50,000	65	41.9
₦60,000 to ₦100,000	64	41.3
Others specify	26	16.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

Those who made ₦10,000 - ₦50,000 monthly during their period of employment were 65 (41.9%) while 64 (41.3%) made ₦60,000 - ₦100,000, and 26 (16.8%) family members made other amounts of money in the Kingdom monthly as well. From this table, family members made some amount of money from being employed in the oil companies to take care of their household members either as full staff, contractors or manual labourers. Hence, the money made monthly was not commensurate to the devastation oil exploitation inflicted on them. Therefore, in order to cushion the low wages generated from being manual labourers or contractors, most women resorted to selling foodstuffs to oil company's staff around the company's surroundings with the assistance of their children and struggling husbands. Quantitative data below acknowledged this fact:

**Table 4.15: Demographic breakdown confirming that family members sold food items to oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Does any member of your family sell food or other items to oil company staff?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	162	70.4
No	68	29.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of 230, about 162 (70.4%) family members made some money from selling food items to oil company's staff, while 68 (29.6%) family members never engaged in selling food items at all. This table gives a clear manifestation that the dwindling economy in Ogulagha Kingdom has compelled some family members to source for additional income from selling food items, especially family members who experienced total destruction of their sources of livelihood. Additional data below corroborates the foregoing in order to clear all doubts relating to the highest beneficiary among family members who sold food items to oil company workers and enormous challenges families are presently facing due to oil exploitation activities:



**Table 4.16: Demographic breakdown indicating the specific family member that sold food items to oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>If yes, who</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Husband	13	19.1
Wife	32	47.1
Children	12	17.6
Others specify	11	16.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>

Husband's who sold food items to oil companies workers in Ogulagha Kingdom were 13 (19.1%) out of 68, while 32 (47.1%) wives from different families sold food items, 12 (17.6%) children sold food items, and 11 (16.2%) other people also sold food items to oil company workers. From the table above, it is clear that wives and children from different families constituted the highest number concerning the categories of family members who economically benefited from making extra money from the sale of food items to oil company workers in Ogulagha Kingdom. As expected, majority of these mothers cannot afford seeing their children go hungry. Immediately oil exploitation activities destroyed their family's means of livelihood, causing most husbands to become frustrated and helpless. Wives in conjunction with their children and jobless husbands started selling food items to cater for themselves.

Field observation has revealed that, presently in the study areas, survival instinct has further pushed families to think of additional sources of income like the collection of periwinkles around their various communities, while men make additional income from thatching and selling logs of wood. An interviewee adds, "...some of us also sell logs of wood by sawing them into planks in order to take care of our family which is always an average of 8 to 6 people" (***IDI with the leader of the women in Youbebe of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017***). Some family members also make additional income through canoe carving, as a young canoe carver declared: "*Canoe carving is another source of making money for me in order for me to support my family. The canoe that uses engine would cost 40 to 50 thousand naira; those that cannot use engine will cost 20-25 thousand naira depending on the wood and size*" (***IDI with a member of a youth group who is also a canoe carver in Obuguru community during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom in 2017***).

Personal observation indicates that even though canoe carving is a painful task, considering the energy that carvers dissipate to make money compared to the stress involved in fishing, many families still make a living from it because of the pressure to survive. In fact, unprecedented survival pressure has finally compelled most families to migrate to neighbouring countries in Africa. The former secretary of Youbebe community Council in Ogulagha Kingdom attested to this:

Families often migrate for survival as a result of mobility of labour and economic meltdown here; they even left to Cameroun to Gabon and other places to fish; many family groups had even naturalized as a citizen of other coastal African countries and they do not even know when they will be coming back again to the Niger Delta region in order to survive **(IDI interview with the secretary of Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom, who is also a community leader during fieldwork in 2017).**

In a related development, additional findings reveal that young ladies have also gone into commercial sex work with oil workers in Ogulagha Kingdom. An interviewee lamented, "... these study areas can be regarded as the Sodom and Gomorra of Delta State because of the high rate of immoral acts that have perverted the original fishing and farming pattern of family life and livelihood of the people ...*These have made families totally helpless in taking proper care of their children, especially the girl child*" **(IDI with the Obuguru community high chief during fieldwork, 2017).** Another respondent disclosed that: "*Some of our girls love money and when oil company workers come around they follow them. Infact, you will even see a woman who is in her husband's house but still be committing adultery with oil company workers because of money*" **(IDI with the King of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).**

Young ladies in Ogulagha Kingdom were not left out in this desperate struggle for survival. Some youths in Ogulagha Kingdom stated as follows:

Oil workers here used to influence our girls with money o! If you are not careful enough you cannot even get a woman to marry here. They normally start by saying madam please! help me do pepper soup, if you are not hard enough on your woman, it will be a different story o!. Many people's wives have gone like that". **(IDI with the leader of a youth group in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).**

Findings revealed further that the emergence of commercial sex work as a source of revenue has resulted in the defilement of many young girls coupled with increasing incidence of teenage pregnancy and fatherless children, which are contrary to the accepted traditional values of Ijaw communities. This has continued to desecrate the institution of marriage because oil company workers do not see anything wrong in taking advantage of poverty-afflicted housewives and young ladies. Quantitative field data further substantiated the trend:

**Table 4.17: Table for the perception of families regarding the emergence of Commercial sex work as a source of revenue for young girls in Ogulagha Kingdom.**

<b>Strongly Agreed</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Strongly Disagreed</b>
53 (23.1%)	74 (32.2%)	38 (16.5%)	38 (16.5%)	27 (11.7%)

A total of 53 (23.1%) families strongly agreed that receiving money from male oil company worker makes young girls independent of parent's authority, 74 (32.2%) agreed, 38 (16.5%) were undecided, 38 (16.5%) disagreed while 27 (11.7%) strongly disagreed. Based on this data, majority of families agreed to the fact that receiving money from male oil company worker has made young females independent of parents' authorities. Consequently, many of these girls ended up as commercial sex workers and they constantly satisfy the sex urge of perverted male oil company workers in Ogulagha Kingdom.

Commercial sex activities have also been associated with the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which was 6.1 per cent as at 1999 but moved to 7.5 per cent in 2000 for the core Niger Delta states of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers (Federal Ministry of Health 1999:40). The HIV/AIDS pandemic accounts for why proper attention was devoted to fuller discussion of the issue in the health section of this study. This enabled the researcher to ascertain reasons for its spread in Ogulagha Kingdom. Other health implications traceable to oil exploitation activities are also extensively covered.

#### **4.3 Research Question Three: Oil Exploitation Activities and Health Implications against Families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

The impact of oil exploitation activities, resulting in health challenges for many inhabitants of Ogulagha Kingdom, is obvious. Archival findings from Ogulagha Annual Health Report (1949) reveals that the health challenges that confronted Ogulagha people before the beginning of oil exploitation activities in 1956 were different from the health problems associated with oil exploitation among the families across the oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom in contemporary times. The report states:

Yaws, ulcers and hypovitaminosis were predominant. The morbidity due to ulcer was alarming. Most of the ulcers were caused by bad and unskillful treatment of lacerations and abrasions and insect bites. There was an outbreak of yellow Fever and small-pox which was brought under control. Tuberculosis cases were very few. Dysentery which was about four hundred cases during the year. Cerebral spinal meningitis and trypanosomiasis were also ravaging the

people (War Prof 9/1, Annual Report of Western Ijaw  
Division 1949: 6, 7, 129, 131, 139).

The foregoing shows that, immediately oil exploitation activities started in 1956, the inhabitants of the oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta were exposed to constant oil spillages, ceaseless gas flaring which resulted into huge environmental pollution accompanied by obvious medical problems. Families were subjected further to more serious devastating health challenges when Nigeria's crude export rose to an average of 2.5 million barrels per day in 2005, causing more severe environmental degradation.

Research findings revealed that families in Ogulagha Kingdom today are affected directly by medical conditions such as pruritus (body itching), upper respiratory tract infections, rashes and chronic bronchitis. They also suffer some diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, staphylococcus, HIV/AIDS and hypertension, which have become rampant among indigenes. The only available medical doctor confirmed that pruritus is a common health issue tormenting families in Ogulagha Kingdom. Oil companies are flaring gases everywhere especially during the raining season, "*...the water here has become acidic and causes pruritus (itching) and other diseases related to oil exploitation activities. Proper medications are always prescribed to cure or manage it*" (KII with the doctor in the Cortage Hospital in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).

**Medical Challenges of oil exploitation activities among families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

**Table 4.18: Demographic breakdown showing the medical challenges of oil exploitation activities among families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Diseases/illness/ Sickness</b>	<b>Who experienced it</b>	<b>Freq. (%)</b>	<b>Average number of times per month</b>	<b>Average treatment cost per month</b>
Pruritus/Itching (S)	Daughter/Son	25 (71.4)		
	Parents	10 (28.6)	2	26,386
	Total	35 (100)		
Hypertension (D)	Parents	20 (54.1)		
	Son	9 (24.3)		
	Daughter	8 (21.6)	3	63,607
	Total	37 (100)		
Upper respiratory tract infections (D)	Son/Male	13 (76.5)		
	Daughter	4 (24.5)		
	Total	17 (100)	2	52,952
Rashes (S)	Son	40 (70.2)		
	Daughter	11 (19.3)		
	Parents	6 (10.5)	2	22,316
	Total	57 (100)		
Chronic Cough/difficulty in breathing (S)	Son	10 (34.5)		
	Daughter	11 (37.9)		
	Parents	8 (27.6)	3	111,578
	Total	29 (100)		
HIV/AIDs (D)	Son	4 (44.4)		
	Daughter	5 (55.6)	4	314,333
	Total	9 (100)		
Gonorrhoea (D)	Son	3 (42.9)		
	Daughter	3 (42.9)	2	22,588
	Parent	1 (14.2)		
	Total	7 (100)		
Syphilis (D)	Daughter	1 (33.3)		
	Parents	1 (33.3)	3	55,333
	Son	1 (33.3)		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3 (100)</b>		



The quantitative data presented above regarding pruritus/itching states that an average of 25 (71.4%) of daughters/son were affected, while fathers were about 10 (28.6%) of the entire questionnaire collected and about ₦ 26,386 per month were incurred. The table shows that, averagely, daughters and sons suffered itching much more than their parents. The medical doctor in Ogulagha Kingdom corroborated the foregoing: “Itching is a common symptom in this Kingdom because most families are exposed to gas flaring. This symptom is common among families during the raining season when the gas flared into the air comes back with the rain. So, whoever bathes with the rain water will develop body itching. Family members get relief medications immediately they present themselves at the clinic”. Aside from serious irritations that come with itching, families regularly incur an average treatment cost of ₦26,386 per month in an environment where families are experiencing reduced sources of livelihood.

The position of ecologists, Martinez-Alier and Temper (2007:18), validated by medical doctors (Ekpoh and Obia 2010:348), affirms that gas flaring and acid rain often accompany crude oil exploitation activities which causes cancer, leukaemia, coughing, wheezing, difficulty in breathing, chronic bronchitis, lung infection, body itching, blindness, impotency and premature death. They stated further that, once a food chain has been poisoned by acid rain, humans, animals and birds that depend on that chain will be affected. Nduka *et al* (2008:815) agree that increased acidity of rain may predispose residents of the oil-producing communities to spontaneous abortion, ectopic pregnancy, malignant lymphomas or soft tissues sarcomas.

Hypertension is another deadly ailment that is silently killing families in Ogulagha Kingdom. Interviews and observations show that many residents have become widowed and many children orphaned, fending for themselves. The doctor explained that many hypertensive cases in the Kingdom were ignorant of their status and were diagnosed incidentally: According to the doctor:

Adults normally come down with hypertension in this area, which I often discover by routine examination. Blood pressure is not supposed to go beyond certain limit, say 120 over 80 mmHg, but people exceed these limits here. Some people here would have had stroke as a result of untreated hypertension before coming to the hospital. At least I can say

in the population of this place, about 20% to 25% of adults have hypertension (**KII with the doctor in the Cortage Hospital, Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017**).

Field study revealed that hypertension was an emerging health challenge which became prevalent with oil exploitation activities by Shell in Youbebe in 1968 and it extended to Obuguru community in 1982. Crude oil exploitation started with the expectation of rosy future for the oil-producing communities. The expectations specifically stretched down to the family level but they were dashed by Shell and Agip oil companies which preferred employing expatriates and non-indigenes from non-oil producing regions of Nigeria, especially from south east and the south west Nigeria. The ruined optimism, coupled with enormous destruction of family farmlands and rivers for fishing as a result of oil exploitation activities, resulted in total frustration (UNDP 2006). Consequently, many family members, especially men now take to heavy drinking, cigarette smoking and tobacco chewing. The doctor in Ogulagha Kingdom linked these acts to primary risk factors for developing hypertension.

The above report has also been confirmed by recent studies on hypertension in Nigeria (Ofuya 2007, Ewhrudjakpor 2009, Onwuchekwa's *et al.* 2012 and Suleiman *et al.* 2013). In the quest by the researcher to investigate the health conditions of families in the study areas further, enquiries were made from the doctor if there was a relationship between the high prevalence of hypertension in the study areas and the scramble for oil work, which has become the dream of most families. He replied:

When people come for medical examination, one has to be very careful before making any medical conclusion. That attitude of 'I just have to be there to survive' is everywhere you go in Ogulagha kingdom. When you meet a person for the first time, and the blood pressure is high, one has to treat with some degree of caution. Because some were caused as a result of the fact that they were disappointed about promises of certain kind of job that never came. For instance now like this community, jobs are highly competitive with no reasonable pattern. It is all about jungle justice approach in getting a job, which is a major reason they always come

down with hypertension (**KII with the doctor in Cortage  
Hospital during field trip in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017**).

Presently, in Ogulagha Kingdom, interviews from families regarding hypertension indicate that majority of the adult population who were breadwinners were dying daily due to stroke, kidney damage and heart failure. Invariably, this exposed their distressed dependents, especially children, to greater suffering. Quantitative field data also affirmed that 20 (54.1%) parents had hypertension, 9 (24.3%) sons were also affected, while the number of daughters was 8 (21.6%). The average family treatment cost was ₦63,607 per month. Based on the foregoing, parents occupied the highest number of the category of people in a family with hypertension as a result of the continuous desire for a better life through high hope for employment in the oil companies which barely becomes a reality.

An average family treatment cost above for a family member was also very huge because most family members had even become more impoverished as a result of hypertension. The most disturbing point regarding hypertensive patients in the study areas, according to the doctor, is that most hypertensive patients do not even know they were hypertensive until many were rushed to the hospital when they came down with complications like stroke or heart failure. This is not peculiar to Ogulagha; it stretches across the Niger Delta oil-producing communities where studies have been done on hypertension. Andy *et al.* (2013:336) affirm that in the rural communities of Ibibio/Annangs, Efiks and Obolos in Cross River State, out of the total population of 3,869 in the study areas, only 2.8 per cent of the inhabitants knew they had hypertension while the rest of the population never knew their condition.

The studies of Ofuya (2007:948) and (Onwuchekwa and Chinenye 2010:514) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State agree with the study above also that interviewees in the various study areas never knew they had hypertension until they were later diagnosed in the hospital. Andy *et al.* (2012) assert that hypertension is an important global public health challenge and a major predisposing factor for heart failure, kidney failure and stroke in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also a major predisposing factor for coronary artery disease, which is currently evolving in sub-Saharan Africa. Suleiman *et al.* (2013:25) add that hypertension is widely known to be a major public health problem with serious impact on an average family's quality of life and the economy with huge attendant

direct and indirect cost implications. It is also regarded as Africa's greatest challenge after HIV/AIDS and the most common cause of sudden death in Nigeria (Onwuchekwa 2012: 343).

Quantitative field data in Ogulagha Kingdom concerning upper respiratory tract infections revealed that, in an average family structure, sons constituted about 13 (76.5%) of people affected with the disease, daughters affected were about 4 (24.5%), while the total family members affected were 17 (100), with average family treatment cost of ₦52,952 per month. According to the foregoing, the percentage of sons infected in the study areas was much, followed by a small percentage of infected daughters. It is important to know that the average treatment cost of upper respiratory tract infections for each family household does not come cheap at all considering the poor financial status of the inhabitants of Ogulagha Kingdom. This disease has been linked to continuous oil exploitation activities and gas flaring. Infact, the infectious nature of this disease has seriously worsened the economic status of families, due to the high cost of medical treatment per month.

Today, aside from upper respiratory tract infections, many families are also struggling with other varieties of terminal ailments and they have become less productive as a result of poor health conditions. In a report on social determinants of health, World Health Organisation (WHO) posits that the health of inhabitants of oil-producing communities has been compromised by oil companies through constant exposure of the victims to polluted air, water or contaminated food. Other causes were exposure to hydrogen sulphide, benzene, contaminated water and diesel dust as well as ingestion of adversely-affected livestock or wildlife. Oil-production operations have also been implicated in cases of respiratory diseases, cancer, pruritus, bronchitis and infectious diseases some of which last two years while others result in death (WHO 2013: 4, 7).

Quantitative data as regards rashes in Ogulagha Kingdom, indicated that sons were the most affected family members in Ogulagha Kingdom. The total percentage of the inhabitants who had experienced rashes was 57 (100%) while the average treatment cost was ₦22,316 per month. Based on the data above, the percentage of sons affected with rashes was about four times higher than the percentage of daughters and parents. Just like itching, rashes were also regarded by families in Ogulagha Kingdom as the

most irritating symptom of discomfort. This was also regarded by families as a major conduit pipe for constant money spending.

Considering the ₦22,316 average treatment cost by family members as stated above, families in the study areas are going through serious pain in order to take good care of their health challenges in the midst of dwindling livelihood opportunities in the Kingdom. The relationship between acid rain and rashes has been well researched by many ecologists such as Martinez-Alier and Temper (2007) who posited that gas flaring often resulted in acid rain which naturally affects family members in oil-producing communities when such rain water is used for bathing (UNEP 2011).

Chronic cough has been regarded as a serious medical symptom which families in Ogulagha Kingdom are constantly suffering from. Quantitative data revealed that daughters were the most affected in Ogulagha Kingdom with an average percentage of 11 (37.9%), followed by sons 10 (34.5%), parents 8 (27.6%), notably, the total number of affected families were 29 (100%). The average cost for the treatment of the symptom of chronic cough was ₦111,578 per month. Based on the enormous treatment cost of chronic cough for an average poor family, it was obvious that families across the Kingdom had spent a lot of money treating this symptom because the percentage effect of the symptom on sons and daughters was huge. The doctor acknowledged that there is a strong relationship between gas flaring and chronic cough, that once gas is flared into the air, it comes back and pollute the environment. When this is frequently inhaled, it naturally leads to chronic cough for family members.

The threat of HIV/AIDS in the study areas calls for serious concern. Quantitative data revealed that the percentage of infected sons in Ogulagha Kingdom was 4 (44.4%), followed by the percentage of daughters 5 (55.6%) which was a little more than the percentage of sons, while the total number of infected inhabitants was 9 (100%). The average cost of treatment regarding this disease for families in the study areas was ₦314,333 per month, which required serious effort for family members to get in an environment devoid of any major source of livelihood. Field observations show that increasing cases of HIV/AIDS across Ogulagha Kingdom was caused by the frequent movement of aliens, especially oil workers criss-crossing the Kingdom for job opportunities. According to the only doctor in the Kingdom, "...if you have a place where foreigners come and stay for weeks, months, years and move out in a short time

for job purposes, definitely HIV/AIDS will be prevalent in such environment". It is important to note that increased incidence of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS is not peculiar to Nigeria.

Harshe (2003:115) links the high rate of HIV/AIDS infections and death in the oil-producing community of Bakola pygmies of Chad to the daily influx of foreign oil workers. Additional observation regarding HIV/AIDS in Ogulagha Kingdom reveals that traditional values which treasured virginity in women have given way to promiscuity. This can be linked to acculturation and Western sexual perversion, resulting in indiscriminate sexual relations and huge spread of HIV/AIDS infection. This is traceable to economic hardship which is obvious in every facet of the family life of Ogulagha people today.

Family disorganisation, lack of financial power to access quality education, and unemployment are all regarded as major factors luring young ladies into unprotected and reckless sexual acts for money. When families were asked if receiving money from male oil company workers encourages the female youths to drop out of school, about 85 (37.0%) families out of 230 strongly agreed that it was so; 45 (19.6%) families agreed to it, 20 (8.7%) families were undecided, 23 (10%) families disagreed while 57 (24.8%) strongly disagreed. Majority of families strongly agreed that receiving money from male oil company workers was responsible for the female youths dropping out of school. Consequently, many of these girls end up as prostitutes and fulfil the sex urge of perverted male oil company workers in Ogulagha Kingdom. This is imperative because only 46.7% of adolescents in Delta State affirm that the case could be prevented by abstinence while more than 50 per cent are ignorant of preventive measures to protect themselves (Okomah, 2007:117).

As a result of the peculiar nature of Ogulagha Kingdom where different oil workers across the world gather to work regularly, sexually-transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea has become another transmitted health challenge that family members confront daily. Available data revealed that infected sons were 3 (42.9%), daughters infected were 3 (42.9%) while parents constituted 1 (14.3%). The cost of treatment for an average family per month was ₦22,588. Although the financial challenges involved for families concerning the treatment of self-inflicted infections such as gonorrhoea

might not be too expensive compared to HIV/AIDS, infected family members still could not afford it owing to diminished sources of livelihood.

Syphilis is another medical disease that cannot be ignored in Ogulagha Kingdom. The proportion of infected daughters was 1 (33.3%), 1 (33.3%) of sons, infected husbands stood at 1 (33.3%). The overall number of infected inhabitants was 3 (100%). The total treatment cost was ₦55,333 per month. The medical trauma faced by syphilis-infected inhabitants in the study areas was enormous as a result of the painless sore that comes with the disease together with the financial cost. The average treatment cost for family members was huge for poor family members with a degraded environment devoid of meaningful sources of survival.

It is important to note that illnesses and other infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, coupled with other health challenges like leukaemia, chronic bronchitis, hypertension, lung infection, and body itching have become serious public health concerns for families today without accessible medical assistance to tackle the foregoing challenges. Aside from the foregoing diseases, the menace of cancer is another major public health concern in Ogulagha Kingdom today which requires comprehensive analysis for urgent government policy intervention.

### **Cancer Prevalence in Ogulagha Kingdom**

The greatest fear of cancer across the world is the mortality associated with it. It has been widely documented that deaths from communicable and non-communicable diseases are gradual, while deaths from cancer are rising exponentially. Cancer remains a poorly addressed public health problem with marked local and international variation in incidence. This highly dreaded disease is presently ravaging the inhabitants of oil producing communities across Delta state and Ogulagha Kingdom is not left out from this overwhelming medical predicament. High prevalence of cancer disease in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom has largely been linked to petroleum hydrocarbon production (Godson et al 2010).

Petroleum hydrocarbon is formed by the decay of organic substances trapped within sedimentary rocks. It consists of alkane and cycloalkanes which normally constitute about 80 percent of oil that are saturated hydrocarbons. The remaining 20 percent hydrocarbons are aromatic because it is unsaturated and made up of benzene-rings

which consist of polycyclic or polyaromatic hydrocarbons, which are known for their carcinogenic properties (Ana 2010). Benzene (BTEX) substances are highly mobile, toxic, potent and find its way into human beings when they breathe air, bathe, eat fish, drink water or accidentally touch soil or sediment that is contaminated. Environmental contamination through benzene often results into adverse cancerous effect on human immune systems (UNEP 2001:214,217). Invariably, this has increased morbidity and mortality across the oil producing communities (Obiora 2020).

Visual observation in Ogulagha Kingdom revealed destructive gas flaring, in addition to huge impact of oil pollution from the manifold areas around Shell and Agip oil facilities. These ceaseless pollutions are visible in the atmosphere, soil, streams, ground water plus adjoining creeks which have exceeded EGASPIN regulated standard. The foregoing facts are all linked to high prevalence of cancer in Ogulagha Kingdom today which poses growing threat to public health in the communities.

Field interview with the doctor in Ogulagha Kingdom revealed that all suspected cancer cases were referred to Delta State University Teaching Hospital for expert care. The researcher therefore based the cancer aspect of this study below on the recent comprehensive study by Obiora (2020) in DELSUTH and WHO/Globocan 2018 prevalence of cancer in Nigeria. This became imperative due to numerous challenges involved in getting necessary clearance from the cancer ethical committee to carry out a sensitive disease like cancer in DELSUTH and Delta State as a whole.



**Table 4.19: Cancer Cases by Site/Organ**

<b>Cancer site</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Anal cancer	2	0.3
Bladder cancer	5	0.8
Bone cancer	2	0.3
Brain & nervous system cancer	7	1.2
Breast cancer	244	36.5
Cervical cancer	48	7.2
Colon & rectal cancer	78	11.7
Eye cancer	1	0.1
Hodgkins lymphoma	1	0.1
Kidney cancer	6	0.9
Larynx cancer	1	0.1
Lips and oral cavity	3	0.5
Liver cancer	1	0.1
Metastasis (L/N,Omentum,peritoneum)	27	4.0
Nasopharyngeal cancer	8	1.2
Non-Hodgkins lymphoma	14	2.1
Oesophageal cancer	6	0.9
Ovarian cancer	27	0.4
Pancreatic cancer	1	0.1
Prostate cancer	54	8.1
Salivary gland cancer	9	1.4
Skin cancer	39	5.8
Small intestine cancer	6	0.9
Soft tissue cancer	40	6.0
Stomach cancer	17	2.6
Testicular cancer	1	0.1
Thyroid cancer	12	1.8
Uterine cancer	8	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>100</b>

Obiora's (2020) descriptive and retrospective study on cancer from 2014 to 2019, carried out in DELSUTH, Delta State revealed that cancer diseases have climaxed into a disturbing dimension across Delta State. In his study, a total number of 668 cancer cases were carried out. This consists of 207 males and 461 females. The age range of cancer patients were 1-98 years.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the table above, accounting for 36.5% of all cases. According to WHO 2018 report, breast cancer across Nigeria was the first most diagnosed malignant disease, accounting for 26,310 (22.7%) of all new cases recorded in 2018. The number of death through breast cancer in Nigeria was 11,564 (16.4%) and it is the most common cause of cancer related death.

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer in the table above, accounting for 78 (11.7%) of cancer cases. WHO 2018 report in Nigeria claimed that, the total number of new cases of colorectal cancer was 2,887 (2.5%) and it is the sixth most diagnosed cancer disease. This cancer represents 9th position among the deadly cancer diseases, accounting for about 1,956 (2.8%) deaths. Worldwide, 1.8 million new cases were encountered in 2018 amounting to 6.1% and ranking 3rd among all cancers.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among males, accounting for 54 (8.1%) of cancer cases in the table above. WHO 2018 report emphasized that, this cancer was categorized as the 3rd most diagnosed in Nigeria with a total number of 13,078 (11.3%) of new cases. Prostate cancer is ranked 3rd among other deadly cancer diseases in Nigeria with a total number of 5,806 (8.3%) of deaths. Worldwide, it is ranked second with 1.3 million new cases recorded in 2018. It is the most common cancer among males in US, Europe, Australia and most other Sub-Saharan African countries. Reports have however shown relatively low incidence of prostate cancer in Asia, and North Africa.

Cervical cancer is the 4th most common cancer, accounting for 48 (7.2%) of all cases in the table above. WHO 2018 cancer report affirmed that, it was the second most diagnosed cancer in Nigeria after breast cancer with a total number of 14,943 (12.9%). This cancer was also regarded as the second most deadly cancer after breast cancer across Nigeria with a total death figure of 10,403 (14.8%). Reports across the globe showed a decline of 3.2% of new cancer cases in 2018. The decline was predominant

in developed countries with most cervical cancer coming from Africa. This recent decline rate was linked to population-based preventive strategies such as cervical screening and HPV vaccination in developed countries and inadequacy of such in developing countries such as ours.

Soft tissue cancer is the 5th most common cancer accounting for 40 (6%) in the above table. They are highly heterogeneous with poorly understood etiology. Local reports have shown it is relatively common across Nigerian hospitals (WHO 2018 report).

Skin cancer is the 6th most common cancer, accounting for 5.8% of all cancer cases in the above table. WHO cancer report in Nigeria stated that, this cancer was the 27th most diagnosed cancer, accounting for 553 (0.48%) in 2018. Skin cancer was also regarded as the 26th most deadly cancer disease in Nigeria in 2018 with a total number of 353 (0.50%) deaths. The risk factors for skin cancer are exposure to Ultra violet radiation, and HIV epidemic which is associated with Kaposi sarcoma, both of which are prevalent in the oil producing communities.

Ovarian cancer is the 7th most common cancer in the table above, accounting for 4% of all cancers. WHO report on cancer across Nigeria in 2018 declared that, this cancer represents about 2,792 (2.4%) of new cancer cases diagnosed. It is also the 8th most deadly of all cancer cases in Nigeria, accounting for about 2,063 (2.9%) deaths. Across the globe, ovarian cancer was 1.6% of all new cancer cases diagnosed in 2018.

Stomach cancer is the 8th most common cancer, accounting for 2.6% of all histologically diagnosed cancers in the table above. WHO 2018 report on Cancer stated that, this cancer was the 10th most diagnosed cancer in Nigeria, accounting for 2,404 (2.1%) of new cancer cases. Stomach cancer was also the 7th most deadly cancer in Nigeria with a total figure of 2,110 (3.0%) deaths. Worldwide, it is the 6th most common cancer with 1,033,700 cases, accounting for 5.7% of all new cancer cases in 2018.

Lymphomas is the 9th most common cancer in the table above, mostly of the Non-Hodgkins type and appears to be more common in Northern than in Southern part of Nigeria.

Thyroid cancer is the 10th most common cancer in the above study with female predominance. WHO 2018 report on cancer, claimed that this cancer was the 16th most diagnosed cancer in Nigeria, accounting for 1,307 (1.1%) of all cancer cases. It is also regarded as the 27th most deadly of all cancer cases in Nigeria, accounting for 212 (0.30%) deaths. Across the globe, 567,000 of new cancer cases were diagnosed in 2018. Constant exposures to environmental pollutants are suspected risk factors.

The foregoing cancer statistical table consists of 668 diagnosed cases, accounting for 28 different types of cancers with 574 cases (85.9%) constituting the 10 most common cancer cases. Field data based on the doctor's report established that there are at least five major types of suspected cancer cases seen among inhabitants that presented in Cottage Hospital, Ogulagha Kingdom for management and referral to DELSUTH. These cancer cases are Breast cancer, Prostate cancer, Skin cancer, Colon & rectal cancer and Soft tissue cancer. The doctor claimed that many years of oil exploitation activities might be responsible for the elevated cases of cancer in Ogulagha Kingdom today, without losing focus on other cancer precipitating factors across the oil producing communities such as diet, family history, life style choices and so on.

This study also draws credence from the recent WHO research on cancer in Nigeria, 2018 which stipulated that cancer diagnoses in the breast, colorectum, prostate, cervix, soft tissue, skin, ovarian, stomach, lymphoma and thyroid cancers constituted about 66, 272 (57.2%) of all 115, 950 new cancer cases. 32, 527 deaths were recorded for the above 10 cancer cases out of the total 70, 327 deaths across Nigeria in 2018. In Nigeria, the risk of dying from cancer before 75 years was 6.6% for a male and 8.4% for a female (UNEP 2011: 214, WHO 2018).

Many scholars and environmentalists such as Alberg et al (2006), Godson et al (2010), Ana et al (2010) and Obiora (2020) all claimed that there are strong relationship between oil exploitation activities and high prevalence of various health outcomes particularly cancer. They emphasized that the inhabitants of the oil producing states such as Delta, Rivers, Edo, Bayelsa and so on, have been exposed directly and or indirectly to different types of cancers from many years of environmental degradation due to oil exploitation activities. Invariably, these have worsened the wellbeing of individual families (UNEP 2011:217).

Godson et al (2010) corroborated the foregoing based on the 10 years comparison study they carried out from 1992 to 2001 in UCH (with 904 samples) and UPTH with (3,521 samples). This research was aim at assessing the pattern of environmentally induced cancers in Nigeria. Their study showed that both Prostrate and breast cancers were slightly higher in Ibadan (79.1%) than in Port Harcourt (75.4%), also the cancer of the eyes were more prevalent in Ibadan (7.3%) than Port Harcourt (1.7%) whereas lung and skin cancers were more prevalent in Port Harcourt than Ibadan. These researchers concluded that the high prevalence of lung and skin cancers in Port-Harcourt are synonymous to resident populations living in highly industrialized communities with higher environmental risk factors, predisposing them to such cancers and related morbidities.

Logical inference can be drawn from the above study that continuous gas flaring, soil and ground water pollution have resulted into serious environmental degradation across the oil producing communities in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom triggering a high mortality disease like cancer and other deadly diseases. Government at all levels in Delta State has a huge responsibility to assist Ogulagha inhabitants in order to reduce the high prevalence of cancer in the Kingdom by engaging the people on population-targeted cancer screening programme, cancer literacy, access to critical cancer diagnostic tools and treatment facility to reduce cancer morbidity and mortality. This study has not been able to establish the empirical linkages and the levels of association between the identified environmental risk factors and the various cancers reported in Ogulagha Kingdom (see also the UNEP Report of Ogoni Land 2011 181).

#### **4.4 Research Question Four: What are the Relationship between Conflict and the Consequences of oil Exploitation on Families in Ogulagha Kingdom**

The discovery of oil in 1956 by Shell Oil Company in the Niger Delta heralded the interest of other multinational oil companies into Nigeria. These foreign major oil companies which still dominates the Nigeria oil industry today (Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Total/Elf, Agip, etc) have been in Nigeria since the late 1950s and have been producing oil since then (Frynas *et al.* 2000:413). The incursion of the oil multinationals was received with mixed feelings by the inhabitants of the oil-bearing communities. To the Federal Government, it marked the awaited new dawn of foreign earnings, even though

the financial benefits came with huge environmental degradations and untold hardships to families in Ogulagha Kingdom.

Oil companies' fierce exploitation of oil with impunity is disturbing. The emblems of Shell and Agip oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom are avoidable oil spillages, gas flaring and devastating environmental degradation. Visual field observation revealed that there are notable differences between the Shell staff quarters and the residents of host communities. Oil multinationals have totally abandoned their corporate social responsibilities to their host families. Surprisingly today in Ogulagha Kingdom, farmlands and streams are totally polluted with continuous oil spillages and gas flaring of a great magnitude which has, to a large extent, destroyed the social, medical and economic well-being of families. This has also degenerated into unprecedented poverty and severe hardship compared to the situation in the early 1930s before oil was discovered.

Field observations further revealed in Ogulagha Kingdom that the level of environmental pollution accelerated as Shell and Agip oil companies intensified crude oil production and exploitation activities. In the process of extracting oil, adequate consideration was not given to families that depend on farming and fishing, invariably distorting totally their accustomed ways of life. The Delta region is "one of the 10 most important wetlands and marine ecosystems in the world; it is a place where about 20 million people directly depend on shared natural resources such as fish, fertile land and water sources for survival but, unfortunately, Shell alone has been responsible for 2,900 oil spills in that region" (Bond and Khadija 2009:22).

Field investigations in Yobebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom further revealed that lack of adequate farmlands and environmental clean-up of spilled oil from their communities and adequate re-invigoration of the communities affected to the original state continue to be a source of protest to date. The devastating effect of oil has also hindered the education of children in the Kingdom. The quantitative statistics below gave a summary of this fact:

**Table 4.20: Demographic breakdown of the Challenges caused by oil exploitation on the education of Children in Ogulagha Kingdom**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Has oil exploitation activities affected the education of your children?		
Yes	160	69.6
No	70	30.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 160 (69.6%) of families agreed that oil exploitation activities has affected the education of their children, while 70 (30.4%) of families said that oil exploitation activities did not affect their children's education. Based on the data, families whose children's education was affected were much more than those that their children's education was not affected. This data is a reality of how oil has undermined the educational well-being of the children in Ogulagha Kingdom.

Shell and Agip companies have done their best in providing some palliative financial assistant to cushion the effect of oil exploitation across Ogulagha Kingdom, still field observations revealed that the host community's development yearning has increased. Findings in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom showed that families were all unanimous in their claim that Shell and Agip oil companies can actually do more in the area of increase scholarship to fund their children who is their future. In addition, part of other agonising issues precipitating confrontations across the Ijaw oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom are huge rate of abandoned projects especially by Agip Oil Company. A fisherman in the community affirms: *“Agip never do anything for us! den do one condemned borehole there and it has collapsed and our people don't know where to get good water”* (*In-depth Interview with a fisherman/family head in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom during field trip in 2017*).

At this juncture, it is necessary to dig deeper into the triggers of unprecedented intra-communal violent conflicts which the Federal Government of Nigeria is managing currently through amnesty programme. Efforts will also be made to ascertain the level of violent conflict directed at Shell and Agip by militant youths supported by oil-bearing Ijaw family groups and their communities.

#### **4.4.1 Government Development Interventions in the oil Producing Communities of Ogulagha Kingdom**

This section is concerned about ascertaining how past government approaches in the oil producing communities have positively benefited families across the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom and how such development intervention has also negatively aggravated their sufferings. Government efforts in alleviating the unprecedented poverty and environmental degradation that had engulfed the Niger Delta region even before independence has been to no avail because the oil producing communities till date still remain backward and underdeveloped, lacking adequate



infrastructures such as electricity, potable water supply, adequate educational facilities, sufficient hospitals, accessible roads, basic housing for shelter and so on.

Earlier development approaches of the government in the Niger Delta region were based on pacification rather than any sincere desire in alleviating the pains of the people. Prior to the exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta region, a colonial government commission of enquiry, Willink Commission of 1957/58, recognized the need for serious intervention in the region, which necessitated a developmental board at that time for the region (Isumonah 2003:213).

The above reality led to the recognition and the establishment of various special development agencies to compensate oil producing areas for its challenging environmental terrain. The first of such development agencies was the defunct Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) which was established in 1961 by the Balewa Administration, through an Act of Parliament with the responsibility of providing developmental advice to the federal and regional governments on how best to develop and improve the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the oil producing communities (Isumonah 2003:213). Unfortunately, the board has had little or no impact regarding physical and human developments on the people. It only carried out surveys and pilot projects to demonstrate development potentials of the area because of developmental suggestions that were supposed to be implemented by government at various levels did not come to realization (Ayodele et al 2016:369).

The poor performance recorded by NDDDB prompted the federal government to extend executive powers to other developmental bodies which came up later such as the Niger Delta Basin and Rural Development Authority in 1976, which also failed woefully to make any impact on the developmental challenges of the people. Perhaps, in another effort by the government to rekindle the lost hope of the Niger Delta people; the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) also came on board with renewed vigor.

#### **4.4.2 OMPADEC's Development Initiative in the oil Producing Communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State**

OMPADEC was another development initiative which came on board in 1992 through Decree 23 which was promulgated by the military President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. In order for this new pacific developmental tokenism to succeed, Babangida administration generously disbursed whopping sum of ₦13.6 billion in 1998 as financial back up to the new commission for the provision of infrastructure; through the increment of the financial contribution to the oil producing areas from 1.5 to 3 percent of government oil revenue allocation (Frynas 2001:37). For better understanding of the responsibilities of OMPADEC, Omotola (2007:79) clearly stated below how the commission was expected to operate and function for effective development intervention across the oil producing communities. Thus, the commission was expected:

- a. To receive and administer the monthly sums from the allocation of the federal account in accordance with confirmed oil producing ratio in each state.
  - i. for rehabilitating and developing oil mineral producing areas;
  - ii. for tackling ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals;
- b. To determine and identify, through the commission and the oil mineral producing states, the actual oil mineral-producing areas and to foster the development of projects agreed upon with local communities in the oil mineral producing areas.

Sadly, this commission never realized its objectives because it lacked focus coupled with terrible managerial deficiency as a result of unprecedented corruption. The two directors (Albert Horsefall and Professor Eric Opia) that almost ran the commission aground were involved in serious financial scandals and were eventually dismissed for such act. According to Okonta and Douglas (1999:51) and Frynas (2001:38), Eric Opia was dismissed in September 1998 for embezzling ₦6.7 billion set aside for the development of the impoverished communities of the Niger Delta. Omotola (2007: 80) further confirmed that in the first three years of the commission, contracts worth \$500 million were given and money was subsequently paid into the accounts of ghost companies.

Based on these aforesaid realities, it is obvious that from the inception of the first government development initiative which was NDDB in 1961 to NDDC in 2000, abandoned development project are scattered every where begging for completion despite the huge financial back up given to these commissions, especially NDDC by the government (see pictures of NDDC's abandoned project below).



**Plate 4.12: Abandoned OMPADEC Secondary School Staff Quarters in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Personal observation in the study areas revealed that these oil producing communities have not adequately benefitted from past and present government development initiatives. Rather, individual families are still being faced daily with deprivation, poverty and environmental injustice as a result of continuous oil exploitation activities in the Delta region. In a separate focus group discussion interviews in these study areas, respondents bemoaned past top bottom approaches of these commissions instead of bottom up, which to them has been the bane of continuous developmental failures that has been recorded till date in all the oil producing communities.

Observations also showed that the inhabitants of Ogulagha Kingdom were not adequately consulted by OMPADEC to know what exactly their major developmental needs were. Proper consultations would have been the first step by any serious commission in its quest to assuage the battered ill feelings of the people towards the government. Infact, adequate discussion with local residents before embarking on any project would have also help OMPADEC to foster the development of projects agreed upon with local communities.

Additional observations in the study areas regarding past and present government development interventions revealed blatant overconcentration of imposed physical developmental needs on the people rather than combining such need with human capital training and development. That is- training family heads on a special skill which can translate directly into the purchasing power of individual families. Okonta and Douglas (1999:52) corroborated this fact that almost all the various groups concerned complained that projects which did not necessarily represent their interest were imposed on them and most of these projects were eventually abandoned by the commission without completion.

Respondents across the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom further exposed that fishermen in their various communities critically need help regarding engine boats which they can use to lurch themselves into the deep sea for better financial status because their major source of sustenance is fishing in order to take care of their individual families. They claimed they would have expected OMPADEC to cater for such poverty alleviation before it went underground in 1998, but this was not the case. Instead, the commission preferred big projects that were never completed. Aside from corruption that crippled the performance of the commission, Ovwasa

(1999:91) noted that politicization of the commission by the Federal government was another major deficiency which worked against it. To him, the politicization was evident when OMPADEC was restructure as a result of corruption charges leveled against Prof Opia; so instead of replacing him with another son of the soil from the Niger Delta region, president Abacha replaced Opia with a Northerner- a former Assistant Inspector General of police known as Alhaji Bukar Ali, which triggered the antagonism of the Niger Delta people. Perhaps, instead of the commission to reduce the discontent in the Delta region, it eventually increased it.

Okonta and Douglas (1999:51) was also specific on the factors which led to the total failure of OMPADEC in achieving its objectives as a development agency across the oil producing communities; claiming that the commission did not place much emphasis on environmentally sustainable development. According to them, the commission lacked committed personnel to enable it meet its ecological mandate; there was absence of long-term planning before projects were initiated; Lack of committed personnel to monitor and assess ongoing projects coupled with poor maintenance; there was no integrated approach to development planning which should involve the local communities and other government agencies in the area. Infact, Okonta and Douglas's positions was also affirmed by the report of the Niger Delta Regional Master Plan in an appraisal of what led to OMPADEC's failure that OMPADEC suffered from lack of focus, inadequate and irregular funding, official profligacy, corruption, excessive political interference, lack of transparency and accountability, and high overhead expenditure.

Most importantly, OMPADEC's projects had little to do with poverty reduction and the vast majority of the people did not benefit from its activities. In brief, OMPADEC failed abjectly to abate discontent and restiveness in the Region' (The Niger Delta Regional Master Plan 2006:57). Based on the failures recorded by OMPADEC regarding its inability to turn the tide of poverty by providing better quality of life for individual families residing in the oil producing communities and their environments, thus, the time was just right for OMPADEC to give way to a better substitute which can restore the fortunes of the Niger Deltans. Thus, in 1999, there was a change of baton from the then military head of State General Salami Abubakar to a democratic civilian president, Olusegun Obasanjo perhaps, time was just right to replace this corrupt bound commission (OMPADEC) with a more result oriented agency because it

was just a colossal failure. Indeed, president Olusegun Obasanjo led up to expectation by changing the commission in accordance with section 28, sub-section 1, of the NDDC Act of 2000, which consequentially dissolved the establishment of OMPADEC by repealing the earlier Decree 1998 that established it (NDDC Act 2000).

#### **4.4.3 NDDC Development Initiative and Environmental Degradation in the Oil Producing Communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State.**

NDDC represents another laudable attempt by the government to bring socio-economic succor to the people and to address the issues of perennial environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. President Olusegun Obasanjo who took over the leadership of Nigeria in 1999 facilitated the establishment of NDDC through the bill he sent to the National assembly in 1999 which later became the NDDC Act of 2000 as passed by the Senate on the 6th of June 2000 while the House of Representatives passed it into law on the 1st of June 2000 in accordance with the provisions of the Acts Authentication of 1961.

The NDDC Bill later became an Act of the National Assembly in accordance with the provisions of Section 58(5) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Although, NDDC has similar functions to those of defunct OMPADEC but the failures and success of the commission were based on its leadership's ability to excellently surmount the problems that brought OMPADEC down to its knees (Ikporukpo 2001). As stated in the NDDC Act of 2000, the basic mandate of the commission was all-inclusive with a central purpose of re-invigorating the environmental and developmental challenges of the Deltans. Under Part II, section 7 of the NDDC Act which has to do with the functions and Powers of the Commission, it was stated that the commission shall:

- 1.(a). Formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger-Delta, area,
- (b). conceive, plan and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger-Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications;

- (c). cause the Niger-Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio- economic development,
- (d). prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger-Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes;
- (e). implement all the measures approved for the development of the Niger-Delta area by the Federal Government and the member States of the Commission;
- (f). identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger-Delta area and assist the member States in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger-Delta area,
- (g). assess and report on any project being funded or carried out in the Niger-Delta area by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organisations and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilised;
- (h). tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger-Delta area and advise the Federal Government and the member States on the prevention and control of oil spillages gas flaring and environmental pollution.
- (i). liaise with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control.
- (j). execute such other works and perform such other functions which in the opinion of the Commission, are required for the sustainable development of the Niger- Delta area and its peoples; and
- (2). in excising its functions and powers under this section, the Commission shall have regard to the varied and specific contributions of each member State of the Commission.



- (3). The Commission shall be subject to the direction, control or supervision in the performance of its functions under this Act by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The NDDC Act also makes provisions for sustainable sources of funds for the commission in order for it to function excellently as required by the government. According to part V of the Act, under section 14 which has to do with financial provisions clearly provided for several viable sources of funding in line with constitutional requirements, especially statutory allocations from the federation account. As regards financial requirements, the Act mandated as follows:

- (1). The Commission shall establish and maintain a fund from which shall be frayed all expenditure incurred by the Commission.
- (2). There shall be paid and credited to the fund established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section:
  - (a). from the Federal Government, the equivalent of 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member States of the Commission from the Federation Account; this being the contribution of the, Federal Government to the Commission-
  - (b). 3 percent of the total annual budget of any oil producing company operating, on shore and off shore, in the Niger-Delta Area; including gas processing companies;
  - (c). 50 percent of monies due to member States of the Commission from the Ecological Fund,
  - (d). such monies as may from time to time, be granted or lent to or deposited with the Commission by the Federal or a State Government, any other body or institution whether local or foreign;
  - (e). all money raised for the purposes of the Commission by way of gifts, loan, grants-in-aid, testamentary disposition or otherwise; and

- (f). proceeds from all other assets that may, from time to time, accrue to the Commission.

Based on these foregoing provisions as stated in the NDDC Act of 2000, one would have no doubt to say that a new dawn for developmental progress and prosperity has been rekindled to the Niger Delta region. However, immediately the new commission came on board, it inherited all the operating structures, projects, assets, liabilities and personnel of its predecessor. Two related strategies were imbibed by NDDC, one immediate and the other long term, developed for the development of Niger Delta. The instant adopted strategy of the NDDC in order to achieve its aim is to first complete the old OMPADEC projects, and then create new strategic projects (development infrastructures) and human capital investment.

Projects in this category include water supply; rural electrification; roads maintenance and construction; jetties and shore protection; school building; health centres; land reclamation and dredging; while the long term strategy is the development of a comprehensive Master Plan that will detail a phased development of the entire region (NDDC, 2001:11). That is, all previous and ongoing projects executed by governments, oil companies, NGOs, and so on, will ultimately be integrated into the Master Plan.

The far-reaching strategies developed by NDDC were to cover a periodic development plan for the entire Niger Delta region which was designed through the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan. The Master Plan is a 260 page document published in 2006 to serve as a guide for the NDDC in fulfilling its mandate in the Niger Delta Region. The Commission adopted the bottom-up approach in developing the Master Plan. The whole idea is to make the people the drivers of their own development by involving them in the conception, planning, and implementation of the NDDC's programmes to be executed in their areas ((NDDC 2001).

To this end, the Commission held Stakeholders' Consultative Forums in all the nine-member states and some local government areas of the Niger Delta soon after its inauguration. The forums provided opportunity for the people, particularly those at the grassroots to tell the NDDC what they wanted in the order of priority. In addition, communities were encouraged to write the vision of their development to the

Commission. Since its publication, the Master Plan serves as the roadmap for the social, economic, and physical development of the Niger Delta Region (NDR).

Expectedly, it articulates the strategies of the Commission. “The Master Plan Strategy” is summarised in pages 18 through 26 in the executive summary and fully discussed in pages 161 through 164 of the Master Plan, where it was titled “The Strategy for Change in the Niger Delta Region”. The strategy is rooted in the vision to improve the quality of life of the Niger Delta people (with particular attention to those with the greatest need) by making good use of the region’s rich natural resources for the prosperity of the region (Master Plan, 2006).

To an individual family residing in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta, NDDC symbolizes their lost hope regarding the nature and manner the commission stated its developmental programmes as it is obtainable in other regions of Nigeria. Ayodele et al (2016:370) claimed that through the NDDC, the government has expended as much as ₦80 billion on people’s developmental projects which is aimed at transforming all nooks and crannies of the oil producing communities of the NDR. These developmental initiatives are education, rural health care, environment, safety and mass transit schemes. Unfortunately, corruption, greed, incessant violent conflicts and top bottom approach of NDDC has hindered government development interventions from getting to inhabitants of oil producing communities in the Niger Delta, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom of Delta State.

Omeje (2004:127-128) concurred that some 700-project contracts have so far been awarded by NDDC, of which 358 had been completed. But only 100 of such completed projects had been commissioned. Some of the completed projects include some 40 roads, 90 water projects, 129 electrification projects, 47 shore protection/jetty projects and 50 health center’s (Vanguard, 2003a). The Commission has also reportedly built some 205 new classroom blocks in a number of community primary and secondary schools, rehabilitated about 130 other classroom blocks and supplied facilities such as furniture and science equipment to many schools. In collaboration with Pro-Health, an international NGO, the Commission provides primary health care services in a number of Niger Delta communities while thousands of local people, mostly farmers and youths, are being supported through agricultural extension services and self-reliant skills acquisition (Vanguard, 2003a).

Recent statistics released by the NDDC Executive Chairman, Onyema Ugochukwu showed a considerably larger number of projects. According to the Chairman, the Commission has since its inception completed a total of 783 projects out of which 190 had been commissioned (Vanguard, 2003b). To Omotola (2007:81), NDDC executed about 810 projects in 2003 to 2004 in different sectors of the delta. However, it is important to note that despite so much developmental projects recorded for the commission in the last 23 years (2000 – 2023) of its existence, its shortcomings and challenges are numerous. As a matter of fact, NDDC has not lived up to the expectations and hope that was reposed on it across the oil producing areas, especially in Delta State despite the number of make-believe completed projects its directors have showcased for Nigerians in the media so far. NDDC's financial misappropriation and recklessness even prompted President Muhammadu Buhari to set up a forensic audit of the commission. This was carried out by three auditing firms including Philip consulting but the outcome still remains secret till date.

In the study areas of Youbebe and Obuguru communities, NDDC's impact regarding socio-economic life improvement and physical developmental projects such as the provision of basic social amenities like roads, shelter and hospital are nothing to write home about and it is too little too late. Personal observations in Ogulagha Kingdom showed blatant neglects by NDDC as if the Kingdom and other oil producing communities across Delta State are not part of the major wealth creation sources regarding petro-dollars for Nigeria. One of the few visible NDDC projects on sight was the abandoned town hall project in Ogulagha Kingdom which was awarded many years ago without completion (see picture below):



**Plate 4.13: Abandoned NDDC town hall project in Ogulagha Kingdom.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Environmental and social development scholars' opinions were divergent regarding the poor performance of NDDC. The commission's performance so far was purely based on superficial performance which has not benefited the rural dwellers in the oil producing communities. The people who should have been the first beneficiary of any developmental arrangements before those in the urban areas are still wallowing in poverty and environmental injustice as a result of oil exploitation activities. Uwejevwe-Togbolo (2005:3) buttressed that NDDC's vocational training skills embarked upon have been a charade because these programmes do not get to the grass root people who are in dire need of the scheme. To him, the lists of these trainees are often being compiled up in a corrupt manner. He concluded that the commission is just a shadow of OMPADEC.

Omeje (2004:129) actually concluded that the recorded failures of NDDC so far should go to the Federal government and the multinational oil companies who reneged on its financial obligations to the commission. To him, the 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member States coupled with the multinationals' reluctance in paying the 3 percent of the annual profits that should be remitted to the commission's coffer as stated in section 14, sub-section (2a&b) of the NDDC Act 2000. Omeje's argument was affirmed by Goddey (2011:109) who reported that NDDC was starved of funds, due to poor enforcement of the laws guiding the funding of NDDC. He explicitly illustrated the commission's financial challenges with a table which shows revenue allocation and disbursement to NDDC from 2001 – 2007.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget Allocation</b>	<b>Actual Funds Released to NDDC</b>	<b>Funds not released to NDDC from the Budget</b>
2001	N30.230 billion	N7.5 billion	N22.730 billion
2002	N28.405 billion	N11.264 billion	N17.141 billion
2003	N40.019 billion	N10.003 billion	N29.956 billion
2004	N43.812 billion	N14 billion	N29. 812 billion
2005	N80.215 billion	N17.357 billion	N62.858 billion
2006	N97.446 billion	N26.130 billion	N71.316 billion
2007	N102 billion	N24 billion	N78 billion
<b>Total</b>	<b>422.127 billion</b>	<b>N110.314 billion</b>	<b>N311.813 billion</b>

Source: Goddey (2011:109)

However, Goddeys position was invalidated by Jike (2005:159) superior argument which he based on corruption rather than poor funding believes. According to him, corruption remains a major impediment facing NDDC from inception, which has led to the removal of the previous commission's directors three times (such as Mr Godwin Omene) in less than six years by the president. Perhaps, the fourth director of the commission (Timi Alaibi) was relieved of his duties in 2011 based on corruption charges.

The menace of corruption and poor record of account which crippled OMPADEC has also become enshrined in NDDC which is absolutely contrary to section 18. Sub-section (2) of the NDDC Act 2000, which clearly stated that 'the Board shall cause to be kept proper accounts of the Commission in respect of each year and proper records in relation thereto and shall cause the accounts to be audited not later than 6 months after the end of each year by auditors appointed from the list and in accordance with the guidelines supplied by the Auditor-General of the Federation'. Noteworthy at this junction is the fact that the NDDC Act 2000 has been contravened many years till date because no proper assessment of the commission's account by auditor-general of the Federation has been carried out in the last 12 years because if it was done, definitely the issue of corruption which has now become part and parcel of erstwhile directors of the NDDC would have been nipped in the bud. Perhaps, another angle to also look at the issue is to find out the unholy relationship that existed between past directors and the Auditor general of the Federation concerning being passive instead of being a whistle blower to the federal government on NDDC's regular account auditing.

Another major deficiency of NDDC is that the Commission often unilaterally decides for the people what is good for them, developmentally. Godday (2011:111) corroborated that even the preparation of the much talked about Master Plan for the Niger Delta development was imported from abroad by Shell through the German research institute in Nigeria GTZ and imposed on the people without any thorough input or consultation from them regarding such development road map, definitely such imposed development initiatives cannot stand the test of time, which is exactly the realities across the oil producing communities.

Most regrettably from inception, NDDC has never enjoyed total autonomy to drive developmental projects from vested interest of the past and present government. To a



large extent, NDDC has been tied to the apron string of the government; this justifies the adage that says 'he who plays the piper dictates the tune'. Section 23 of the NDDC Act 2000 clearly stated that 'the President may give to the Commission directives of a general nature or relating generally to matters of policy with regard to the performance by the Commission of its functions and it shall be the duty of the Commission to comply with the directives' (NDDC Act 2000).

Without mincing word, the government has continued to suggest to the commission through her mediocre party members till date as regard shallow developmental ideas and or white elephant project that would never be completed till eternity, which the director must comply with by force if the commission's director still wants to remain in the office. Perhaps, this has been a major reason why the superficial Niger Delta Master plan which was used in other developed countries based on their own peculiar terrain was imposed on the local farmers and fishermen who can neither read nor write.

Conclusively, laudable as NDDC might appear, its 20 years of existence has not been adjudged fruitful. The commission needs more synergy and proactive job in its developmental drive in order for it to adequately touch the lives of an average inhabitant across the oil producing communities. Still, the government also needs to restructure and amend the NDDC Act of 2000 so as to repeal some contradicting rules that established the commission so that it can better perform its developmental responsibilities to the people. Most importantly, NDDC should live up to expectations of the people, especially families by deliberately engaging the beneficiaries of its developmental programmes in thorough discussions concerning their immediate and longtime poverty alleviation programmes as specific as possible; it is when this is sincerely done that the people can be glad that indeed democracy has come to stay; invariable peace and development can then be achieved in the NDR.

#### **4.4.4 DESOPADEC's Development Interventions in the Oil Producing Communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State.**

The Board of Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) was set up in July, 2007, to execute a clear and critical mandate; to rehabilitate, rejuvenate and resuscitate the peoples and communities of the oil producing areas of Delta State. This mandate is stated unequivocally in Section 13 (i) of the enabling law which set up DESOPADEC and states that the Commission shall

“receive and administer exclusively the fifty percent (50%) of the thirteen percent (13%) Oil Derivation Fund accruing to the Delta State Government for:

- (a) The rehabilitation and development of Oil Producing Areas in the State, and
- (b) Other development projects as may be determined from time to time by the Commission.

The composition of the Board of Commission was carried out according to the production quantum of each of the oil producing ethnic nationalities that made up the oil producing area of Delta state and after due consultations with all the major stakeholders in the region, including the Youths, Women, elders and traditional institutions, the action plan of DESOPADEC was then defined in consonance with the 3-Point Agenda of the Administration of His Excellency, Dr. Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan, Governor of Delta State which are: Peace and Security, Human Capital Development and Infrastructural Development. Although it has had a retroactive effect from 1st August 2006, under the governorship of Chief James Ibori. A board of DESOPADEC with an executive chairman and commissioners from the oil-bearing ethnic nationalities in the state were subsequently put in place.

### **Activities of DESOPADEC**

The law establishing the Commission in Section 14 empowers it to:

- (i) Manage and supervise the affairs of the Commission;
- (ii) Enter into contract as may be necessary or expedient for the discharge of its functions and ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Commission in accordance with government financial regulations;
- (iii) Establish and maintain such number of departments as it may deem fit for the effective discharge of its functions;
- (iv) Pay the staff of the Commission such remunerations and allowances as appropriate;
- (v) Make rules and regulations for carrying out the functions of the Commission; and
- (vi) Do other things as necessary and expedient for the efficient performance of the functions of the Commission (<http://www.deltastate.gov.ng/index/php/modules-menu/special-duties/desopadec>).

As regards the sharing formula of the annual developmental allocation by Delta State government to DESOPADEC, a Key Informant respondent asserted that the money being allocated to DESOPADEC is being shared by: *“all the communities that DESOPADEC covers, when the money comes the government divides it on percentage bases: Itsekiri 29%, Ijaws 27%, Urhobos 21%, Isoko 14%, Ndokwa 9%”* (**Key Informant Interview with DESOPADEC staff in Ogulagha main town during field trip in 2007**). According to the News Agency of Nigeria in Asaba on February 23, 2013 during an interactive session with the former Delta State govern Governor Emmanuel Oduaghan claimed to have released about ₦160 billion to the State Oil Producing Area Development Commission (DESOPADEC) in 2007 for oil producing communities (<http://www.nanngronline.com/section/economy/delta-releases-n160bn>).

Hence, in a quest to make sure the commission remains focused in carrying along the oil producing communities in its development programmes, the former governor, Emmanuel Oduaghan in an appeal in 2007 told DESOPADEC direcrors that “I appeal to you to involve the host communities in your activities. Use the bottom-up approach, which requirevarious oil producing communities determine the projects they want in th eir area. With this, peace will reign and development enhanced” (<http://www.spyghana.com/uduaghan-flags-off-desopadec-free-health-care-scheme>).

Another major development stride of DESOPADEC is its all-encompassing free health scheme initiative for Deltans, The incumbent governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State 2020 initiated the free health programme and said the scheme covers free medical treatment for surgery, dental examinations, eyes surgery, provision of glasses, HIV/AIDS counseling and screening, maternal scan, diabetes screening, ear examination/hearing screening, and was aimed at bringing health care delivery closer to the rural populace who could not afford medical bills (<http://www.spyghana.com/ifeanyiokowa-flags-off-desopadec-free-health-care-scheme>). Infact the commission has executed conservatively about 790 projects to address the developmental problems in the oil producing areas (<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/news-metro>).

In 2009, incumbent Delta State government Ifeanyi Okowa like his predecessor budgeted ₦30 billion for DESOPADEC. In 2010, ₦35 billion was budgeted for

development interventions, while ₦28 billion was budgeted in 2016 for the oil producing communities of Itsekiris, Ijaw, Urhobos, Ndokwa, Isoko and Ogbara which all make up DESOPADEC (Akelemo, Edith, Otto and Ohale 2018). A Key Informant Interviewee who is the community liaison officer of DESOPADEC in Delta State opened up concerning what has been done so far in improving environmental degradation and poverty alleviation across the oil producing communities in Delta State below:

Concerning environmental degradation across Delta State, DESOPADEC has always been intervening. We have given over a billion naira as micro credit facility to multi-purpose cooperatives. Still, it boils down to the fact that you see groups coming to pick the money without knowing what to do with the money **(KII with the community liaison officer of DESOPADEC during fieldwork in Warri 2017).**

As regards development initiatives in the study areas, the commission's official further claimed that: the commission has been using bottom up approach to intervene in the communities in the coastal areas. According to him:

Two years ago, coastal areas community cooperative societies were asked to register with the commission after which they gave ₦100,000 to ₦200,000 to various groups to assist them in whatever business they like. In addition, the commission also assisted interested farmers on rice plantations and poultry farming which failed because it was politically motivated” **(KII with DESOPADEC staff during fieldwork in Warri 2017).**

The DESOPADEC staff aforesaid submission was also full of rhetorics and window dressing comments without physical facts on how family lives have been improved. The commission never talk about practical steps on how it will tackle family poverty which has become endemic in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom. Field observations do not also correspond with the commission's foregoing development narratives. Field observations and comprehensive interviews with families in the oil

producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru in appraising DESOPADEC's developmental achievements revealed that; like NDDC that recorded very poor performance in these communities; DESOPADEC's score card was not better either, owing to the abandonment of even minimal projects it initiated. These projects were meant to serve as life changing ventures, in order to transform individual family lives.

The inhabitants of Ogulagha Kingdom only wanted old promises by the government and oil companies regarding developmental projects like better roads, stable electricity, hospitals and other social amenities to be fulfilled. This also includes better programmes that would alleviate family poverty because oil exploitation activities have hindered them from getting better livelihood from farming and fishing. These invariably have made it very difficult for them to feed and cater for their children. In addressing the most challenging issue of environmental degradation,

It is important to note that even though DESOPADEC has been adjudged to be fair by the people as a development commission that is actually trying to improve the lives of families. This is as a result of its community interventions across the oil producing communities in Delta State. Unfortunately, it has also been evaluated by social analyst and Deltans as a very corrupt commission which is not in any way better than NDDC. Infact, this was confirmed by an independent consultant based in Delta State called Economic Dash Board, which uncovered a fraud of N25billion at the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) in 2016 (<http://leadership.ng/nga/articles>). In addition to this, the Delta State House of Assembly Committee on DESOPADEC has descended heavily on the chairman of the commission for allegedly awarding a road contract of less than one kilometre at an incredible cost of 142 million naira, while 28 million naira has been released for the project (<http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvnews>).

Conclusively, fraud cases are numerous across the oil producing communities that DESOPADEC represents with a very little result to show for it in the area of physical and human developments. One can imagine if all these syphoned monies meant for the improvement of wellbeing of the people and their degraded environment are put in good use, definitely, individual families' wellbeing would have been improved and better projects would have been executed. Hence, as we all know, corruption has

become a plague that would never do anybody any good including its promoters because they would also be a victim of it on the long run.

#### **4.4.5 Intra-communal Conflict and the oil Producing Communities of Ogulagha Kingdom**

Family solidarity, sincere trust, love and the spirit of being each other's keeper, which used to be the basis for peaceful communal coexistence, has finally disappeared from the oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom. These have paved way for widespread suspicion, deep-rooted hatred, unprecedented restiveness and incessant communal conflicts between families. Research findings revealed that the activities of Shell and Agip have also weakened families which are always the essence of communality. Invariably, this created jealousy and prolonged disputes across the Kingdom. Quantitative data also corroborated that the loss of fishing waters and farmlands arising from oil pollution and spillage has robbed families of their traditional means of livelihood. These further constrain families to be overly dependent on menial jobs from Shell and Agip as means of survival including picking periwinkles, snails and business.

Ikelegbe (2006:106-107) affirmed this reality across oil-producing communities across the Niger Delta region that the region's population is largely impoverished, hungry and unemployed. There are misery, hardship, sorrow, hopelessness and neglect among resident families. These have been compounded by the fact that oil exploitation activities have brought environmental pollution, ecological disasters and socio-economic deprivation. Oil exploitation activities has wasted scarce land and fishing waters as well as dislocated primary occupations and created little direct benefits to families. There has been anger, bitterness, grief, frustration, disillusionment and disenchantment among families/youths and a deep sense of injustice, inequality and unfairness. Research findings also discovered that violence now thrives among frustrated youths across oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom. Communities in the Kingdom are now very hostile and are always on the edge over minor disagreements, which often resulted in widespread violence, especially among youths.

In addition, respondents in the study areas all acknowledged that the unwillingness of Shell and Agip to pay compensations for destroyed farmlands and their preference for

paying such compensations to corrupt elders has been the major source of serious intra-communal confrontations which has led to many killings between families in the Kingdom. This was caused by constant allegations of corruption and embezzlement levelled against some family elders, community chiefs and youth representatives. An incident during field observation in Ogulagha Kingdom was a manifestation of intra-communal encounter.

A youth in the community pursued an elder of the community until he caught up with him and cruelly cut him with a machete at the community's open field where a burial was going on. It was the elder's continuous shout for help that attracted the attention of many passers-by including the researcher. He was lucky to survive it. Surprisingly, eye-witnesses around the scene of the incident were unperturbed. A respondent later told the researcher, "...my brother, don't worry yourself, we are used to occurrences like this here". An interviewee further said that the youth who attacked the elder did so as a result of an argument over some millions of naira given by Shell as compensation over destroyed farmland.

A senior staff of Shell, during a key informant interview in Ogulagha Kingdom, also condemned the continuous greed and corruption of the elders, especially the king of the Kingdom. She stated that ... *"the king of Ogulagha Kingdom has about 20 companies which serves as sources of income for him alone at the expense of his people (Key informant interview with Shell senior staff in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017)*. This confirms that the king is also a contributor to the poverty currently being experienced by his subjects because most of the companies owned by him have not contributed to the curtailing of unemployment challenges in his domain. According to an interviewee, *"these twenty companies were just meant to drain off all the financial benefits accruing to the Kingdom and for the recruitment of ghost workers" (IDI with a youth leader in Ogulagha main town during field work in 2007)*. In addition, a key informant revealed:

Even the most talked about security company that was owned by the king, which was meant to recruit some security workers for the protection of Shell and Agip oil company facilities was filled with ghost workers with just very few existing names which the king has been lusing to syphoned

money monthly from these oil companies” **(KII with a Shell senior staff in Warri, Delta State, during field trip in 2017).**

Doubtlessly, these acts of corruption and marginalisation by the king, his chiefs and some corrupt elders pushed family groups and youths to confront them violently in order to restore sanity and tranquillity. Thus, the major cause of irresponsibility of the king and elders which has made them lost respect across the oil producing communities was properly situated by Kemedey (2003) who explained that oil industries have strongly been linked to the breakdown of all known traditional structures of the people by deliberately corrupting the people’s respected elders.

Observation in the field of study further revealed that the much-cherished Ogulagha Kingdom’s culture and communal governance of *Amagula* (community court), under the leadership of Amakusowe (gerontocratic leadership) has been destroyed. Consequently, Shell and Agip, being legacies of colonial heritage had further destroyed the remains of the Ogulagha family’s socio-cultural values, mores and norms (which naturally regulate the relationship between the elders, youths and the entire community) through their past military, cultural invasions and exploitation of the people’s oil with impunity (Raji 2013).

Findings also revealed that immediately the laws regulating the communities in Ogulagha Kingdom broke down and oil exploitation activities across the oil-producing communities in the Kingdom intensified, it directly affects families’ financial strength to cater for their offspring. This resulted into hostilities as families engaged each other including oil companies in serious face-off over the remaining parcels of land for farming. The youths in the Kingdom also arose in defence of their various families and ditched respect for their elders and resorted to violent confrontation at the slightest provocation, using cutlasses and guns when necessary.

Research findings further exposed that, as soon as the oil companies succeeded in corrupting the king, chiefs and elders, youth leaders representing their various families emerged as the only effective symbol of leadership and the corrupt elders were compelled to handover the responsibility of liaising and negotiating with oil companies to them. Ikelegbe (2005:114) also noted that unemployed youths in many oil-producing



communities in the Niger Delta had simply pushed aside (sometimes with intimidation) traditional authorities considered as corrupt and irresponsible.

However, anger of youths was not directed against corrupt community elders alone, Shell and Agip oil companies also faced serious violent confrontations for constantly fanning the embers of violence by rewarding traditional rulers and their chiefs who gave strong supports to devastating oil exploitation sprees at the expense of their people. A key informant in Ogulagha Kingdom complained: *“the community chiefs only go to Youbebe and or Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom when they are aware that Shell or Agip have some food items or money to share among families in order to take advantage of it” (KII with Agip staff in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017).*

It is important also that feelings of animosity by the youths, resulting in intra-community violent confrontations are not directed at the elders and chiefs alone, but also at rival youth factions or youth leaders found corrupt. An in-depth interview with one of the youth executives in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom exposed that the money donated by Shell seven years earlier for community development projects was misappropriated by some corrupt youth executives. This resulted in serious intra-communal violence and death of at least five youths. Issues of corruption are constant reason for intra-communal conflict in Ogulagha Kingdom. An interviewee corroborated that:

When I was the executive youth leader, the youth’s association in Youbebe accused me of not performing well, so I was suspended with the other executives for three months. Before I came back, over one million naira had been misappropriated by the interim executives **(IDI in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork with a former Youth executive in 2017).**

Findings also revealed that many youths in the study areas have resorted into reckless scrambling for survival through imposition of financial demands on Shell and Agip. This includes engaging in criminal activities such as kidnapping of oil company workers and even killing any elder or rival gangs that intends to disturb them. Sadly,

today, most families that these youths represent have become morally insolvent to the point of standing behind their children even when they commit crimes. As long as these youths bring money home for their families to eat, they get the blessings of their parents. This goes with a popular Yoruba adage which says that “a child that brings home money will always get the praises of his or her parents”. All these formed the bases of intra-communal confrontations across Ogulagha Kingdom.

Additional field report on other triggers of intra-communal violent conflict in the study areas shows that immediately multinational oil companies started relating with the youths in terms of which group is more powerful and destructive, rather than the group that is properly constituted by respected community leaders to get compensations and accruing opportunities from oil companies, the stage became set for serious intra-communal violent conflicts with unprecedented consequences. Field observations further revealed that Youbebe community youth group of Ogulagha Kingdom are brutal for their aggressive violent nature among rival youth groups in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom. Their notoriety regularly secured them a surveillance security contract in Youbebe community from Shell.

Violent disposition of Youbebe youths, prompted Agip to terminate their initial contract signed some years ago with youths in Obuguru for the protection of their oil facilities and also transferred it to Youbebe youth groups. This resulted in pandemonium instantly, when Obuguru youths prevented Youbebe community youths from entering their community for the surveillance job. This culminated in violent conflict that was extraordinary in the history of Ogulagha Kingdom. The trend continued until few respected elders intervened in 2007. This surveillance security contract actually led to the death of many youths in Ogulagha Kingdom. It is a major source of continuous intra-communal violent confrontations among youths till date. FGD interview with these youth groups revealed that none of these groups desire to give up, making violent uprising a daily affair.

Furthermore, field data extracted from key informants and in-depth interviewees indicated that impartial execution of projects by government development agencies such as NDDC and DESOPADEC have also fuelled rivalry, confrontation and violent intra-communal conflicts among local subgroups. Conclusively, the menace of intra-communal conflict has stalled meaningful development programmes and tangible

progress across Ogulagha Kingdom, just as it has caused untimely deaths of many promising youths.

#### **4.4.6 Youth Militancy and Violent Confrontation against Oil Companies in Ogulagha Kingdom**

*It is incredible that wherever prime raw material is discovered the locals die in misery, their sons become soldiers, and their daughters are turned into servants and whores (Courson 2009:6).*

Youths in the Niger Delta have established their dominance as the most violent group in the Niger Delta. At various times after being pushed to the wall since 1997, they got involved in armed insurgency against the state security forces and oil multinationals over various issues with devastating consequences. This is an indication that the people, especially, the youths simply can no longer bear the suffering to which they have been subjected to by the government and oil companies. Therefore, this has pushed many youths to the forefront of violent confrontations and militancy across the Delta region till date (Aregbeyan and Adeoye 2001, Anugwon 2001).

Field data gathered in the oil-producing communities of Youbebe and Obuguru of Ogulagha Kingdom revealed that untold hardship suffered by families and exceptional social inequalities persisting in their communities have compelled them to pledge their open support for their youths who has overthrown the leadership of manipulative elders. Additional findings also revealed that youths in Ogulagha Kingdom decided to be freedom fighter by resisting marginalisation of multinational oil companies which impoverished their parents with the hope of restoring their degraded environment and improve their family's well-being. Asuni (2009:3) concurs that all youth groups get inspirational supports of their local communities and family members in taking up militancy against the exploitation of their region by oil companies and the Federal Government.

Findings and visual observations in Ogulagha Kingdom showed that unlike the king and his chiefs who often connive with oil companies to marginalise his people, majority of militant youths regularly give back to their communities, especially their families because of the unprecedented support they get from them. Such community and or family support came to them in form of egbesu initiation. The alliance of the

youths to the egbesu cult in Ogulagha Kingdom can be explained by a strong belief in its protective powers and the fact that such belief is seen as a route to acquiring broad-based community and family support for militancy (Raji 2013).

Individuals can only become a member of the militant group in Ogulagha Kingdom by performing the egbesu rituals and then acquire the full rights and privileges of Ijaw citizenship (Anugwom 2011:13). A clear example of the accruing benefits being enjoyed by parents who gives adequate supports to their children in order to become a militant in Ogulagha Kingdom was unequivocally revealed by a respondent below. The respondent confirmed that General Government Ekpemupolo, also known as Tompolo (one of the most notorious Ijaw militant leaders in Delta State, whose father hails from Gbaramatu and his mother from Ogulagha Kingdom), built a beautiful house in Ogulagha main town for his mother for supporting his militant activities.

An interviewee posited further that Tompolo does not only get adequate support alone from his mother, the entire Ogulagha Kingdom also revered him. Findings ascertained that: *“Tompolo secured employments for many youths and he was also responsible for the permanent settlement of many protracted intra-ethnic violent conflicts between Ogulagha Kingdom and other neighbouring communities” (IDI with an old woman in Ogulagha main town during field-work in 2017).*

Asuni (2009:12) concurs that militant groups across the oil producing communities have been able to pose as freedom fighters for their communities against the federal Government and oil companies' greed and exploitative policies. Visual observation and indepth interviews established that, strong family solidarity and unprecedented community protection of militant war lords and their groups in Ogulagha Kingdom during difficult periods against Nigeria security agencies have sustained militancy in Delta state and its environs.

Interviewees unanimously agreed that Chief Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) is one of the leaders of militant groups who trained the youths in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom to militancy. This warlord capitalised on his benevolence towards the youths who were all challenged by poverty, isolation, humiliation, frustration and strong desire to better the lots of their families and communities. Although Tompolo's camp-five militant base was in Gbaramatu axis of the Western part of Delta State, he

was compelled to seek refuge in Ogulagha Kingdom in 2009 during a faceoff with the Joint Task Force (JTF).

Based on findings, JTF as at that time was on a military mission to rescue the Federal Government's dwindling oil revenues in Delta State. The Joint Tax Force deployed four fighter jets, 24 gun boats, helicopters and three battalions of the Nigerian army and Navy into his camp to crush his boys for eliminating 18 military officers across Delta State. Tompolo-led militant group was attacked by the military, using fighter jets and bombs, alongside ground troops and naval support. A fisherman who was close to the scene of the event rendered this account:

Tompolo gets wisdom well! well o!!. This last operation, Army bring 16 gun boats with one war ship come Gbaramatu, with 2 operational helicopters to fight am. Na the person wey dey the government side call am say Army dey road! As den come, den come dey shoot. The person wey dey serve ham juju wey den shoot tear into two, na him make am tell him boys say make everybody find him way **(IDI in Obuguru community of Ogulagha Kingdom with a fisherman during field-work in 2017).**

Findings further established that this incident informed the quick decision of Tompolo with some of his boys to temporarily move to Ogulagha Kingdom, his mother's place of birth, where he found solace until the violent encounter subsided in Gbaramatu Kingdom. It was during this period he recruited many willing and distressed youths across Ogulagha Kingdom with the support of their parents. Many of these youths were victims of family poverty, neglect and disorganisation. The development actually set the stage for full-blown militant activities in Ogulagha Kingdom from 2009 till date.

General Tompolo's emergence in Ogulagha Kingdom made him a formidable militant leader to reckon with, having succeeded in providing youths with a united front with the firm support of their helpless families. Research findings revealed that Tompolo executed a drastic change across the oil-producing communities, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom, regarding the creation of many "illegal opportunities" for many youths under his control by deliberately imposing some of them on the payroll of Shell

Oil Company as junior staff. Some youths were also recruited and posted out by his security surveillance company for Agip and Shell Oil Companies facility protection. A key field informant claimed: *“oil bunkering remains a major source of financial strength of Tompolo and his boys” (IDI with a high chief in Youbebe community of Ogulagha Kingdom during a field trip in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).*

This was clearly reflected in the number of oil spillages arising from sabotage from militants as a result of blatant stealing from commissioned and or decommissioned oil wells across oil platforms scattered everywhere in oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom. Research findings revealed also that some of Tompolo’s trustworthy boys were responsible for the kidnapping of foreign and local oil workers for ransom purposes. Kidnapping in Ogulagha Kingdom by the militant youths has compelled Shell and Agip which exploit oil in the Kingdom to wake up to their responsibilities regarding the implementation of the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) signed with host families in the Kingdom.

This implementation has become necessary due to the fact that some of their key staff of the oil companies have been harassed and kidnapped at various times by militants. Infact oil companies’ pipe-lines in the study areas have also been vandalised, causing the reduction of several barrels of oil and loss of dollars which would have accrued to the coffers of the Federal Government of Nigeria. All respondents condemned the deceitful nature of oil companies in Ogulagha Kingdom, like offering the communities in the Kingdom Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) which was full of empty promises.

Respondents said further that most oil companies do this regularly to freely gain access into the host community’s oil resources. Immediately access is gained, oil companies appeals to the Federal Government for security support by the police and the Army to suppress the host communities. Field data revealed also that Shell and Agip, for a long time, relied on the full protection of security agencies and suppression of the host communities rather than being corporately responsible and humane to them.

Ikelegbe (2005:225) affirms that multinational oil companies often secure security contingents from the national security agencies which they motivate regularly and arm for the protection of their oil facilities and intimidation of indigenes. They even

purchase arms as well as provide logistics and support for state security agencies in their repression of the inhabitants of the communities. There have been instances where inhabitants suffer injuries and, in some cases, death from the security forces (Hayes and Walker 2005:410).

However, in correcting Shell's many years of corporate irresponsibility in Ogulagha Kingdom coupled with an attempt to stop continuous onslaught of militants on Shell's oil fields, observations and In-depth interviews showed that, in 2017, Shell awarded a contract for the much-delayed supply of pipe-borne water to the people of Ogulagha Kingdom, leaving other neighbouring communities around this Kingdom out of the project. This incident further generated a lot of inter-communal rivalries, protests and violent conflicts during which some youths were injured.

Wiwa (2014:10) confirms that the oil companies and the government of Nigeria have both limited the youths' potential to advance and succeed in the Delta region and this deliberate act of limitation has culminated in violence and other criminal activities. Observations showed that indigenes of Ogulagha Kingdom are not violent people by nature but their present predicament of environmental degradation, poverty and intimidation by soldiers guarding oil facilities has translated into continuous intimidation and harassment of these host communities. Consequently, this has eventually made them violent. Observations also revealed that the relative peace observed in the study areas is spurious and cannot stand the test of time. A key informant confirmed this:

The people of Ogulagha Kingdom do not have militancy; it was the federal government that has taught us violent confrontations. This place was a peaceful place before, but by the time the government started drafting military men into this place to intimidate the people to the point that they are now used to intimidation, they started fighting back (**IDI with a community elder in Ogulagha Kingdom during field trip in 2017**).

One would have expected that failure of the coercive tactics of the Federal Government would discourage it from further recourse to military oppression in addressing the

menace of militant face-off in Youbebe and Obuguru communities of Ogulagha Kingdom; instead, the acts of intimidation in the Kingdom persisted. This further became obvious when President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua presented the 2008 budget to the National Assembly in March 2008. In that budget, the president allocated the sum of 444 billion naira to security in the Niger Delta, while an insignificant amount of 69 billion naira was allotted to the NDDC for the development of Delta region (Courson 2009:23).

Ostby (2008:143) asserts that in any environment where horizontal inequalities exist (that is a society where power and resources are unevenly distributed), violent conflicts are inevitable immediately such marginalised group develops deep sense of collective deprivation due to continuous discrimination. Ikelegbe (2006:108) posits that rather for it to weaken or create fear, the prevalent state repression has hardened and radicalised the youths, making militancy the only option of confronting the state. Ross (2008:4) was right when he posited that oil wealth causes economic instability, which often leads to political instability. Hence, when people lose their jobs, they become embittered with the government and more vulnerable to being recruited by warlords in confronting the affected governments and its allies to attract strategic attention.

#### **4.4.7 Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) Community Development Initiatives in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Even though Shell and Agip has not been very proactive enough in urgently attending to the environmental degradation and poverty currently being faced daily by families in Ogulagha Kingdom. Thus, these oil companies are still funding many significant developmental projects that are making lives a bit easier across the Kingdom. The discovery of oil and gas in the Kingdom has provided families the opportunity for appreciable improvement in their living conditions. In this section, the researcher documented all the developmental initiatives by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) in order to put this research in better and impartial perspectives. The researcher will comprehensively beam light on SPDC's Developmental initiatives then followed by Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited community development strategies.



In 1936, the royal Dutch/Shell Group founded Shell D'Arcy, the first Shell Company in Nigeria. By November 1938, Shell D'Arcy was granted exploration license to prospect for oil throughout Nigeria. In January 1956, first successful oil was drilled at Oloibiri by Shell D'Arcy. In February 1958, the first shipment of oil from Nigeria was exported abroad. Starting from this little beginning of achievement, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) tops the rank of the arrays of the richest and successful privately owned oil companies in Nigeria in conjunction with NNPC till date with huge profit to show for it.

As a result of expanded operations, Shell was able to make important discoveries of which the most promising one was the Bomu oil field in the Ogoni area in 1958 (Frynas et al 2000:412). All these success stories of Shell were achieved based on the company's first mover advantage, which was/is pivotal to its success story during Nigeria's pre and post-colonial periods.



**Plate 4.14: SPDC's Offshore oil facility equipment situated in Ogulagha River**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Frynas et al (2000) further confirmed that Shell occupied the advantageous position in Nigeria owing to the fact that on the eve of Nigeria's independence in 1960, Shell-BP was able to choose 46 oil mining leases in the most promising areas which gave the company a virtual monopoly over Nigeria's oil exploration and production in the decades to come. Despite the looming competition, Shell-BP had benefited from the economic interests and strategic calculations of the British Empire. The other oil companies had to start anew, while Shell-BP had the experience of over 20 years in Nigeria which helped the company to have the first mover advantage over other oil companies (Frynas et al 2000:412).

Okonta and Douglas (1999:69) also corroborated Frynas position that Shell has been able to achieve the highest feet of one of Nigeria's global oil partners of 800,000 and one million barrels of crude oil a day because 'the company holds concessions over an area of 31,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Niger Delta coupled with 94 producing oil fields and 6,200 kilometers of pipeline and employs about 5,500 workers including 300 expatriates and additional 20,000 people work for the company either as subcontractors or temporary workers'. The aforesaid claims revealed Shell's oil production per day and employment strengths in the Delta region as at 1999, depicting it as super oil multinationals.

Today, this oil company has now grown gigantically in terms of the barrels of oil production per day while its employment capacity has also skyrocketed in Nigeria. There is no doubt that this oil company has flourished immensely in Nigeria (in conjunction with its shareholders in Britain) beyond every reasonable doubt. Infact, from 1991 to 1995, this multinational oil giant made between 250,000 to 290,000 barrels of crude oil a day, while 11.7 percent of Shell's overall oil exploitation activities across the world in 1994 came from Nigeria's Shell. Conservatively, this oil company earned \$2 billion between 1986 and 1995 from Nigeria (Okonta and Douglas 1999:71). Harshe (2003:114) put the profit Shell had made in the Niger Delta point blank at a robust profit which was more than \$100 billion, making the oil company the largest and the most profitable super oil major in Nigeria.

Field data revealed that in 2017, the SPDC Joint Venture gave 5 million naira as additional support for top quality and holistic health care services to Ogulagha Cottage Hospital in order for the hospital to provide the residents in the Kingdom the best and affordable health care. Field data also showed that SPDC expended about I.5 million

naira on its Health-in-Motion programmes in 2018 to provide Health care intervention to 546 persons in areas that range from existing health conditions, like hypertension, malaria, visual impairment hernia to other infections and 213 persons with impaired vision received eye glasses. Another 973 persons received HIV/AIDs counselling and testing, 700 persons treated for minor and chronic ailments and four primary schools across Ogulagha Kingdom received education and hygiene materials from the School-health programme.

A key informant interviewee who is the general manager, external relations of SPDC in Delta State revealed that in 2018 alone, SPDC Joint Venture spent more than N390 million on development projects in Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) across the Niger Delta Region clusters on roads, schools, town halls and markets, award of secondary school and university scholarships as well as microcredit programmes for small businesses. The general Manager claimed further that:

“about 12 million naira was committed to Ogulagha Kingdom alone. Youth empowerment programmes 2.3 million was donated, road constructions 5 million naira, scholarships award for secondary schools and University students gulped 2 million naira, while 3 million naira went into the construction of market and town halls” **(KII with Shell staff in Warri, Delta State during fieldwork 2017).**

Field data also revealed that in 2013, 174 youths from Delta State have benefited from the special regional Shell LIVEWIRE programme, a scheme that enables young entrepreneurs turn ideas into viable businesses. Each year, Shell LIVEWIRE Nigeria provided training and finance for talented young entrepreneurs to set up and grow their businesses and, in 2018, SPDC Joint Ventures awarded N29 million as start-up grants to beneficiaries. Youths in Ogulagha Kingdom were also beneficiaries of this scheme. Additional field data showed that the sum of 2.2 million naira was share among 22 youths of different age grades in the Kingdom to start their own personal businesses in order to pursue other profitable ventures aside from fishing and farming.



**Plate 4.15: This pipe borne water is one of SPDC's developmental intervention in Ogulagha Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The picture of the pipe borne water in Plate 4.15 above represents another SPDC's developmental interventions project in Ogulagha Kingdom. The picture of this project was taken in 2017 during fieldwork. Field report established that based on SPDC's Corporate Social Responsibility, it awarded the sum of 8 million naira to an engineering company to provide resident families with clean pipe borne water across Ogulagha Kingdom. This became imperative owing to continuous oil spillage on the streams and rivers in the Kingdom as a result of SPDC's oil exploitation activities. Indepth interviews carried out by the researcher with a family member also revealed that:

“Resident families are not enjoying the pipe borne water for now because the tap water was brown in colour and not good for drinking. The site engineer couldn't complete the project to drinkable level as a result of the frustrations of not being able to access additional mobilization money from a high chief who facilitated the project” **(IDI with a community leader during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).**



**Plate 4.16: SPDC's donated primary school teacher's Quarters initiative in Ogulagha Kingdom.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Field data confirmed another SPDC's intervention project situated in Youbebe community where the oil company is exploiting oil. This intervention project was donated to the community in 2015 in order to ease the challenge of accommodation shortage being faced by teachers that are posted to teach in Youbebe primary school. According to a key informant interview that is a staff of SPDC:

“this five rooms and parlour apartment cost 11.5 million naira and it has increased the productivity of the teachers to their pupils. Before SPDC embarked on this project, teachers posted to Youbebe primary school used to travel two to three hours by a speed boat, five days per week to teach in the primary school” **(Key informant interview with a staff of SPDC during field work in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017).**

This challenge brought a lot pain to the teachers who most times couldn't meet up with the stress involved in getting to school daily to teach. Invariably, the primary school pupils suffered serious academic setback until SPDC intervened.





**Plate 4.17: SPDC's donated building to the Youth Executives in Youbebe Community for regular meetings in a comfortable ambience.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Field report substantiated that SPDC responded to the request of Youbebe executive members who demanded for a befitting apartment to conduct their regular executive meetings. The building cost 8 million naira and it was donated to Youbebe executive member in 2007. This building was also well furnished to standard. Regular deliberation about important community issues are often being discussed among community executives in the building before the issue will be put forward to the entire community for discussion. Aside from using this building as a regular meeting venue, it is also a fixed place for relaxation for Youbebe executive members.



**Plate 4.18: SPDC's Primary School Initiative in Youbebe Community (under construction).**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The researcher also came in contact with another on-going SPDC's Corporate Social Responsibility initiative which is a primary school at a foundation level. The aim of SPDC regarding this initiative is to make primary school education accessible to all the children in Youbebe community. This project became imperative because the only available primary school can no longer contain the huge numbers of primary school age children. This on-going primary school will serve as an additional school for the enrolment of supplementary children in the primary school age bracket when completed. The contract for the school was awarded to an indigenous construction company at the valued of 13.3 million naira as at 2012. An Indepth Interviewee claimed that: "*the commencement of this project generated great joy from families and community leaders who has been lobbying Shell and the government for a new primary school to be built for more than 7 years to no avail*" (**IDI with a community leader during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017**). These elder cannot wait for the school to be completed in order for it to accommodate other stranded primary school pupils. The foregoing SPDC's Corporate Social Responsibility intervention initiatives were all geared towards alleviating the challenges posed by oil exploitation activities against all the inhabitants, especially, families in Youbebe community.

However, it is sad to realise that all Shell's development interventions in Ogulagha Kingdom can only be regarded as "remedial tokenism", or too little too late. The company's "remedial tokenism" is a strategic practise of deliberately engaging only in symbolic effort to intervene in the community or lives of under-represented groups in order to give an impression of being fair to them. Government at all levels; especially Shell which is a multinational oil company can do more in alleviating the suffering and poor financial status of families' inline with the enormous yearly revenue being generated from Ogulagha Kingdom.

Shell declared \$16 billion as profit in 2017, the company announced \$21.4 billion as profit in 2021. Infact, the company's profit climed to the highest point in 115 years in 2022 which was \$42.3 billion (The Guardian Newspaper, 6, February, 2022, retrived 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)). Interestingly, *the bulk of this profit came from Delta State, especially from Ogulagha Kingdom* (**IDI with a high Chief in Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017**).

SPDC is not the only oil multinational company that has contributed its own quota through Corporate Social Responsibility in Ogunlaga Kingdom, Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) has also did its bit to the development of the Kingdom. The oil company's development initiatives were discussed below after historic background. Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (AGIP-ENI) is Italy's proudest post-war development and her biggest stake in the world's economy.

On April 3, 1926, Benito Mussolini set up a state-owned oil company called Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (AGIP-ENI), while ENI stands for Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi, which literally means National Hydrocarbons Authority for the purpose of supplementing the rather half-hearted efforts of private enterprise to find deposits of oil or natural gas in Italy (Joesteneni 1962:24). Agip-ENI does have (under the 1953 law that set up this agency) the exclusive right to search for and exploit deposits of hydrocarbons in a well-defined area of the Po Valley (Joesteneni 1962:25).

The early days of Agip-ENI Oil Company were challenging, which pushed Musolini to appoint Enrico Mattei to liquidate the company owing to its unprofitable nature. But Mattei was convinced after he had talks with the research staff of AGIP-ENI that there was a good prospect for the company and his daring gamble paid off when an AGIP exploratory drilling team struck natural gas in commercial quantities at Caviaga, near Piacenza, in June, 1946. After a short time a second important strike was made at Ripalta. But it was not until three years later that a real breakthrough was achieved with the discovery of the Cortemaggiore field, south of Cremona, where for the first time oil was struck, along with vast quantities of natural gas (Joesteneni 1962:24).



**Plate 4.19: Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) permanent site in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Since, Agip-ENI's natural gas has been one of Italy's principal sources of energy and by far the most economically viable establishment, its output has grown by leaps and bounds. Having consolidated Agip-ENI's position at home, Mattei, with his characteristic vision and vigor, set out to conquer new worlds for his group and for Italy. His avowed purpose in branching out into foreign fields was to break the "monopolistic grip" of the big international oil companies in order to obtain low-cost crude oil for his own organization and for Italy's rapidly expanding economy (Joesteneni 1962:25).

Agip-ENI has focused its attention more and more on the African continent lately. In one way or another the oil company keeps searching for oil, refining and selling it in countries like Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Nigeria and Uganda. In addition, marketing outlets are being organized in Bene Republic, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo (Joesteneni 1962:25). The oil company commenced activities in Nigeria in 1962 through a wholly owned subsidiary known as the Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC). Most importantly, the search for oil by Agip-ENI Oil Company in Ogulagha Kingdom (in Obuguru community precisely) started in 1976 when the multinational oil giant embarked on its oil search with the clearing of a large span of land in the community. This search finally paid off in 1982, which marked the commencement of oil exploitation in large quantity.

Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) intervened in numerous community developments initiatives to put succour into the lives of families residing in Ogulagha Kingdom. One of such projects is the skills acquisition scheme project. The overall objective of the youth Skills Acquisition Scheme is to equip selected youths of NAOC host communities with relevant skills necessary for the establishment and efficient management of small scale enterprises. During Key informant interview, a staff of Agip in Obuguru community claimed that:

“since 1999, AGIP is consistently investing in human capital development for youths in her host communities through the skills acquisition programs. Trades include catering, carpentry, fashion design, boat engine repairs, hair dressing and welding /pipe fittings wood work **(Key informant**

**interview with a staff of Agip in Obuguru community during fieldwork in 2017).**

Field data also affirmed that in Ogulagha Kingdom, a total of 750 youths and women have been trained in the area of acquisition of technical and vocational trade since program inception. Out of these 750 trainees, AGIP selected 300 youths and women for training in Obuguru community where the company's facilities are situated. The establishment of the skill acquisition training center in Ogulagha Kingdom cost 9.7 million naira in the year 2000. Observations revealed that after six weeks of training by the representatives of the oil company in Obuguru community in 2016, the trainees were still expecting their start up tools and stipend the company promised them as at 2017 when the researcher was in the community in 2017 to gather data for this study.

In a bid to support and promote the enhancement of education amongst members of NAOC host communities and the country at large, scholarship & bursary scheme was established in 1990, which aims to promote academic achievement and excellence. The bursary award was solely for secondary school students from the communities in the areas of the company's operations (host communities). The award of the bursary is effective from the academic session and class of the beneficiary until the end of senior secondary (SS3). 344 secondary school students were selected as beneficiaries from the scheme across Ogulagha Kingdom in 2017 which cost the oil company 2.4 million naira.

In addition, Agip also have another category of scholarship award for undergraduate students. The first is (1) Area of operation scholarship award: this category is open to first year full time students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria from the local community of the company's operational areas (in Bayelsa, Delta, Imo and Rivers States). The second category is (2) the National Merit Award Scholarships which is for only candidates studying Engineering, Geosciences and Medicine. National Merit Award is for candidate from any communities in the oil producing and non-producing communities in the company's operational areas. Field report showed that about 87 undergraduates were selected for the scholarship award across the Niger Delta by the oil company in 2014 and the sum of 8 million naira was expended to beneficiaries of different categories of awards. Finding revealed that as laudable as the scholarship



scheme was, Ogulagha King and various families in the Kingdom were opposed to the lopsided nature of selecting successful candidates. The king of Ogulagha claimed that...

Agip should tell us how they compiled the list of successful children for the scholarship because many of the names they released are not from this Kingdom. They should also know that our children are many in this place, so the company should try and increase the number of selected children from 100 to at least 300 yearly. The scholarship of our children going to the University should also be increased including the money they pay our children **(IDI with the king of Ogulagha Kingdom during fieldwork in 2017)**.

Field data further revealed that NAOC also spent 9.5 million naira as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility to build a primary school in Obuguru, its host community. This became necessary in order to make primary school education accessible to all children from indigent background. Agip staff claim that the decision to site this primary school in Obuguru community many years ago “*attracted many parents in bringing their children back to school. They no longer need to worry about bringing table and chair, it has already been provided for*” **(KII with Agip Staff in Obuguru community during fieldwork, 2017)**. Parents no longer take their children with them for early morning fishing on the high sea because majority of them now value education more as a major way out of poverty.

However, observations revealed that the primary school which was built some years ago and appeared in plate 4:20 below needs an urgent rehabilitation in order to make life bearable for the primary school pupils making use of this facility for learning. After the researcher inspected this building thoroughly, he concluded that Agip need to intervene very fast to prevent the building from collapse. All the same, Agip has done well for building this primary school which has increased the school enrolments of children in Obuguru community.



**Plate 4.20: NAOC's Donated Primary School in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Field interviews with Agip Liason officer in Obuguru community and observations ascertained that Agip also awarded pipe borne water project in 2014, (in plate 4.21below) for the sum of 7 million naira as part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility agenda for the development of Obuguru community. A staff of Agip who is familiar with the contract document and the environmental pollution inhabitant of Obuguru are facing daily acknowledged the importance of the project when completed, "that it *will supply the whole of Obuguru community with quality water. This became imperative owing to the pollution caused by AGIP oil exploitation on the rivers and streams that the community depends on for their regular fishing, cooking, bathing, washing and so on*" (**IDI with a senior staff of Agip in Obuguru community during fieldwork in Ogulagha Kingdom, 2017**).

On the contrary, observation in the study area ascertained that the abovementioned water project has not been completed for the community even at 2017 when i visited the community for my field work. The whole community has been enduring polluted water for cooking, washing, drinking, bathing themselves and their children. Consequently, UNEP report (2011:213, WHO 2010) claimed that one of the consequences of cooking, drinking, washing and bathing with water mixed with crude oil at concentrations ranging from 0.155 to 48.2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  is Benzene. Benzene is a carcinogenic in nature. That is, when water is mixed with crude oil and then use regularly for cooking, drinking, washing and bathing, it will cause cancer. Quick commissioning of this pipe borne water project will go a long way in protecting the health of families and make life easier for them.



**Plate 4.21: NAOC huge pipe borne water storage tank project under construction in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 4.22: NAOC donated a town hall project in Obuguru community, Ogulagha Kingdom.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

In 2014, NAOC acceded to the constant call of Obuguru community who demanded for a befitting town hall to gather for their regular community meeting. The community's request was attended to with the donation of a large town hall which cost the oil company 12.5 million naira. Field report confirmed that the community as a whole now uses the hall for their general meetings and other vital social community events. In addition, NAOC's investment strategy in the area of healthcare aims to make health services available to less privileged community members in Ogulagha Kingdom, especially in Obuguru community. Investments have been made in advocacy projects, ranging from awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and definitive interventions projects on maternal and child health, eradication of malaria and other endemic diseases. Field report showed that all these enlightenment intervention campaign initiatives cost 3.1 million naira across Ogulagha Kingdom.



**Plate 4.23: NAOC donated public toilet in Obuguru community in  
Ogulagha Kingdom**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Field data and personal observation revealed another Corporate Social Responsibility donation by NAOC to the Obuguru communities in 2015 at the cost of 950,000 naira. This makeshift toilet was provided in order to deter inhabitants/families from defecating indiscriminately across the community. The researcher gathered from interviewees on the field that the women group in the community requested for an assistance from Agip to build the toilet having observed that their children come down frequently with a particular sickness that the doctor diagnosed as cholera.

The doctor advised that:

...the only way to save the entire community from cholera outbreak is to maintain a cleaner environment that is devoid of inappropriate disposal of faeces and garbage everywhere. Dirty environment will naturally results into contamination of the drinkable surface water in the community with dire consequences **(KII with medical doctor in Ogulagha Cottage hospital, during Fieldwork in 2017).**

The foregoing SPDC and NAOC's corporate social responsibility initiatives have really improved the lives of individual families across Ogulagha Kingdom, yet challenges of ceaseless oil exploitation in the Kingdom has continued unabated. These continuous oil exploitation activities have generated huge financial gains to Shell and Agip oil companies respectively. Shell's surplus profit was confirmed by the company's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Ben Van Beurden who claimed that in 2018, Shell made \$48.3 billion dollars compared to 2017 when the company made \$25.9 billion dollars (Shell Annual Report 2018).

Agip 2018 Annual Report also exposed startling profits made by the oil company in 2018 (€75, 822), and the company declared (€66, 919) as profit in 2017 (AGIP Annual Report 2018). Based on the foregoing annual reports, these two oil companies Corporate Social Responsibility in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom can be regarded as 'remedial tokenism. Obviously, the huge yearly profits being declare by Shell and Agip oil companies cannot be compared to serious infrastructural deficit and appalling poverty that families are exposed to daily.



Most importantly, Shell and Agip Oil Companies must invest large amount of profits on infrastructural and human capital development in Ogulagha Kingdom for constant protest and violent confrontation to be nip in the bud. Federal government should also lead by example by investing extensively across the oil producing communities based of her three million barrel of crude oil production daily for real peace and development to reign supreme in Delta State, especially in Ogulagha kingdom in general.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The main thrust of this study is to investigate the challenges of oil exploitation activities on families of Ogulagha Kingdom in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, this research investigated the Ogulagha families' historical ways of life before the advent of oil exploitation activities, examined the economic challenges caused by oil exploitation activities to families, investigated the health problems confronting families as a result of oil exploitation activities, ascertained the relationship between conflict and the consequences of oil exploitation on families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State.

The collection of data for this study was done through both primary and secondary sources. The data gathered from the field for this study through unstructured Questionnaires, In-depth Interviews, Key-Informant Interviews, Focus-Group Discussions (FGD) and direct observations were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The researcher also used secondary sources of data collections (documentary data) such as archival documents, newspapers, magazines, seminar papers, journals, academic publications, proceedings, internet based resources, periodicals and other public documents. The data generated through the use of these documents were presented and analyzed using the descriptive and narrative style.

The researcher carried out 115 systematic sampling in Youbebe and another 115 in Obuguru communities (totalling 230 interviewees) through unstructured questionnaire to get families responses regarding the disturbing issues of oil exploitation activities and environmental degradation, oil exploitation and economic challenges, oil exploitation activities and education, oil exploitation activities and the unprecedented health problems.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select Burutu Local Government Area (LGA) out of the 25 local government areas that make up Delta State. Convenience sampling technique was also used to select 60 in-depth interview respondents both in Youbebe and Obuguru communities in Ogulagha Kingdom, Burutu LGA, totalling 60 interviewees with unstructured interview guide. This technique was also necessary for the researcher to sample families at different locations of these communities.

In specific terms, Indepth Interview data collection instrument was used to obtain sample as follows: Twenty (20) families in Youbebe and Obuguru communities were interviewed. The researcher also interviewed ten (10) community chiefs, ten (10) community opinion leaders who are fishermen and farmers, ten (10) representatives of youth groups and eight (8) representatives of women association, the incumbent Local Government Chairman of Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State where Ogulagha Kingdom is located and the traditional ruler of Ogulagha Kingdom with whom in-depth interviews were conducted. In total, 60 indepth interviewees were conducted in Youbebe and Obuguru communities.

Key informant interviews were conducted in the study areas through snowball sampling to interview 30 key personalities who provided vital informations to the researcher. The breakdown is as follows: Four (4) members of staff (each) of Shell Petroleum Development Company and four (4) staff members of Nigerian Agip Oil Company, four (4) staff members of Niger Detal Development Commission and four (4) staff members of Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission. Interviewees also included four (4) officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (DPR), two (2) medical doctors, four (4) officials of Federal Ministry of Environment and four (4) officials of National Oil Spill Detection and Resonse Agency. The total number of the Key Informant Interviewees was 30.

Non-participant observation also provided the researcher with practical opportunity to observe the family life of Ogulagha families, that is, their livelihood, culture and other details holistically. Audio tape recorder and field notes were used to capture observed details. The research data collected from the field were presented and objectively analyzed in the form of tables and percentages. The comprehensive analysis of the data generated, made it possible for robust and thought-provoking discoveries, which is summarized below.

This study comprehensively documented archival materials from 1914 to 1953 when the entire Niger Delta region, including Ijaw communities were known as Western Region. The study documented essential details of the traditional extended family's social and economic means of sustenance until 1956 when oil exploitation activities across the oil producing communities started. The economic means of sustenance of families were farming, fishing, tombo selling, canoe carving, salt making as well as socio-economic interactions and negotiations based on trade by barter.

Prior to oil exploitation activities in the pre colonial period, additional findings substantiated that Ogulagha families sources of livelihood were not limited to fishing and farming, it included oil palm products, plantation of rubber, rice, cocoa, and fruit trees were planted and harvested all over the province. The family subsistent livelihood skills stabilised the Kingdom then because women, children and adults were all taken care of with the proceeds from fishing and subsistence farming. The commencement of oil exploitation activities in Ogulagha Kingdom in 1968 by Shell and Agip gradually altered the economic livelihood and general wellbeing structure of families due to poverty as a result of poor fishing and farm harvest.

This study also traced and documented Ogulagha's Kingdom traditional system of government whereby all the family heads formed a village council known as *Amagula*, headed by *Amakusowe*, for effective day-to-day running of the communities under his control. This system of government was also applicable to the traditional Ogulagha Kingdom. It was regarded in the early 1930s as almost the best form of gerontocratic government because it eschewed youth violence, kidnapping for ransome and militancy, while it upheld discipline, equity, progress and development. However, this is absent today across communities in Ogulagha Kingdom.

The study established that Ogulagha Kingdom represent a major money spinner for Nigeria considering the fact that there are 216 oil wells in the community, apart from flow stations which littered everywhere. Conservatively, Nigeria get not less than two million barrels of crude oil daily from the Kingdom. Therefore, as a result of the abovementioned numerous Shell and Agip oil wells scattered across the Kingdom, incessant oil spillage as a result of technical errors from Shell flow station resulted into about 584,000 barrels of crude oil being spilled into Youbebe community. Thus,

continuous leakages from Agip oil company's manifold areas situated in Obuguru community also caused a total of 532,000 barrels of oil in 2011.

In 2017, visual observation and indepth interview from resident families confirm that additional 823,000 barrels of crude oil was spilled by Shell into Youbebe community with a disturbing smell from dark harsh soil as evidence around the oil well vicinity. Agip Oil Company further impacted the soil, creeks and the surface water of their host community with about 754,000 barrels of crude oil in 2015. This was directly spilled into Obuguru costal environments, destroying family's sources of livelihoods such as their farmlands for planting and sea for fishing. This absolutely caused abject poverty for families and many of them were helpless in providing for their children.

In Ogulagha Kingdom as facts signify, after each episode of oil spillage, families are deterred from cooking with firewood owing to the huge volumes of crude oil that had been spilled into their community and the atmosphere. Any attempt by resident families to cook at a particular period of oil spillage will definitely results in serious outbreak of fire across the entire community. Therefore, individual families often go to Ogulagha main town (neighbouring town close to the community) to cook and return to the village after eating each day during oil spillage incidents. Families also claimed to have paddled their canoes to Ogulagha main town to cook their food and take it back with them daily, until the effect of the spillage subsided. This lasted for two weeks.

In Youbebe and Obuguru communities, the impact of gas flaring can also be seen everywhere. Infact, the unbearable radiation of heat that is being generated by flaring furnnels positioned across these communities left much to be desired by individual Ijaw families. Gas flaring is posing lethal danger in form of non-degradable and persistent danger on individual family health, animals, crops, streams and the entire sea produce. These communities continue to bear the brunt of severe gas flaring challenges, which climaxed into serious rust of the roofing sheets of their houses. Field study corroborated that in Ogulagha Kingdom, resident families acknowledged that gas flaring comes with acid rain which is also responsible for constant rusts that are taking place on their roofs owing to low content of Sulphur dioxide and Nitrous oxide in gas during flaring.

It is important to note that oil exploitation activities in the study areas, do not only come with devastating impacts of oil pollution alone as a result of oil spillage and gas flaring; it also comes with erosions which has now been added to the nightmares of individual families; caused by the dredging of the sea for oil. Personal observations in these study areas also revealed that although the challenges of erosion is not as disturbing in Youbebe as it is in Obuguru community because Shell which happens to be in charge of all the oil flow stations and oil-well that criss-crossed the entire community in Youbebe, had shore protected the edges of the sea in the early years of their oil exploitation activities; having initially lost some flow stations in the area to erosion. Still, noticeable effects of soil erosion were obvious for all to see in Youbebe till date.

In the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, oil exploitation prompted diseases have been categorized into two; that is, direct and indirect acquired diseases. Direct acquired diseases are acquired through direct effect of oil exploitation activities and these diseases are rashes, cough, measles, cholera, hypertension and so on, while indirectly acquired diseases are the type of infections acquired through indiscriminate and reckless sexual perversion of oil workers in the study areas which led to increasingly spread of sexual transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS.

Personal observation in the study areas regarding this virus (HIV) revealed that traditional value which placed greater emphasis on women virginity has been relegated to the background to the point that it has finally given in to promiscuity- through acculturation of Western sexual perversion, resulting into indiscriminate sexual irresponsibility and huge spread of sexually transmitted diseases. This current sexual style is actually traceable to economic hardship which is obvious in every facet of individual family lives across the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom.

This study revealed that Shell and Agip oil companies have executed some physical and human development projects, including poverty alleviation programmes across Ogulagha Kingdom. Unfortunately, it has never been commensurate to the yearly huge billions of dollar it is making from the host communities. Oil multinationals needs to do more regarding genuine corporate social responsibilities that are really proportionate to its yearly billions of dollars being generated from the Kingdom. This

should also be supported with adequate engagement of families in participatory community development policies that will alleviate poverty and turn around families' socio-economic wellbeing. Field investigations further revealed that lack of adequate compensation for individual families whose sources of livelihood has been destroyed represent a major source of frustration and incessant protests resulting into violent conflict. Sadly, whenever Shell decides to pay this compensation, it is often meager amount which is not commensurate with the quantity of host communities destroyed farm yields and fishing streams.

This study further established that there are specific sanctions which the Directorate of Petroleum Resources (DPR) should strictly apply in regulating multinational oil companies' excesses across oil-producing communities. These regulations are stated in the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN 1999:390) in section 4.6.2a, b and c, under Enforcement Powers and Sanctions, including section 5.6.2.2 which has to do with control of gas flaring. Hence, this study advocates effective statutory enforcements of sanctions by DPR on oil companies with the view of instilling environmental justice and ensuring that the Niger Delta people live in a sustainable environment.

This study exposes the ineffectiveness and challenges of DESOPADEC owing to poor funding, inadequate staff with technical knowhow and lack of strong will to effect meaningful changes for host families. This study also uncovered that the huge resources invested through the NDDC into Ogulagha Kingdom by the federal and state governments has achieved very little results in terms of poverty reduction and economic growth through infrastructural and human capacity development owing to its overconcentration on imposed top bottom developmental needs for the people rather than focusing more on participatory development by individual families.

The study also gave first-hand information on the incursion of Ghanaian fishermen on the high sea in Ogulagha Kingdom, coupled with adequate information on the constant migration of families into the riverine communities of neighbouring West African countries such as Gabon and Ghana in response to the increasing economic hardship experienced in Ogulagha Kingdom.

Observations and qualitative interviews in the study areas further attested to the fact that survival instinct has pushed individual families in Ogulagha Kingdom to think of better alternative means of survival in order to make up for poor fishing income and farm harvest which have become so precarious to them. These families now make up their income through additional incomes generating means such as gathering periwinkles, snails, crayfish and so on while the men make up by engaging in thatching for traditional buildings, canoe carving, felling of trees and saw-ling them into planks for sale in order to take care of their children which are always an average of 6 to 8 children.

The researcher dovetailed this study into three distinct theories (i) structural functionalist theory by Radcliffe-Brown, (ii) political economy theory by Karl Marx and (iii) frustration Aggression theory by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears in order to comprehensively explain the challenges of oil exploitation activities against individual families in the Niger Delta region, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom.

(i) Structural Functionalist Theory by Radcliffe-Brown: provided a strong theoretical basis for the explanation of the effects of oil exploitation, conflicts and family institution. This theory gave further explanation on the reality that all social institutions play important roles in maintaining societal equilibrium and harmony. When any part of these institutions is negatively affected or not well-maintained, the entire society will be adversely affected.

(ii) Political Economy Theory of Capitalism by Karl Marx: Capitalism is an economic system in which private individuals or businesses own capital goods. At the same time, business owners (capitalists) employ workers (labor) who only receive wages. Labour does not own the means of production but only uses them on behalf of the owners of capital. Today, many of marx's ideas regarding capitalism remain relevant, such as the emergence of mega-corporations, persistent unemployment, and the general struggle between Workers (proletariat) and employers (bourgeoisie). Marx predicted that because of capitalism's relentless pursuit of profit by way of competition and technological progress to lower the costs of production that the rate of profit in an economy would always be falling over time, invariable causing incessant conflict.



(iii) Frustration Aggression theory by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears: The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. The theory asserted further that frustration always precedes aggression, and aggression is the sure consequence of frustration. When these needs are constantly ignored or unsatisfied, anger, depression, loss of self-confidence, annoyance, aggression, and sometimes violence are likely to follow. Frustration Aggression theory clearly explains the incessant protests, confrontations and conflict by youths, women and families in Ogulagha Kingdom as a result of continuous effects of oil exploitations activities.

The outcome of this study aims at promoting peace across the oil-producing communities, which is pivotal to the needed development initiatives of NDDC and DESOPADEC. In order to achieve meaningful progress in Ogulagha Kingdom, stakeholders (Shell, Agip, Delta State Government, Federal Government and Families in Ogulagha Kingdom) should be aware of the destructive effects of oil exploitation activities on the economic, health and the general well-being of families in Ogulagha Kingdom. Importantly, with corresponding people-oriented policies and programmes implemented by all stakeholders, peace will reign supreme in Ogulagha Kingdom and Delta State as a whole.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The overall space, in which families exist today across the world as an important propellant of socialisation, has now been marred by unprecedented economic, social conflict and health challenges. Families no longer enjoy pleasant environment to raise and nurture children which are the pride of morally-upright families, neighbours and the society at large, owing to modern technological incursions into every sphere of society.

Expectedly, families of Ogulagha Kingdom in Delta State are not exempted from the trauma of the on-going technological incursion, which has manifested in form of oil exploitation activities. The commencement of oil exploitation activities signalled the beginning of the problems of families across the oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta region, especially in Ogulagha Kingdom. Although oil exploitation came with great financial expectations, but it ruined the present economic wherewithal of the host families and altered the prospects of a better future for them.

The reality today is that family's means of sustenance (farming, fishing and other sources of legitimate livelihood) have been destroyed by oil exploitation activities without any meaningful compensations whatsoever which have resulted into abject poverty and untold hardships. Families across Ogulagha Kingdom are embittered and resentful because of very poor farm yield or lack of it. In fact, there is scarcity of fish which was induced by oil pollution which has pushed fishes down into the deep sea. Today, families are no longer capable of providing for their children's wellbeing.

As long as blatant exploitation of oil continues in Youbebe and Obuguru oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, without adequate provision of social amenities and poverty alleviation programmes for impoverished families, constant violent protests and youth militancy are inevitable. The foregoing is in line with a popular adage that says "those who make peaceful settlement difficult make violence option inevitable for the oppressed". The earlier the government and oil companies brace up to the existing reality in the study areas by economically empowering families, the faster will be the attainment of total peace and needed progress in the Delta region.

On a final note, if these three stakeholders (Shell, Agip and the government at all levels) persist in using command approach and militarisation of families in Youbebe and Obuguru oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, violent confrontations will not abate. This is because host families, especially youths in the study areas, are poised to change their tactics of negotiation to a more militant and destructive approaches unless their demands are met by the Federal Government as well as Shell and Agip oil companies.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

The main limitation of this study was the frequent violent demonstrations and armed confrontations which delayed collection of data at a point. Also, the challenge of suspicion and hatred against strangers was very serious in Ogulagha Kingdom of Delta State. This was because an average Ijaw indigene knows that people from the south-western part of Nigeria make up about 70 per cent of the staff of multinational oil companies across the Niger Delta region. Therefore, introducing oneself as a researcher from the south-western part of Nigeria attracted resentment and serious expression of bitterness from interviewees.

However; the researcher was able to surmount all these difficulties with deliberate endurance and painstaking explanation to convince respondents in order to get their cooperation. These limitations, however, did not in any way compromise the integrity of data collection and analysis.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The research outcome of this study and their implications has led to a number of important issues that need to be looked into and resolved for policy implications. This require the following recommendations which are being recommended to make sure that individual families across the oil producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom are well provided for including their degraded environments. Suggested recommendations is also focused on making the local economy of families flourish again in order to banish unprecedented poverty out of Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State:

- I) The study suggests that DPR and NOSREA should constitute a joint committee to carry out pipeline integrity test and comprehensive decommissioning strategy in order to find a lasting solution to the incessant crude oil spillage in Ogulagha Kingdom. Proactive strategy should be initiated by NOSREA on oil spillage covering both land and water bodies with serious emphasis in enlightening the members of Ogulagha Kingdom on the need to report any oil spillage they noticed anywhere around their domain for prompt action to curb it from degenerating further. Delta State Ministry of information in partnership with NOSREA should embark on aggressive sensitization of families regarding the overall effect of oil exploitation activities.
  
- II) All contaminated soil surface should be removed, while all polluted dug up ground water wells across the Kingdom should be pumped out for proper clean up by manual labour to reduce cost in order to nip the ongoing soil and ground water contamination in the bud. This should be initiated by NOSREA and DPR with immediate effect by compelling Shell and Agip to foot the bill. As a matter of urgency, federal government should clearly review the separates roles, responsibilities and overlapping mandates of DPR and NOSDRA in order for each of these agencies to carry out their function of protecting Ogulagha Kingdom from incessant pollution.

- III) As a result of the significant damage against the mangroves which serves as the primary source of getting good fish harvest across Ogulagha Kingdom by families, mangroves replanting is very important after uprooting dead mangroves and cleaning the degraded top soil in areas where crude oil pollution has completely destroyed it.
- IV) As a matter of urgency, the federal ministry of health in conjunction with the state ministry of health should register all family members who have drunk water from crude oil contaminated sources (contaminated streams and dug up wells). State health ministry will appeal to families to undergo a broad medical examination to properly ascertain and document their health status for onward treatment.
- V) Surveillance visits to the creeks and oil manifold areas in Ogulagha Kingdom should regularly be carried out by NOSREA to check for any indications of pollution and any on-going incidents or activities which may cause pollution. This should be carried out at least once in a month. This will definitely guide against unnecessary delay regarding prompt response to spillage cases.
- VI) Young ladies and boys who are engaged in illicit businesses (such as prostitution, oil bunkering and kidnapping) and are not presently in the Amnesty Programme should be enrolled by the federal or state government. The oil and gas companies should establish development fund which should be deployed to partner with oil producing communities to establish small and medium scale enterprises using locally sourced materials. Resident families deserve some level of additional financial compensation for the wreckage of their livelihood and environment by oil exploitation activities.
- VII) Governments at all levels in conjunction with oil companies should immediately embark on the construction of walk ways for the pupils residing in Obuguru community in order for them to conveniently access the only secondary school in the Kingdom easily. Field observation showed the huge risk school pupils pass through daily to get to school. Shell and Agip oil companies should also assist their host communities through corporate social responsibility to build roads, interlinked walk ways and other vital social

amenities to make life of the students and the entire members of Ogulagha Kingdom convenient. The oil companies should be committed to corporate social responsibilities that will add tangible value to their operating environment. They should help fulfil critical development gaps, promote good neighbourliness and encourage mutual coexistence with their host communities. They should also shun dishonest business practices as well as embrace consultative process regarding the host community development plans.

- VIII) Federal and State governments should as a matter of urgency declare an emergency in the education sector to cater for the feeding, uniform, books and the general wellbeing of all the schools in Ogulagha Kingdom because families can no longer cater for their children within and outside the school age group. Government at all levels in the Niger Delta should deploy the resources of the region for development and improved living standards for the peoples of the regions in order to reduce the burdens of extreme expectations of the communities from oil companies.
- IX) Government should also promote sincere respect for human rights in Nigeria, especially in the Delta region, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The act of taking family land with impunity for oil exploitation running into 22 billion barrels per day without commensurate development plans and adequate compensation is human rights abuse which should not be allowed to continue. If all the aforementioned road map to genuine peace and progress are diligently executed, the present militant acts of hijacking, kidnapping and other social vices across the Delta region would come to an end.
- X) Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) should fully apply stated guidelines as enshrined in EGASPIN of 1990 in section 4.0 to 4.7.1, regarding enforcement powers and sanctions on erring oil multinationals in the Niger Delta region regarding incessant oil pollution. Culpable oil multinationals should be blacklisted to serve as deterrent to others. If all the stated sanctions as stipulated in the EGASPIN guidelines are followed to the later, all avoidable and blatant acts of environmental injustice being perpetrated daily in Ogulagha Kingdom will definitely be laid to rest.

## 5.5 Contributions to Knowledge

This study has made some brilliant contributions for the advancement of literature and knowledge by properly detailing archival materials from 1914 to 1953 when the entire Niger Delta region, including Ijaw communities were known as Western Region. The study documented essential details of the traditional Ijaw family's economic sources of livelihood before 1956 when commencement of oil exploitation activities across the Niger Delta Region started. These sources of livelihood were farming, fishing, tomo selling, canoe carving, salt making, palm oil production as well as trade by barter. Empirical works are very few in this regard, therefore this study filled an existing knowledge gap on how the commencement of oil exploitation in 1956 activated series of adverse effects on the host communities across the Niger Delta. Hence, such environmental degradation from oil exploitation activities commenced by Shell and Agip from 1968 in Ogulagha Kingdom till date.

This study also explained how the Ijaw traditional system of government was used to maintain peaceful coexistence for many years without rancor. This system of government was formed by all the family heads in the village council known as *Amagula*, headed by Amakusowe, for effective day-to-day running of the communities under his control. It was regarded in the early 1930s as almost the best form of gerontocratic government which upheld discipline, equity, progress and peaceful development, devoid of violent conflict. However, this is absent today across Ijaw communities in Ogulagha Kingdom. This fact has disprove some of the research of scholars like Watts 2003 and Rose 2008 who postulated that youth violent conflict, kidnaping, gangstarism are normal ways of life in the Niger Delta Region.

This study established that the commencement of oil exploitation came with great financial expectations for all inhabitants of oil producing communities, but it ruined the present economic livelihood of the host communities, especially families and altered their prospects for better future for them. The reality today is that families' means of sustenance (farming, fishing and other sources of legitimate livelihood) has been destroyed by oil exploitation activities without any meaningful compensation whatsoever. These has resulted into abject poverty and untold hardships. Families across Ogulagha Kingdom are embittered, frustrated and resentful because of very poor farm yield. In fact, there is scarcity of fish which was induced by oil pollution; this has further pushed fishes down into the deep sea. This study corroborated the

positions of Ojimba (2006), Courson (2009) and United Nations Reports (2011) who all agreed that families are no longer capable of providing for their children's wellbeing across the Niger Delta.

This study confirmed that avoidable human errors and blatant negligence caused by Shell and Agip oil companies' old and corroded pipelines across oil-producing communities in Ogulagha Kingdom was predominantly responsible for relentless incidents of oil spillage resulting in pollution which has become a worrisome problem to families. This is contrary to the multinational oil companies' propaganda that oil spillage in the Delta region arose from sabotage and vandalism by angry youths. This study corroborated the position of Okonta and Douglas 2001:89, Ana, 2003, UNDP 2006 regarding the avoidable menace of oil spillages across the Delta State.

This study has contributed to knowledge by filling the gap in literature through archival findings of Western Province Annual Health Report of 1949. This report emphasized the prevalent health challenges confronting families in the Western Ijaw Province (Ogulagha Kingdom Included) before the beginning of oil exploitation activities in 1956. These diseases were yaws, ulcer, yellow fever, small-pox, Tuberculosis, Dysentery, Cerebral spinal meningitis, trypanosomiasis and hypovitaminosis. The foregoing health challenges were totally different from the health conditions in Ogulagha Kingdom today which are pruritus, bronchitis, coughing, Wheezing, leukemia, hypertension, upper respiratory tract infection, rashes, chronic cough, gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS and Cancer.

This study acknowledged that the present health conditions facing families in Ogulagha Kingdom are basically direct and indirect consequences of ceaseless oil exploitation activities. These diseases are very expensive to manage and very deadly compared to the health conditions of families during the pre-oil exploitation period which are less expensive to cure and were not deadly. Today, families' medical bills concerning their health conditions have further impoverished them and their household. These facts corroborated the reports of UNEP (2011) and WHO (2018) which focused mainly on the financial burden and health challenges confronting the inhabitants/families residing in the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta Region.

This study exposed that there are specific sanctions which the Directorate of Petroleum Resources (DPR) should have strictly utilized in regulating multinational oil companies' excesses across oil-producing communities. These regulations are stated in the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN 1999:390), in section 4.6.2a, b and c, under Enforcement Powers and Sanctions, including section 5.6.2.2 which has to do with control of gas flaring. Hence, this study advocates effective statutory enforcement of sanctions by DPR on oil companies with the view of instilling environmental justice and ensuring that families residing in Ogunlaga Kingdom live in a sustainable environment. This finding corroborated Okomah (1997), Frynas (2000) and Ikporukpo's (2004) positions that Nigeria as a country has numerous laws meant to regulate the oil and gas industries but the country's challenge is the lack of strong will to bring to justice any erring oil multinationals.

The study affirmed that NDDC which was established in 2000 and DESOPADEC in 2007, meant to achieve government developmental agenda across the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta Region, Delta State and especially in Ogunlaga Kingdom. These federal and State governments agencies above were specifically established to serve as an antidote to the incessant protest and violent conflict by inhabitants, families and youths in the oil producing communities, sadly, satisfactory developmental strides has not really been achieved in terms of poverty reduction and the provision of economic growth through infrastructural and human capacity development.

The study exposed yearly financial budgets and financial recklessness of NDDC and DESOPADEC in the study areas. The above positions above was supported by environmental justice scholars such as Kemedi (2003), Akpomovie (2008), Wiwa (2014) who called for reform regarding proper reconstitution of the agency's board and yearly forensic audits of these developmental agencies to achieve transparency.

This study has contributed to knowledge through validation inline with three distinct theories (i) structural functionalist theory by Radcliffe-Brown, (ii) political economy theory by Karl Marx and (iii) frustration Aggression theory by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears in order to comprehensively explain the relationship between the effects of oil exploitation activities against individual families in the Niger Delta region, especially in Ogunlaga Kingdom.



(i) Structural Functionalist Theory by Radcliffe-Brown: provided a strong theoretical basis for the explanation of the effects of oil exploitation, conflicts and family institution. This theory gave further explanation on the reality that all social institutions play important roles in maintaining societal equilibrium and harmony. When any part of these institutions is negatively affected or not well-maintained, the entire society will be adversely affected.

(ii) Political Economy Theory of Capitalism by Karl Marx: Capitalism is an economic system in which private individuals or businesses own capital goods. A capitalist earns the highest profit by using capital goods (e.g., machinery, tools, etc.) most efficiently while producing good or service. This study showed that many of Marx's ideas regarding capitalism remain relevant in Ogunlana Kingdom today as a result of the emergence of multinational oil corporations like Shell and Agip (bourgeoisie). These multinationals quest to make relentless huge profits in line with the dictates of capitalism has resulted into persistent unemployment, poverty and severe health challenges, including incessant violent conflicts against oil workers (proletariat). Marx predicted that because of capitalism's (multinational oil companies) relentless pursuit for profit by way of competition and technological progress to lower the costs of production, there will always be conflict against (proletariat) oil workers, youths, families and inhabitants in general.

The (proletariat) oil workers, youths, families and inhabitants believed that Federal government's concealed mixed economy in the oil sector was actually 'capitalism' by operation across Delta State, especially in Ogunlana Kingdom. The theory of capitalism is a wake up call on the Nigerian government to take full responsibility of her oil sector and operate it in a transparent and conscientious mixed economy policy which will be beneficial to families and inhabitants of the oil producing communities as a whole.

(iii) Frustration Aggression theory by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears: The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. The theory asserted further that frustration always precedes aggression, and aggression is the sure consequence of frustration. When people's needs are constantly ignored or unsatisfied, anger,

depression, loss of self-confidence, annoyance, aggression, and sometimes violence are likely to follow.

Frustration Aggression theory clearly explains the incessant protests, confrontations and conflict coming from the youths and families residing in Ogulagha Kingdom as a result of continuous affects of oil exploitations activities. These above-mentioned theories have deepened this study and broaden the field of research in the area of the effects of oil on the families in Ogulagha Kingdom and the field of peace and conflict studies as a whole.

This study showed the connection between the present economic challenges and incessant youth confrontations with the multinational oil companies across Ogulagha Kingdom. Other societal effects as a result of oil exploitation activities included high rate of school dropout, prostitution among young ladies and incessant conflicts between the youths and oil companies. Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta depleted families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Nigeria socially, economically and health wise. Palliative measures from government and oil companies in form of financial largesse and social amenities were inadequate to address the situation.

As long as blatant exploitation of oil continues in Youbebe and Obuguru oil-producing communities of Ogulagha Kingdom, without adequate provision of social amenities and poverty alleviation programmes for impoverished families, constant violent protests and youth militancy are inevitable. The earlier the government and oil companies brace up to the existing reality in the study areas by economically empowering families, the faster will be the attainment of total peace and needed progress in Delta State, especially Ogulagha Kingdom.

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## APPENDIX I

### ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PICTURES FROM OGULAGHA KINGDOM



**Plate 1: The researcher standing besides an Ogulagha Kingdom Signpost**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

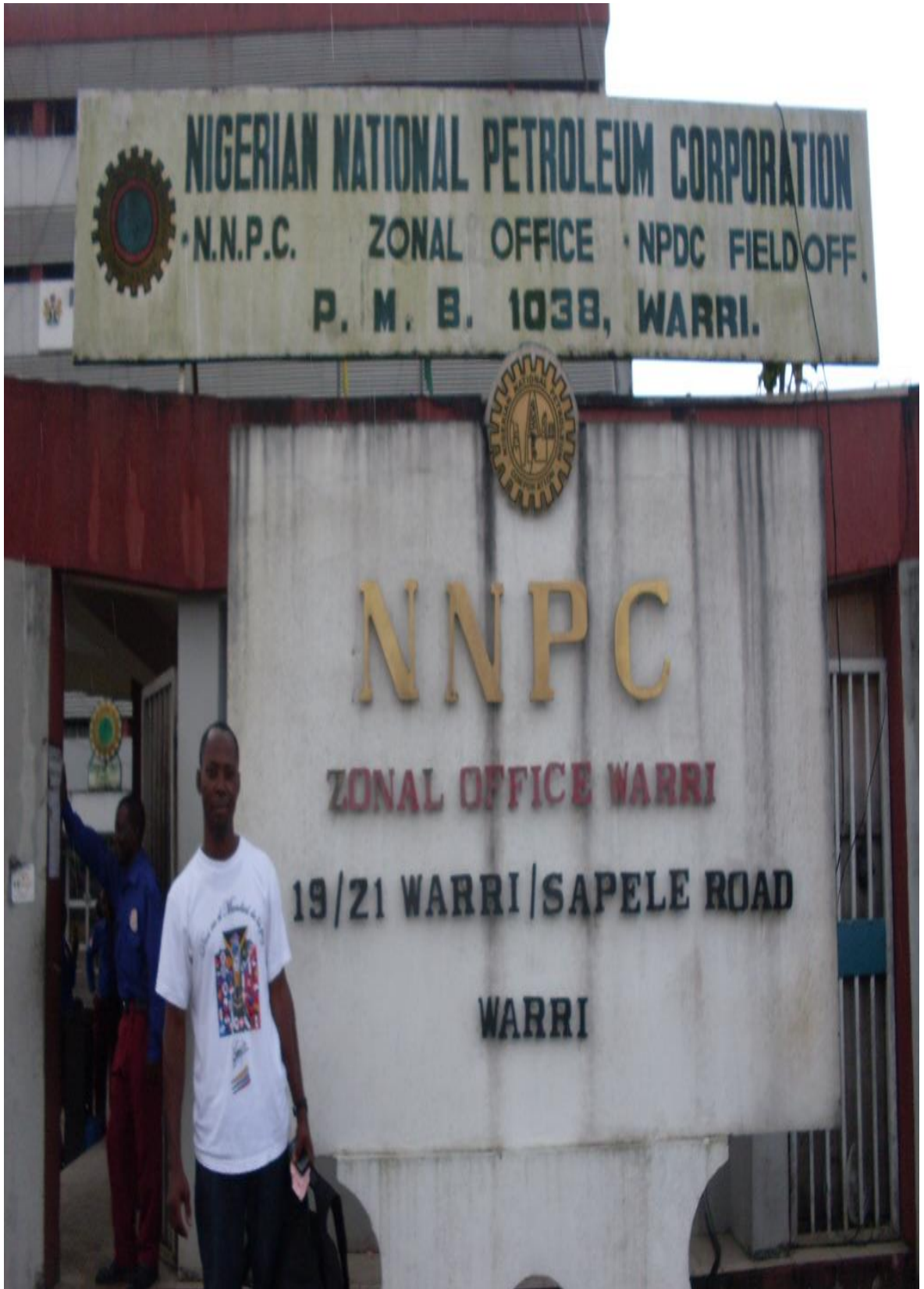


**Plate 2: The researcher with an elder and Youth Executives in Ogulagha Kingdom**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 3: The researcher with a canoe carver in Ogulagha Kingdom**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 4: The researcher standing beside the NNPC signpost in Warri during an Interview with DPR's Staff members.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 5: The researcher standing beside NOSDRA's signpost in Warri during an Interview with selected Staff members.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 6: The researcher standing beside DESOPADEC signpost in Warri during an Interview with selected staff members.**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017





**Plate 7: The researcher on a field trip on a commercial boat with other resident members Ogulagha Kingdom.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 8: The researcher standing beside DELSEPA's signpost in Warri during an Interview with selected Staff members**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate 9: The researcher is standing beside the signpost of Cottage Hospital, very close to the entrance gate in Ogulagha Kingdom.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017



**Plate: 10: The researcher was inspecting a fresh case of SPDC's oil Spillage which polluted the Youbebe River.**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

## APPENDIX II

### INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES, SELECTED COMMUNITY HIGH CHIEFS AND LEADERS IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM

**Date of IDI.....**

**PLACE...**

**TIME....**

#### **A. Socio-Demographic of Respondents**

1. Age:
2. Sex:
3. Educational background:
  - (a) Can you give a brief historical background of Ogulagha Kingdom
  - (b) Please describe the nature of family life in Ogulagha Kingdom before oil exploitation. Is it patriarchal, matriarchal or matrifocal.
  - (c) Please kindly explain husband/wife, father/children relationship before oil activities
  - (d) How did traditionally family heads relate with his/her household?
  - (e) How did individual families generate livelihood and income before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (f) Kindly mention your most important source of livelihood and income generation before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (g) How would you describe the family values, norms and cultural beliefs of Ogulagha people before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (h) How frequent does Ogulagha families migrate to neighbouring towns and countries in search of greener pasture and sustainable livelihood before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (i) What were the challenges individual families encountered before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (j) What has really changed with regards to Ogulagha families now in comparism to the reality before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
  - (k) How do families care and provide for their children before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?

- (l) How strong was the social relationship and solidarity among the family members before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (m) Were individual families flourishing in wealth before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (n) Were families in total control of their wives and youths before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (o) Were families the main unit of production and a major source of labour before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (p) Was the menace of family disorganizations rampant in Ogulagha Kingdom before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (q) How rampant was the incidence of child mortality and adult morbidity before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (r) Kindly explain the relationship between families and its socio-economic, political and religious institutions before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (s) How violent were youths in Ogilagha Kingdom before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (t) What were Ogulagha traditional conflict management/resolution techniques before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (u) What were the disciplinary measures meant for confrontational act of deviance before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (v) Has there been a time in the history of Ogulagha people where confrontational means were used to achieve meaningful changes before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (w) How important was land acquisition to an Ogulagha person before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (x) How pronounced was poverty among individual families in Ogulagha Kingdom before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (y) How hospitable were Ogulagha people to strangers/visitors before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?
- (z) What was the traditional health challenges and care of the people before the commencement of oil exploitation activities?

**A. INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FAMILIES TO ALLEVIATE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF SUFFERINGS RESULTING FROM OIL EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

- (a) With whom do oil companies normally discuss issues affecting your community?
- (b) As an indigene of this community, what alternative channels of communication do you prefer in putting across your complaints to the multinational oil companies in this community?
- (c) Since the oil producing company (ies) started operating in this community, what contribution has it made to the development of this community?
- (d) Are the community development associations (CDA) and ordinary people always involved in any oil producing development initiatives in this community?
- (e) What changes would you like to see in the relationship between your community and the oil producing companies?
- (f) What efforts has your community made to solve the effects of oil exploitation and its problems communally?
- (g) What do you want the government in all levels to do as a family so that you can improve your livelihood and income?
- (h) How do you want the government in all levels to assist your community with regards to the provision of social amenities (such as education, good roads, electricity portable water and so on)?
- (i) How do you really want to be compensated as an individual family and as a member of this community?
- (j) What do you think the family institution can do to better perform their responsibility as a safety net in the society?

**B. INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SELECTED YOUTHS AND YOUTH LEADERS ECONOMIC AND HEALTH EFFECTS OF OIL EXPLOITATION ON FAMILIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

- (a) What is the relationship that exists presently among families; that is between father, mother and their children?
- (b) What is the social relationship existing between all the members of this community?

- (c) What is the social relationship existing between oil bearing communities and multinational oil company (ies)?
- (d) Do families migrate for greener pastures to neighbouring countries due to oil exploitation activities?
- (e) If they do? What part of Nigeria or the World do they often like to migrate to?
- (f) What are families' sources of income and livelihood today in your community?
- (g) What is the major source of livelihood for the families in this community?
- (h) Kindly describe the menace of poverty among families today, and what do you think can be done to turn this tides around?
- (i) How rampant is the menace of family disorganization today?
- (j) Do families represent the main unit of production and a source of labour currently?
- (k) How accessible and very close are the primary and secondary health care centres to families health needs?
- (m) What are the diseases being encountered by the families today as a result of the effects of oil exploitation?
- (n) What is the most common disease ravaging your community today?
- (o) How real is the existence of diseases like skin rashes, respiratory diseases and so on among families today?
- (p) How high is the rate of child mortality and adult morbidity in your community today?
- (q) How free and available are medical drugs to families and how accessible are medical doctors in the hospitals?
- (r) Give suggestions on what should be done with regards to the socio- economic and health improvement of families?
- (s) What do you think the family institution can do to better perform their responsibility as a fulcrum of community development and progress?



**C. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SELECTED YOUTHS  
ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIL EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES  
AND INCESSANT VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH  
MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

**Probe on oil Exploitation Activities;**

- (a) What do you understand by oil exploitation activities?
- (b) Generally describe the challenges that come with oil exploitation activities in this community?
- (c) What is the greatest challenge that is bedeviling oil exploitation activities in this community?
- (d) What are your experiences and understanding with regards to oil pollution, oil spillage and gas flaring in this community?
- (e) Kindly state your experience with regards to any of these oil exploitation effects (oil pollution, oil spillage and gas flaring)?
- (f) Which of these oil exploitation effects (oil pollution, oil spillage and gas flaring) has wrecked the greatest havoc on your source of livelihood income generation?
- (g) Does oil exploitation cause serious destruction to your plants, animals, streams/fishing and farmlands?
- (h) If it does? How often and what did you do to improve the devastating situation to a manageable level of adjustment?
- (i) Kindly state how many of your children are in school (primary, secondary and tertiary) presently?
- (J) Generally, what effect has the activities of oil multinationals had on this community as a whole (environmental wise, development wise and educational wise)?

### **Probe on Violent Confrontations;**

- (k) Has there been any constant protest by the youths/individual families as a result of oil pollution, spillage and gas flaring in your community?
- (l) In your own view, is there a link between high rate of youth militancy, hostage taking and environmental degradation in your community?
- (m) Does an individual family support the militancy approach of the youths to correct the menace of environmental degradation?
- (n) Has youth militancy and or Individual family protests been able to improve the general devastating environmental degradation of Ogulagha families and their deplorable conditions today?
- (o) Can there be a relationship between onshore oil exploitation activities, environmental degradation and incessant youth confrontations in Ogulagha Kingdom communities today?
- (p) Has there been any serious confrontation between government security agents and individual families' militant youths?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (DPR, NOSREA)**

- (j) What are the modalities in place at the moment by governments in all tiers to nip the hazards of oil pollution, spillage and gas flaring in the bud?
- (k) Do governments in all tiers have any programme on poverty alleviation to better the lots of the individual families?
- (l) What is government in all tiers doing in the area of family life education?
- (m) What is the government doing in the area of trade, health and confrontational violent management in this community?
- (n) What are governments in all tiers doing in the area of individual families' violent protest, youth militancy and hostage taking in this community?

- (o) What are the governments doing regarding curbing the incessant menace of oil spillage and gas flaring being perpetrated by oil companies?
- (p) What are the governments' strategies to ameliorate oil exploitation challenges being faced daily by individual families in order to improve their wellbeing?

## **APPENDIX III**

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

- A. Demographic Data
  - (i) Number of discussant in group
  - (ii) Age bracket of discussants
    - (1) 18 – 40 years
    - (2) 41 – 50 years
    - (3) 51 – 90 years
  - (iii) Sex
  - (iii) Educational status
  - (iv) Discussants years of being a resident in Ogulagha Kingdom

### **CHALLENGES OF OIL EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES ON THE HOST COMMUNITIES**

1. What are the main livelihoods for family sustainance in this Kingdom?
2. What are the specific challenges that your community are currently experiencing regarding your local economy and the environment at large?
3. What are the major areas the challenges of oil exploitation activities badly affected in your community?
4. Has oil exploitation activities in this Kingdom become a blessing or curse to the inhabitants of this Kingdom?
5. How has the inhabitants of this Kingdom reacted so far to the challenges of oil exploitation activities?
6. How do people in this Kingdom manage and or settle avoidable oil and gas related dispute?

7. Has this Kingdom been properly compensated as a result of the effects of oil exploitation activities?
8. Has there been an improvement on the socio-economic lives of individual families in this Kingdom?

#### **ACCESSING THE INTER COMMUNAL RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE OIL PRODUCING COMMUNITIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

1. What role do youths in this Kingdom play in the escalation and de-escalation of conflict?
2. Has the oil exploitation activities hindered intra and inter communal relations in this Kingdom?
3. Has the oil companies contributed to the escalation or de-escalation of conflict across the oil producing communities in this Kingdom?
4. What is the level of acceptance of the oil companies exploiting oil in your Kingdom?
5. Are the oil companies operating across the oil producing communities in this Kingdom committed to equal community developments and progress of the inhabitants?
6. Kindly suggests ways the intra and inter communal relations in this Kingdom can be better in line with oil exploitation activities.

#### **ACCESSING MEANINGFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN THE OIL COMPANIES AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITY**

1. Can you briefly describe the relationship that exists between the inhabitants of this Kingdom and the oil companies?
2. Since the oil companies stated exploiting oil in your community, has there been a remarkable improvement in the lives of individual families in this Kingdom?
3. Do the oil companies have regularly discussion with the people before embarking on any project in your Kingdom?

4. Has the oil company's performance regarding its corporate social responsibility been followed to the latter in this Kingdom?
5. Do the oil companies include the inhabitants in the implementation of community project?
6. What should be done to improve the relationship between the oil companies and the host communities in your Kingdom?

#### **ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

1. What can you say about government development commissions such as NDDC and DESOPADEC in this Kingdom?
2. How many government development structures or programmes can you point to in this Kingdom?
3. Are families consulted by the government before project execution in this Kingdom?
4. Are individual family lives better now after government development commission's intervention or worst?
5. Are there any specific government development commission's intervention projects that were based on human capital development (such as skill acquisition programmes for jobless youths and economically vulnerable people)?

## APPENDIX IV

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM (SPDC, NAOC, NDDC, DESOPADEC, DPR AND NOSREA)

1. How many years has oil multinationals been carrying out oil related business activities in Ogulagha Kingdom?
2. Are you familiar with the challenging effects of oil exploitation families are experiencing today?
3. Are you familiar with international laws guiding oil exploration activities in the world/Nigeria?
4. What have you done as a body to alleviate the sufferings of individual families with regards to oil pollution, spillage and the devastating effects of gas flaring?
5. What have you done as an organization to uphold international best practices with regards to curtailing the effects of oil pollution, spillage and the devastating effects of gas flaring?
6. What has your organization done in the area of adequate compensation for families whose livelihood has been destroyed?
7. What has been done regarding the provision of social amenities (good roads, electricity, quality education and pipe borne water) for inhabitants?
8. What still needs to be done to make life more bearable for families in this in Ogulagha Kingdom?
9. In your own opinion, is there a relationship between youth militancy, hostage taking and environmental degradation in Ogulagha Kingdom?
10. Can you say militancy has helped to improve or worsen the lives of families, especially militant youths?
11. What do you think should be done to put an end to act of militancy, hostage taking and environmental degradation in Ogulagha Kingdom today?
12. Kindly state important issues raised by individual families and youths regarding embarking on violent strategies against oil multinationals?
13. Are multinational oil companies adhering strictly to the rules of Environmental Impact assessment (EIA) and or Historical Impact Assessment (HIA) before embarking on oil exploitation activities in Ijaw communities?

- (14) So far, what have you been able to do as a body to stem the tide of violent confrontations especially with regards to youth militancy, hostage taking and families' agitations, if any?
- (15) Kindly suggest possible ways multinational oil companies can collaborate with the governments in all levels in the provision of basic social amenities so as to make lives bearable for families residing across Ogulagha kingdom?
- (16) Are there any poverty alleviation programmes by the governments at all level which could make lives better for an average family which has been bedeviled by the impacts of oil exploitation activities?
- (17) In your own view, do you think there is a cordial relationship between family, religious, political and economic institutions in Ogulagha Kingdom?
- (18) What do you think the family institution can do to better perform their responsibility as a safety net in the society?



## APPENDIX V

### QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Ph.D student in the Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies, Faculty of Multidisciplinary Studies, University of Ibadan.

This questionnaire is exclusively for the purpose of gathering information on the Effects of oil Exploitation on Families in Ogulagha Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria. The information supplied here shall be kept private.

#### SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

{Please tick your options like this  }

1. Gender: (a) Male  (b) Female
2. Age (a) 18 – 39  (b) 40 – 59  (c) 60 and above
3. Marital Status (a) Single  (b) Married  (c) Cohabiting  (d) Widowed   
(e) Divorced  (f) Separated
4. Religion (a) Catholic  (b) Protestant  (c) Pentecostal  (d) Islam   
(e) Traditionalist
5. Highest level of education? (a) None  (b) Primary School  (c) Secondary School  (d) Tertiary  (e) Others specify -----

#### SECTION B: ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF OIL EXPLOITATION ON FAMILIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM

- 1a. Does any member of your nuclear family have a permanent job in any oil company in this community? (a) Yes  (b) No
- 1b. If yes, who? (a) Wife  (b) Child  (c) Husband  (d) Others Specify

- 2a. Does any member of your nuclear family have a contract job in any oil company in this community? Yes  (b) No
- 2b. If yes, who? (a) Wife  (b) Child  (c) Husband  (d) Others Specify
- 3a. Does any member of your family or you work as a manual labourer on any oil company related project? (a) Yes  (b) No
- 3b. If yes, who? (a) Husband  (b) Wife  (c) Child  (d) Others Specify -----
- 3c. If yes, for how long? (a). 1-6months  (b). 7-12months  (c). 1-2years  (d). Others specify-----
- 3d. If yes, how much has been realized? (a). ₦10,000 to 50,000  (b). 60,000 to 100,000  (c) Others specify-----
- 4a. Has your family had supply contract like sand, wood for building, construction iron etc to any oil company related project? (a) Yes  (b) No
- 4b. If yes, what? (a) Sand  (b) Wood  (c) iron  (d) others specify-----
- 5a. Does any member of your family sell food or other items to oil company workers or contractors? (a). Yes  (b). No
- 5b. If yes, who? (a) Husband  (b) Wife  (c) Child  (d) Others Specify -----
- 6a. Has any member of your family received any grant, scholarship, gift, monetary or material gift from oil company before? (a). Yes  (b). No
- 6b. If yes, who? (a) Husband  (b) Wife  (c) Child  (d) Others Specify
- 6c. What? (a) Grants  (b) Scholarship  (c) Monetary gift  (d) Material gift  (e) Others specify -----
- 7a. Has oil exploitation brought rapid development to this community? (a) Yes  (b) No

- 7b. In what way? (a) Provision of industry for employment  (b) Provision of good roads  (c) Provision of Electricity  (d) Provision of water  (e) Others specify -----
8. What is your traditional family occupation? (a) Farming  (b) Fishing  (c) Business  (d) Others specify -----
9. Since oil exploitation activities started in this community, has any of the following happened to your family? (a) Destruction of family fishing areas due to oil spillage  (b) Destruction of farm land by gas flaring  (c) Others specify -----  
-----
10. If your answer to question 9 is yes, when? -----
11. Has the situation been rectified? (a) Yes  (b) No
12. Has natural resources like trees, mangroves etc, in your community meant for the production of local crafts and medicine been destroyed? (a) Yes  (b) No
13. If Yes specify-----
14. Does oil company pay compensation for environmental degradation in this community? (a) Yes  (b) No
15. Who receives such compensation on behalf of the community? (a) The King   
(b) Chiefs  (c) Family head  (d) Youth leaders  (e) Others Specify
16. Where do the children of beneficiary (ies) of oil in this community school regarding Secondary and University education? (a) Federal government school   
(b) State government school  (c) Private School  (d) Others specify -----
17. Has any land been acquired from your family for Oil Company's project?  
(a) Yes  (b) No

18. If Yes, were you adequately compensated, please elaborate? -----  
-----  
-----

**SECTION C: EFFECTS OF OIL EXPLOITATION AMONG FAMILIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

1. Has oil exploitation activities impacted on the education of your children?  
(a) Yes  (b) No
2. How many of your children are in school? (a) 1 to 2 children  (b) 3 to 4 children  (c) 5-6 children  (d) Others specify-----
3. What are the levels of your children in school? (a) Primary   
(b) Secondary  (c) Tertiary  (d) Others specify -----
4. Has oil exploitation activities discouraged any of them from schooling at any time? (a) Yes  (b) No
5. If Yes, at what level? (a) primary School  (b) Secondary School   
(c) Tertiary  (d) Others specify-----
6. How long? (a) 6 months to 1 yrs  (b) 2 to 3yrs  (c) 4 to 5 yrs  (d) Others Specify-----
7. Has s/he continued school now? (a) Yes  (b) No
8. Did any of your children stop school for any of the following reasons  
(a) Militancy  (b) Easy money from oil work  (c) Casual work from Oil company  (d) Others specify -----
9. Has Oil Company related activities hindered you from exercising your authority over your children? (a) Yes  (b) No
10. Please specify in a statement how oil company activities has affected your authority as a father?-----
11. Do you have control over the movement of your children? (a) Yes   
(b) No

**SECTION D:** In the table below, kindly indicate the degree of agreement/disagreement you have with the statement in the ITEMS column by ticking appropriate boxes. Please do not select more than one response per item.

S/N	ITEMS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	STRONGLY AGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	Contract jobs and manual labour from oil companies makes young males feel independent of parents' authorities?					
2	Receiving money from male oil company workers encourages the female youths to drop out of school?					
3	Receiving money from male oil company workers makes young females independent of parents' authorities?					
4	Easy money from oil related opportunities discourages youths					

	from (Formal/Informal) education.					
5	Easy money from oil related opportunities discourages male youths from learning fishing, farming or other traditional occupation?					
6	Youths in oil producing communities are really making a lot of money from oil related economic activities such as bunkering, settlement from oil companies and contracts.					

**SECTION E: MEDICAL EFFECTS OF OIL EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES  
AMONG FAMILIES IN OGULAGHA KINGDOM**

{which of the following symptoms or diseases has any of your family members experienced? Please tick as many as applicable }

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Diseases/illness / Sickness</b>	<b>Who Experienced it</b>	<b>How many times</b>	<b>Treatment cost</b>
1	Pruritus/Itching			
2	Hypertension			
3	Upper respiratory tract infections			
4	Rashes			
5	Chronic Cough/ Difficulty in breathing			
6	HIV/AIDs			
7	Gonorrhea			
8	Syphilis			