Effects of Oil Spillage on the Bua Yeghe Village in Ogoni land: An Ecomusicology Approach

By

Offor Ndubuaku Kate
Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
E-mail: nducynth@gmail.com
&
Popbon Daido Taoh
Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Abstract

This paper assessed an approach of ecomusicology: effects of oil spillage on community development in the Bua Yeghe village in Ogoni intending to determine its adverse effects on health hazards and hunger and its abolition in the region. The concepts of oil spillage, community development, health hazards and hunger were reviewed. To effectively assess the effects, three research questions were formulated and analyzed. The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire, focus group discussions and observation. The face and content validity were tested and as for reliability. Research assistants administered the researchers' focus group discussions and observations. The researchers did the focus group discussions and observations. The data was analyzed using percentages and a weighted mean. The modified Likert scale was used to assign values and criterion mean of 2.50 to analyze the research questions. The results of the study showed that the causes and effects of oil spillage were the same in the oil-producing states; health hazards in the community caused by oil spillage have led to environmental degradation; health hazards rate is still on the increase due to polluted water source as the children and adults are malnourished; the rate of youth unemployment is high and there is no evidence of national food security in the communities. Controlling oil spills will require the cooperation of oil companies, government officials, and community members.

Keywords: Oil spillage, community development, pollution, health hazard and hunger.

Introduction

Community development is the practice of taking on activities that provide basic services to communities to make them more livable and sustainable. It supports the development of strong communities and helps improve the quality of life (Grazier, n.d). According to Memmott (n.d), a strong, healthy neighborhood is made up of a variety of factors. These factors include good schools and educational offerings; convenient access to goods and services; easily available public transportation; streets that are both walkable and bikeable; availability of jobs; a mix of housing; health and wellness centers; parks; gardens and activities that improve quality of life.

It's important to have input from residents and community leaders to define the needs of a community, Rhea (n.d), opined that planning, zoning, building policies and regulations are important in guiding growth and redevelopment. Also, "Leaders need to develop a vision for the community and a plan to make the area more livable and sustainable," Rhea, (n.d). "Community development can empower individuals and groups by providing them with skills to make positive changes in their communities. Various groups, organizations and individuals need to establish and maintain effective partnerships to coordinate efforts. It is important to assess community problems and needs, identify means to address the needs and develop a strategic plan to make the improvements [Rhea, (n.d)]."

Memmott, (n.d), posited that community development also involves facilitating and attracting commitment and investment - financial and otherwise - to a community. "The means and tactics change depending on whether you-re working to reinvigorate a low-income area or working in your downtown, but the principles of building the right platform for attracting investment remain fundamentally the same," Furthermore, "Cities do that in any number of ways: by developing well-thought out plans, infrastructure and amenities such as safe walkable streets, parks, parking, special events; by promoting sites and business opportunities; and by providing great city services and financial incentives, Memmott, (n.d)".

In the same vein, the essence of community development in any region is to improve the socio-economic lives of the people. It is a holistic development which lay much emphasis on sustainability. Sustainability in a broad sense is the capacity to endure, development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Imobighe, 2011).

Sustainability/Environmental Ethics

Sociomusicology: It is a branch of ecomusicology that talks about aspect of environmental sustainability within music production and performance for example it speaks about relationship between demand for certain musical instruments and also the cost and impacts of its production. This also is an interest for ecomusicologist to investigate the sustainability of the consumption and production of music or musical instruments. It also includes the impact which the demand for musical instruments merchandise or live experience such as concert has on the natural environment. Pedelty (2013) a music Journalist and anthropologist has written on ecomusicological relationship between human musical activities and health of the environment. He wrote about the pollution of environment caused by international music touring and ethically carbon emission, created by heavy vehicles used to move band, members, instruments and any extensive staying or crew.

Ecomusicology investigation of environment ethics are methods in which discussions around projects of sustainability are positioned within popular music and media Rolling Stone complied list of 15 most Ecofriendly Rocker in 2010 selected Artist base on various criteria regarding their support or consideration for environment within their musical practice, it also includes the amount of money donated. It includes the assessment of the amount of money donated to environmentally sustainable causes, or effort of an artists to perform and act in carbon – neutral ways. Some of artist are Green Day for their work with the Natural Resources Defence Council, and Hip-Hop Group. The Roots for hosting multiple music event according to the artists aimed at promoting social and environmental awareness.

Environmental Activism and Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is another branch of field study in Ecomusicology that focuses on the ways in which sound and music is used to create/express concern about the environment Ecomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon has written and described Ecomusicology that focuses more conceptual aspect of ecocritism as the study of music, culture, sound and nature in a period of environmental crisis. The performing of live music event aimed at creating and promoting awareness in what is happening on environment within a community at large. It could create awareness or notice of environmental destruction, like what is happening at Ogoni environ that makes Koromuu dance group to sing about government on the destruction of Ogoniland with Shell companies and others. It also affects climate change causing black suite and health hazards, this is one of the areas Ecomusicology continues to be engaged in ecological music.

Similarly, in the Western world there are numerous musical events that are indicators to the aforementioned issues such as: Live Earth Concert at Wembley Stadium (See Figure 1.1), more recently then Make It Rain, Australia 2020, among others have either been involve in fund for the alleviation of the effects of climate change on humans and animals (See Figure 1.2). The investigation of Eco-friendly organization such as Reverb is also relevant to Ecomusicological inquiry. These organizations often aimed at help to work hand in hand with artist to make them reduce or offset the carbon footprint of their performance and touring emissions as well as engaging audience in environmental activism by reducing waste production at music events.



Ecomusicology also considers the relationship of music or sound and promotion ideas/concept that surround environmental activism. Ecomuicologist can, for example, examine the conceptual basis of songs written specifically about the environmental degradation or consider what brought the music or how, to what effect is the use of music, uses of simple short, repetitive vocal chants may assist in voicing the environmental concerns central to projects of climate activism. It also considers the ways which music has been used to prompt social and political action to protect the environment is also notable or is of notable relevance to the focuses of ecomusicology at large.



Figure 1.2: Make It Rain in Australia 2020
Source: https://www.wikipedia.com

Negative Impact of Oil Production

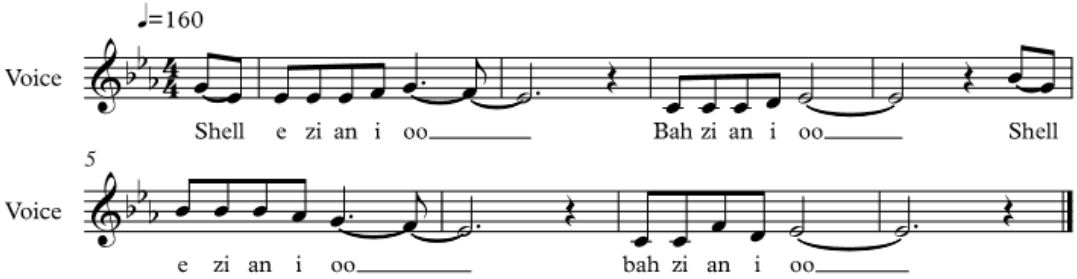
(a) Threats to Survival

According to the Anthropology Faculty Publications 2002: The Dutch Shell Oil Company first discovered oil in Ogoniland in 1958, and since then an estimated 100 billion dollars' worth of oil and gas has been carted away from Ogoniland, the lives of the Ogoni people have been changed. Since drilling began in the late 1950s, Shell and its partners – the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC), Elf Aquatain, Chevron, Willbros, Tulsa – O Klahoma and the British Oil Corporation's Agip – have seen responsible 50 percent of all extracted oil from Nigeria and Ogoniland specially. Records of Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Limited (SPDC) show that Shell own five major oil fields – Bomu, Korokoro, Yorla, Bodo West, and Ebubu – about 100 wells in Ogoniland. According to Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), about 900 million barrels of crude oil have been extracted from Ogoniland. In the early 1990s, the Ogoni began to speak of the

"ecological war" that the Nigerian government and Shell oil were waging war against them. They accused both the government and Shell of 'mounting a campaign of intimidation and terrorism against the Ogoni people'. These intimidations prompted the Ogoni people to sing these folks songs titled "Shell Eziani oo" and "Nigeria Eyip Bai oo" to express their grievances to entire world as shown below:

Shell Eziani oo

Folk Song	**English Translation**
Call: Shell e zian i oo oo bah zian I oo Refrain: Shell e zian i oo oo bah zian I oo	Means Nigeria have stoling our properties
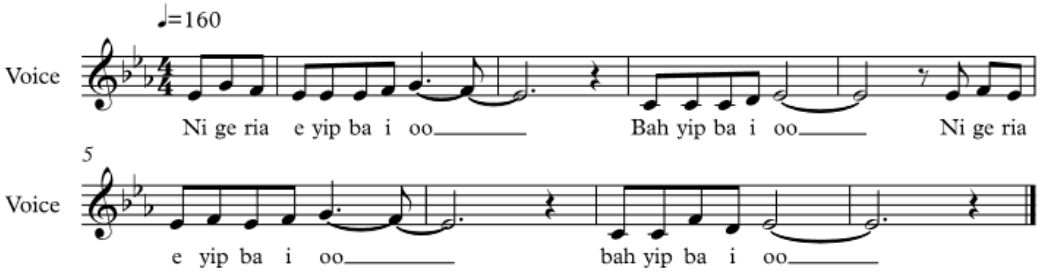


Shell Eziani oo

Nigeria Eyip Bai oo

Folk Song	**English Translation**
Call: Nigeria e yipba i oo, bah yipba i oo Refrain: Nigeria e yipba i oo, bah yipba i oo	Mean Nigeria have stoling our properties.

Nigeria Eyip Bai oo



The presence of Shell and its partners in Ogoniland have led to environment degradation of the area. The establishment of two oil refineries, one petrochemical plant on fertilizer plant, and a power plant in Ogoniland and their development can be disputed because Ogoni people complain of not having pipe-borne water, electricity, good hospitals and schools but Shell continued to argue that they had devoted considerable time, energy and capital to community assistance programmes, education scholarships, both and water treatment programmes, agricultural development and road construction. The response to this claim by Shell was cynicism by the Ogoni. One hundred and thirty-four-year-old man from Biamu in the Nyo-Khana Kingdom responded by saying 'we would be better off today if Shell had never come and taken one drop of oil. Despite the good intentions that Shell might have had in empowering the livelihood of the Ogoni people, very little of their efforts have resulted in tangible gains for the Ogoni. Even the refineries and other plant sun by Shell in Ogoniland, few Ogoni were employed in these establishment.

(b) Environment and Social Cultural Crises

The heavy production of oil in Ogoniland has resulted in intensive ecological damage of the areas. The environmental effects of having eight oil fields, over 1000 oil wells, numerous oil pipelines and four flow stations in Ogoni have been 3000 separate oil spills, averaging 700 barrels each, have occurred in the Niger Delta. Shell's response to spills has been reported to be slow and insufficient. Oil spills can be traced miles from the source. Reports claim that more than 6.4 billion liters (1.6 million gallons) were spilled in Nigeria between 1982 and 1992 much of the land has been starred black destroying the once fertile soil and continually limiting

agricultural productivity. Waters in the area flow black-brown and are void of fish. A major blowout at Kegbara Dere in 1970 spewed oil for several weeks, destroying a large part of Ogoniland in a densely populated area.

According to the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development, the Niger Delta is the most endangered river delta in the world. The Ogoni maintain that within Ogoniland, both Shell and the Nigerian government have instituted a policy of ecocide (the purposeful destruction of our environment). The Ogoni have continually pushed for self-determination and autonomy through statehood, in order to benefit from the region's oil reserves drilling operations. As a direct result of considerable environmental degradation, Ogoni health and livelihood have been greatly threatened oil spills and the intense venting of toxic gasses have continuously destroyed the traditional means of subsistence farming. The worldwide fund for nature has calculated that the gas flares in Nigeria are a major contributor to global warming. More than 75 percent of the natural gas that is vented from the oil wells is burned off, as opposed to 20 percent for the wells in Libya, Iran and Saudi Arabia in the United States, most of the natural gas is captured and used for domestic and commercial purposes.

The burning of methane and other hydrocarbons has produced a sharp increase in respiratory diseases, and the noise from burning has led to hearing problems for many Ogoni. Many flares also give off so much heat that is sometimes impossible to go near them, thereby preventing local farmers from heavy access to many parts of their land. Even though the environmental impact assessment has not been fully documented, the impact of gas flares and oil spills on local ecology and climate, as well as on people's health, is quite significant. Some studies, for example, have indicated that blood – lead levels of many inhabitants are at near toxic levels. Also respiratory problems, coughing, skin rashes, tumors, gastro intestinal problems, and various forms of cancer have been linked to pollution in the land. Many children exhibit the symptoms of Kwashiorker (a protendecificiency ailment) with their distended stomachs and light hair worse still, the death rate in Ogoni escalated as many people began to die from the consequences of environment pollution and "barrow pits" which companies dig to extract gravel for road construction. These pits are left uncovered, so during the heavy tropical rains of

the raining season, they are filled with mud and water, causing the drowning of unsuspecting children. By the middle of the 1990's, the death rate in Ogoniland deteriorated to a state of natural decline (more people dying than were being born each year).

In similar manner, animal life throughout the region has also been destroyed along with their habitat(s). The mangrove forests of the Niger Delta is home to a number of endangered species including the Delta Elephant, the white crested monkey, the river hippopotamus and crocodiles.

Negative Effect of Oil Spillage in Bua Yeghe

Massive oil deposits are found in this region, which have been extracted for decades by the government of Nigeria, and by multinational oil companies. Oil has generated an estimated $600 billion since the 1960s (Okereke, 2001).

The region suffers from environmental degradation since oil was discovered at commercial quantity in Bua Yeghe community of Ogoni. The major cause of the environmental degradation is oil spillage. This region has suffered for decades from oil spills, which occur both on land and offshore. Oil spillage is a worse form of pollution which poses great threat to man, the ecosystem and the environment. It is even worse because the impact of environmental pollution is felt on long-term, recurrent basis, making it difficult to arrive at an exact impact assessment as the incident occurs (Osuji, 2004).

Incidents of oil spillage had in the past caused irreparable damage on the farmlands and streams in the oil producing communities, often reducing inhabitants of the affected villages and communities to refugees. In some cases, the spillage has directly or indirectly caused death of people. The magnitude of oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta is so enormous that the toxic effect of oil pollution and spillage of biological species, water contamination and habitat disturbance pose great biochemical and ecological impact (Akpomuvie, 2011).

The economic impact of exploration activities and oil spills according to Akpomuvie on health hazards, crop and fisheries losses and so on has adversely

impoverished the economic lives of the people of the community. The effect of the oil spillage on occupational health, traditional values, life-styles and customs of the people has negative impact on the socio-cultural values of the people of the Bua Yeghe.

Oil spillage – the uncontrolled discharge of oil or its by-products including chemicals and wastes, which mainly occurs through equipment failure, operation error or willful damage have been identified as the main source of environmental damage in the region overtime (Nwilo and Badejo, 2005). The various stages of the mineral oil business - geographical prospecting, drilling, production, transportation, and refining, cause hazardous effects of one type/degree or the other.

There is no doubt that sabotage, vandalism of oil infrastructure and thefts of oil are serious problems in the Bua Yeghe, although the scale of the problem is unclear. Sabotage ranges from vandalism by community members to theft of oil and deliberate attack by criminal groups. Some people damage pipes while trying to steal small quantities of oil for sale at local markets or for personal use. Others damage pipes and installations to extort compensation payments or clean-up contracts from companies (Mba, 2013).

The increase in community sabotage activities is a reflection of wider problems that exist in oil-affected areas of the Bua Yeghe community. For some people, causing an oil spill and getting a clean-up contract or compensation is the only way they can access any benefit from the oil operations. Nigeria has had the misfortune of one oil spill too many due largely to negligence on the part of the oil companies when they fail to adhere to basic international standards in facilities installation and clear acts of sabotage of oil bunkeriers and miscreants. Added to that is oil waste dumping and indiscriminate gas flaring. All these coalesce to destroy the biodiversity of the affected areas leading to loss of wild life, aquatic life and soil, and health degradation. In the main, the nation loses economically and socially (Imobighe, 2011).

Recommendations

Based on the study the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for a better understanding of the coastal ecology so as to evaluate the significance of the impacts generated by oil spill incidents. A thorough environmental impact assessment should be done prior to oil exploration and exploitation in oil rich regions.
2. The petroleum industry should work closely with government agencies, universities and research centers to reduce the frequency and impact of oil spills in the region, and any company that breaches environmental protection laws should be seriously penalized by suspending their operations in that community.
3. The national food security project should be introduced in all the oil producing communities to ensure food security and reduce the health hazards of the people.
4. The development of any area cannot be without the human resources. The people of the area should be given the employment and periodic orientation on better ecological management.

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