

The Curse of Oil: Unpacking the Challenges to Food Security in the Nigeria's Niger Delta

Authors : Abosede Omowumi Babatunde

Abstract : While the Niger Delta region satisfies the global thirst for oil, the inhabitants have not been adequately compensated for the use of their ancestral land. Besides, the ruthless exploitation and destruction of the natural environment upon which the inhabitants of the Niger Delta depend for their livelihood and sustenance by the activities of oil multinationals, pose major threats to food security in the region and by implication, Nigeria in general, Africa, and the world, given the present global emphasis on food security. This paper examines the effect of oil exploitation on household food security, identify key gaps in measures put in place to address the changes to livelihoods and food security and explore what should be done to improve the local people access to sufficient, safe and culturally acceptable food in the Niger Delta. Data is derived through interviews with key informants and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with respondents in the local communities in the Niger Delta states of Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers as well as relevant extant studies. The threat to food security is one important aspect of the human security challenges in the Niger Delta which has received limited scholarly attention. In addition, successive Nigerian governments have not meaningfully addressed the negative impacts of oil-induced environmental degradation on traditional livelihoods given the significant linkages between environmental sustainability, livelihood security, and food security. The destructive impact of oil pollution on the farmlands, crops, economic trees, creeks, lakes, and fishing equipment is so devastating that the people can no longer engage in productive farming and fishing. Also important is the limited access to modern agricultural methods for fishing and subsistence farming as fishing and farming are done using mostly crude implements and traditional methods. It is imperative and urgent to take stock of the negative implications of the activities of oil multinationals for environmental and livelihood sustainability, and household food security in the Niger Delta.

Keywords : challenges, food security, Nigeria's Niger delta, oil

Conference Title : ICGFS 2017 : International Conference on Global Food Security

Conference Location : Miami, United States

Conference Dates : March 09-10, 2017