

# 1 The Challenges and Prospects of oil Companies Activities on 2 Communities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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## 6 **Abstract**

7 The rising issues is what has happened to the impoverished communities in Eket LocalThe  
8 rising issues is what has happened to the impoverished communities in Eket Local  
9 Government Area whose livelihoods have been affected due to the activities of oil companies  
10 which is the backdrop of this work. However, Two communities were used namely Mkpanak,  
11 and Upenekang of which ninety three copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed to  
12 each of the community in order to captured the impact of the oil companies activities such as  
13 type of infrastructural development ,impact on the environment, nature of activities and  
14 companies by-products. The data collected were analyzed using the Pearson? product  
15 moment correlation. However, Findings show that even though the oil companies in the area  
16 have contributed significantly to the socio-economic wellbeing of the people through income  
17 generation, employment creation, provision of social amenities, their activities were not devoid  
18 of environment crises. These crises arises due to oil spills which in turn affect the soil  
19 nutrients, lost of aquatic life and mangroves. Beside, the data analyzed show a high positive  
20 relationship between the companies by-product and the impact on the environment which  
21 indicate that the oil companies have really destroyed the natural ecosystem which is the major  
22 source of sustenance to the impoverished communities. Therefore the various stakeholders in  
23 environmental management must provide a mechanism that would guarantee the  
24 sustainability of the people in the ecosystem.

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26 **Index terms**— Aquatic life, Devastated, Ecosystem, Environment, oil companies.

## 27 **1 Introduction**

28 n recent times Nigeria is the leading producer of oil producing nation in Africa, it is ranks 11 th in the world.  
29 Today, it is a major supplier of oil to Western Europe and the United States of America. According to World  
30 Bank, Nigeria is the giant in Africa with enviable resources. With over 100 million people, it is the most populous  
31 country in sub-Saharan Africa, and earns annual oil revenue of over \$6 billion a year. Nigeria also has a huge  
32 reserve of natural gas, yet to be fully exploited. Yet instead of turning Nigeria into one of the prosperous states on  
33 the African continent, these natural resources have enriched a small minority while the vast majority has become  
34 increasingly impoverished: with a per capita gross national product of only U.S \$260 a year, Nigeria is one of the  
35 poorest countries in the world. The poverty, instability and erosion of human dignity, which we see in Nigeria,  
36 besides other factors, are hugely as a result of corruption, greed and mismanagement. Oil is the bedrock of the  
37 Nigerian economy and the presence of this essential commodity in a technological age has attracted the presence of  
38 some multi-national oil companies into Nigeria. These multi-national companies like Royal Dutch/Shell, Exxon,  
39 Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, Total, Elf and Agip etc, go into every country with promises of a better life for the  
40 populace. They usually have only one thing in mind; making profit at whatever cost, even at the cost of the  
41 environment and human lives. Nigeria is an example of this situation. These multi-national companies have  
42 been aptly described as "modern day Gulliver on the rampage, waging an ecological war wherever they set down  
43 their oil rig. These multi-national, borderless corporations are oftentimes not accountable to any government

## 5 B) ENVIRONMENT -THE HOME OF MAN

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44 and so are at liberty to violate human rights with impunity. The case of Exxon, Mobil activities in Eket Local  
45 Government Area of Akwa Ibom State since it started oil exploration in the area has proven this to be true. Ever  
46 since Exxon, Mobil drilling oil in communities such as Mkpanak and Upenekekang life has been a living hell for  
47 the people as their activities have damaged the natural ecosystem which is the only source of their livelihood  
48 sustenance in the area Beside, the activities of the oil companies have devastated the environment through oil and  
49 gas deposits which have extensively depleted the forests, abundant wildlife, mangroves and fertile agricultural  
50 land where rice, sugar cane, plantain, beans, palm oil, yams, cassava and timber hence living the people with  
51 no alternative source of livelihood. Apart from these ,their activities have not only caused degradation to the  
52 environment and destroyed the traditional livelihood of the region but have caused environmental pollution that  
53 has affected weather conditions, soil fertility, waterways aquatic habitats and wildlife. More so, majority of the  
54 inhabitants still live a rural, subsistent existence

## 55 2 The Challenges and Prospects of oil Companies

56 Activities on Communities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria characterized by a total absence of basic facilities such  
57 as electricity, pip-borne water, hospital proper housing and motor able roads To this end one would ask if the  
58 oil companies in the area are really contributing to the livelihood of the inhabitants with specific reference  
59 to the challenges and prospects of oil company activities as regards communities benefits from oil company  
60 ,infrastructural development by the oil companies, Problems associated with their activities on the environment,  
61 activities of the companies and companies by-products II.

## 62 3 Study Area

63 This research was conducted in Akwa Ibom State taking into consideration Eket local Government Area. Two  
64 communities where used in Eket Local Government Area which include, Mkpanak and Upenekekang. These are  
65 communities that the activities of the oil companies have devastated their natural ecosystem Howeve, 186 copies  
66 of questionnaires were distributed to the communities of which 93 were distributed in each of the communities  
67 using random sampling technique which allow every member of the community equal chance of being selected for  
68 this study. Information such as the benefits, oil companies' activities, by-product and infrastructural development  
69 from the companies were captured in the questionnaires. Nevertheless, the data collected was analyzed using the  
70 Pearson's Moment Correlationss which try to assessed whether or not a relationship exist between the companies  
71 by-product and impact on the area the result obtained was further validated by the use of student T test.

72 Impact of oil spillage on the natural ecosystem in Mkpanak. Literature Review a) Definition of development  
73 Mabogunje (1981) views development as that which includes economic growth, modernization, distributive justice  
74 and socio-economic transformation. By the end of the early 1960s, development began to be seen not as only  
75 increasing the per capita income but more importantly, reducing the poverty level among the masses or, as it was  
76 better put, satisfying their basic needs Development and economic development have been used interchangeable  
77 mainly because much of development has to do with economic issues and then social/welfare matters. The  
78 assumption has always been that other aspects of development will not be very functional without and cannot  
79 be isolated from economic matters and vice versa. This establishes a give and take scenario; just as it is the  
80 case of increased real income per capita in relation to improvements in health and nutritional status, educational  
81 achievement, access to resources, a 'fairer' distribution of income and increase in basic freedoms. As stressed  
82 by Sada (1988), development goes beyond issues of per capita income and Gross National Product to include a  
83 socioeconomic context which includes issues of human welfare. The socio-economic context of development implies  
84 modernization, "a process whereby a society is reoriented in its structure, institutions, values, and patterns of  
85 behaviour. Modernization is said to be a complex human relations as well as the generation and utilization of  
86 technological resources to change the quality of human life. ??abogunje (1988) also conceived development as  
87 distributive justice which comprises the nature of goods and services that government must provide; the need  
88 for goods to be accessible to all members of the society; and attempts at controlling, eliminating or sharing the  
89 burden of development usually referred to as "externalities". All these take place within the human environment.

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## 91 5 b) Environment -The home of man

92 The word "environment" is traditionally defined as the total surrounding which includes natural and biological  
93 resources. However, with the current trend of sustainable development, the definition of the environment has  
94 been widened to include natural and human resources and their interactions with each other. The World ??ank  
95 (1991), therefore defines the environment as the natural and social conditions surrounding all mankind and  
96 including future generations. Environment could be treated within the framework of natural human surrounding  
97 and activities, which include biophysical components and processes of natural environment of land, water and air.  
98 It also includes all layers in the atmosphere, inorganic and organic matters (both living and non-living), socio-  
99 economic components and processes of the human environment. These components and processes include social,  
100 economic, technological, administrative, cultural, historical, archaeological components and processes. Land and  
101 associated resources, structures, sites, human health, nutrition and safety are also inclusive (Emmanuel and

102 Alakinde, 2006). In the above context, the environment is seen as the natural habitat of man with several  
103 components and within which series and various levels of activities and processes take place. These components  
104 and activities or processes, in most cases, reflect the level of development in the environment that needs to be  
105 protected in all ramifications. What is going on in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is a clear demonstration of the  
106 fact that after 38 years of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, the natives have become poorer and less empowered,  
107 contrary to what one would have expected, judging from some cases of oil rich countries like Venezuela and Saudi  
108 Arabia, who have learnt how to manage the excess wealth generated by this lucrative commodity. The violence,  
109 poverty and environmental degradation which oil exploration has fostered in the Niger Delta is a clear violation of  
110 human dignity. Pope John XXIII makes it clear in the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* that "human dignity is violated  
111 when there exist conditions that prevent access to adequate food, shelter and other goods, necessary for human 4  
112 well being and flourishing. The poverty which structures of exploitation perpetuate is a threat to the dignity of  
113 the human person created in the image and likeness of God. Whatever will not allow human beings to live life to  
114 the full is a hindrance to human beings realizing their full potential as humans. We believe that oil as an essential  
115 commodity in this technological age, even though it has empowered many countries that possess it, has ended  
116 up impoverishing some countries like Nigeria, who cannot manage the enormous profit it generates as a result  
117 of corruption, selfishness and greed. In Nigeria in particular, some of the adverse effects of this lack of ability,  
118 or unwillingness to employ the profit from oil to the betterment of the living condition of the people is poverty,  
119 environmental degradation, and violence. These adverse consequences can be adequately challenged using the  
120 core principles of Catholic Social Teaching, namely, the dignity of the human person, and stewardship of creation.  
121 Made in God's image, all human life has inherent dignity which is the basis of fundamental human rights. We  
122 agree with Bill Ryan, that Catholic Social Teaching can and did have significant, if rarely determining, influence  
123 in shaping history in particular situations. It can also do same in the case of Nigeria. In fact, the principles  
124 of Catholic social teaching are in a better position to challenge the phenomenon of poverty, and environmental  
125 degradation because, "the

## 126 **6 Global Journal of Human Social Science**

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128 core values of Catholic social teaching are common and accepted, at least in principle, in all local churches-even  
129 if the living out of them leaves much to be desired?its core social values are found to some degree in all world  
130 religions."

131 Oil exploration in Nigeria is fostering inequality, injustice, and violence. This inequality exists among people  
132 living in the same country simply because the majority of the masses who have no access to the wealth generated  
133 by oil exploration and exportation, cannot compete with employees of oil companies who are paid better salaries.  
134 Hence the cost of living in oil producing states in Nigeria is higher because of the presence of oil companies and  
135 their employees. In the same country "while most Nigerians have been sliding into destitution, the political and  
136 economic elites of the country have grown ever richer-in most cases obscenely so."

137 Having lived in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, I have witnessed firsthand the effect of poverty and its attendant  
138 erosion of dignity. I was very often caught in the demonstrations and riots against oil companies like Shell and  
139 the Nigerian government, and still have friends and family, who still live in this part of Nigeria. In the face of  
140 all these I have come to the conclusion that there are alternatives. It offends God to see human beings created  
141 in his image wallow in abject squalor as a result of structures of sin, set up by fellow humans. Nigeria could  
142 become one of the richest countries in the world if only corruption and greed were eschewed and accountability  
143 embraced. Many countries have applied oil wealth to better use. Nigeria can do the same.

144 The history of the contact between multinational oil companies and the natives of the Niger Delta, has been  
145 that of impoverishment and environmental degradation. This impoverishment affects more their eco-system,  
146 which is widely acclaimed as one of the best in the world. The struggle by the local communities of this area  
147 of Nigeria with the Nigerian government and oil companies for a fair share of the products of their land has  
148 transformed this once peaceful part of Nigeria into a violence-prone zone.

149 I believe that these negative consequences of oil exploration can be more effectively challenged using the  
150 principles of Catholic social teaching. Oil exploration in the Niger Delta over the years has perpetuated poverty  
151 and environmental degradation, which violate human dignity, and becomes an abuse of the mandate received  
152 from God to care for creation. Using the Bible and Magisterial texts we can critique effectively, the poverty and  
153 violence which oil exploration has fostered as these constitute a threat to 5 the dignity of the human person  
154 created in the image and likeness of God. Ecological disasters, as a result of reckless use of resources of the earth,  
155 are an abuse of the mandate give to human beings by God to subdue the earth. Humans are constituted stewards  
156 of creation, and so actions of some trans-national companies with the collaborations of some governments should  
157 be challenged, not just from the ecological point of view but also from a theological standpoint. The task of  
158 preserving the earth is not just for environmentalists, but is also a theological concern.

159 The church in Nigeria has no doubt been a voice for the voiceless and the conscience of the nation since  
160 independence in 1960. Following the example of the universal church, she has always taken the side of the poor  
161 in denouncing structures of oppression and injustice. Unfortunately she has done little or nothing in the case of  
162 ecological concerns especially as it affects the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. We call for an urgent response from  
163 the church in Nigeria with regard to ecological issues. The Gospel message should be liberative, especially in

## 10 E) BY-PRODUCT OF OIL COMPANIES ACTIVITIES

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164 places like Nigeria where the faith is flourishing. Evangelii Nuntiandi makes the link between proclamation of  
165 the Gospel message and social liberation when it says that "the church has the duty of proclaiming the liberation  
166 of millions of human beings, many of whom are its spiritual children, the duty of aiding liberation at its start,  
167 of giving witness in its favor, and of accompanying its effects that it may be achieved. This is not apart from  
168 evangelization. belief that even though the faith is "flourishing" in Nigeria, the needed social transformation  
169 which should accompany this has not yet been achieved because here, the Bible is often given a spiritualized  
170 interpretation and only read for the nourishment of individual souls towards spiritual salvation and not in view  
171 of societal transformation. But Pope Paul VI makes it clear in his address to the Diplomatic Corps on January  
172 17, 1967 that "the church cannot remove herself from temporal affairs, because the temporal is the activity of  
173 men, and all that concerns the Church. A disembodied Church separated from the world, would no longer be  
174 the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church of the incarnate Word. The Church, on the contrary, interests herself  
175 closely in every generous endeavor which helps to set humanity on the road to heaven, but also in the search for  
176 well-being, for justice, for peace, for happiness on earth.

177 The church in Nigeria has on many occasions lived up to her calling as a force for social transformation. The  
178 Niger Delta area can benefit more from the prophetic voice of the Nigerian church.

### 179 7 Findings a) Community benefits from oil companies

180 The benefits of communities from the oil companies presented in table 1 show that 23.63% of the( D D D D) b  
181 Year building of hospitals. This result was shown in communities with 22.58% and 21.50% of the sampled  
182 population in Mkpanak agreeing that the oil companies in the area have contributed in the construction of  
183 hospitals and engagement of youth in training in the area. This result was evidenced in the sampled population  
184 of 24.73% and 20.43% in Upenekekang agreeing that the major contribution of the oil companies in the area was the  
185 building of hospitals and provision of youth training. However, it was observed in Table1 that even though the  
186 oil companies provided hospitals and youth training they also provided 16.13% employment and 13.98% micro-  
187 credit to farmers and fishermen in Mkpanak community while 18.28% and 12.09% of the sampled population in  
188 Upenekekang also affirmed that employment and micro-credit was provided by the oil companies in the area Source  
189 : field work (2011).

### 190 8 b) Contributions of oil companies in Infrastructural development

191 The level of in infrastructural development from the oil companies presented in table 2 revealed that the provision  
192 of class room block was one of the major infrastructure provided by the oil companies in the area with a high values  
193 of Mkpanak 16.13% and Upenekekang 17.27% followed by the provision of electricity with a values of Mkpanak  
194 15.05% Upenekekang 16.13%. It was noticed in table 2 that the oil companies provided seaports and airports in  
195 the two communities with Mkpanak having a values of seaports 11.83% airports 9.68%, Upenekekang seaports  
196 10.75% and airports 5.37% while the construction of hospitals was on the least side in terms of infrastructural  
197 development the two communities with values of Mkpanak 9.6% and Upenekekang 9.14%. Nevertheless, table 2  
198 indicate that the percentage total population sampled in the sampled communities show that both communities  
199 have benefited from the oil companies activities in the area through the construction of class room blocks with  
200 a high value of 17.20% compared to other variables. Although, 26.34% of the sampled population in the two  
201 communities agreed that all the aforementioned infrastructures were provided by the oil companies operating in  
202 the two communities The oil companies activities shown in table 3 indicate that all the activities mentioned were  
203 undertaken by the oil companies in the area .However, it was noticed that 20.96 % and 14.50% of the sampled  
204 population agreed that drilling and servicing and maintenance were the major activities of the oil companies in  
205 the area. This result was also evidenced in an individual note as drilling in Mkpanak and  
206 Upenekekang have a value of 20.43% and 21.50% while services and maintenance both have a value of 3.98.%  
207 and 15% respectively. Besides, it was observed in table 3 indicate that the oil companies in the area embarked on  
208 activities such as transportation and storage with values of 12.5% and 12.90% while administration and refining  
209 were on the least side with values of 0.1% and 6.45%.respectively Source : field work (2011).

### 211 9 d) Impact of oil companies activities in the area

212 The impact of oil companies in the area presented in table 4 revealed that 13.44% of the sampled population  
213 are of the opinion that the oil companies activities in the area has caused the migration and death of fishes  
214 followed by water pollution with a value of 10.75%. However, it was noticed that the oil companies activities  
215 also influenced the destruction of crops in the two communities with values 13.97% and 12.90% while corrosion  
216 of zinc and killing of mangroves were another impact generated by oil companies activities on the environment.  
217 Table ?? Source : field work (2011).

### 218 10 e) By-product of oil companies activities

219 The by-product from the oil companies presented in figure1 show that the major by-product produce by oil  
220 companies in the two communalities was gas flaring with a value of 20.43% followed by oil spills with a value

221 of 18.27%. Although, it was observed in figure1 that noise pollution was another by-product 16.66% and  
222 6.45%respectively. This result was also observed in each of the community as gas flaring in Mkpanak had a  
223 value of 21.50%, Upenekekang with a value of 19.35% while oil spills in Mkpanak had a value of 17.20% and  
224 Upenekekang with a value of 19.35%. Nevertheless, 23.65% of the sampled population in the two communities  
225 attest to the fact that all the mentioned variables constitute the by-product of the oil companies in the area.  
226 However the data collected were analyzed and a correlation coefficient of 0.97 was obtained which show a high  
227 positive correlation coefficient and indicate that a strong positive relationship exist between the byproducts in  
228 the area. This means that the by-products of oil companies played significant roles in environmental degradation  
229 in the area. Furthermore, a coefficient determination of 0.09409, which is otherwise seen as 94.09%, explains the  
230 fact that 94.09% of the bye-products of oil companies are related to the experienced environmental problems in  
231 the study area. More so, the student T test was used to test the validity of the data obtained and a calculation  
232 value of 4.91 was obtained with a table value of 2.57 at 5 degree of freedom in a two-tailed test at 0.05 level of  
233 significance .This result show that since the calculated value was greater than the table value, the null hypothesis  
234 was accept and the alternative hypothesis rejected. which show that the higher positive correlation did not occur  
235 by chance, thus, the bye-product of oil company activities has a significant effect on the environment. Figure1 :  
236 By-product of oil companies activities.

237 Source : field work (2011).

## 238 **11 Conclusion and Recommendations**

239 Today, what is going on in the communities under study show that the oil companies in these oil producing  
240 environment have impacted significantly on the community livelihood. However, the significant impact recorded  
241 by the oil companies in area were not devoid of environmental problems as a result of the company's activities.  
242 The data collected show that the oil companies in the area have contributed in socioeconomic development of the  
243 area through infrastructural development and on the livelihood of the local communities through employment  
244 provision income generation and provision of micro-credit. However, the companies in the areas have also  
245 impacted negatively on the natural ecosystem through destruction of farmland, aquatic live and depletion of soil  
246 nutrients which affect crop yield in the area .It is on this note that one would wonder if the oil companies in the  
247 area are really protecting the natural ecosystem and also putting the communities livelihood into consideration.

248 Therefore, the following recommendations are hereby put forward if the natural ecosystem and the communities  
249 livelihood must be maintained.

250 1. The government should provide adequate mechanism that would monitored the activities of the oil  
251 companies in the area. 2. The affected communities should be provided with an alternative livelihood since their  
252 environment has been devastated due to oil companies activities. mediate between the community, government  
253 and the companies 4. The communities should be provided with microcredit facilities so as to enable the affected  
254 individual diversify their economy 5. The indigenes should be allowed to participate in the decision making and  
255 policy formulation and implementation, this process would help the communities and the companies to look at  
essential issues affecting the communities <sup>1 2 3</sup>



Figure 1: Volume

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## **11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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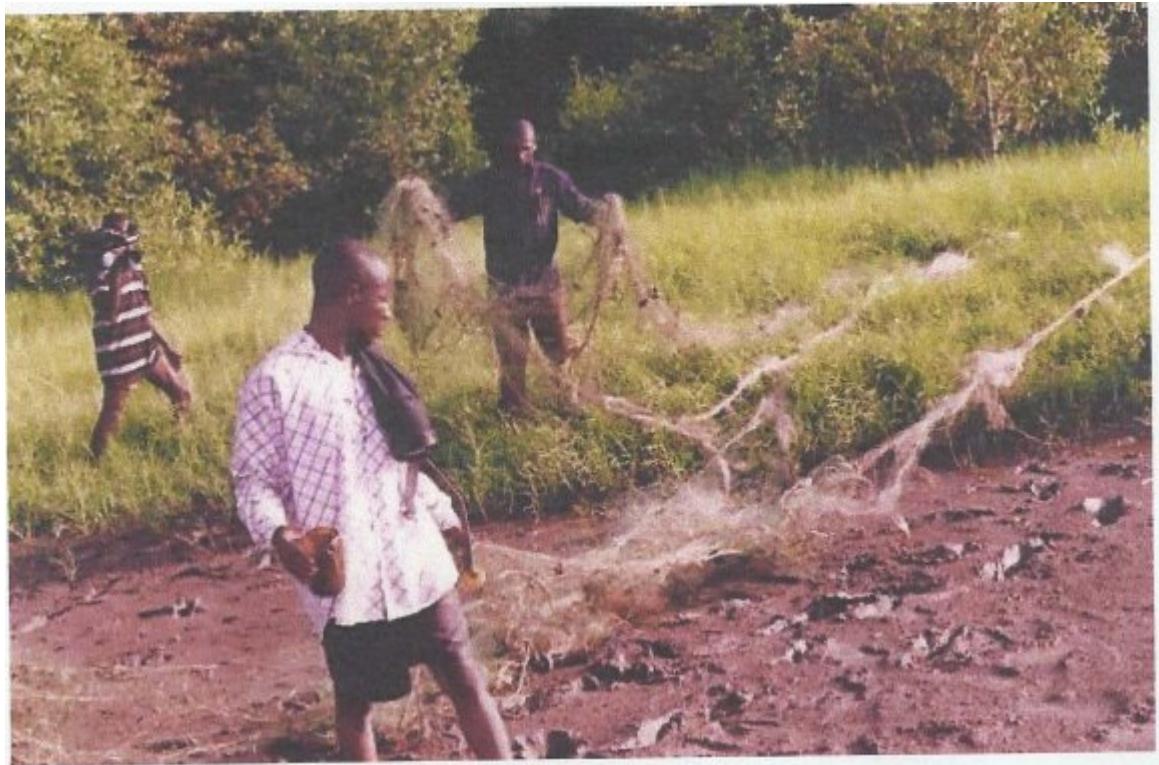


Figure 2:

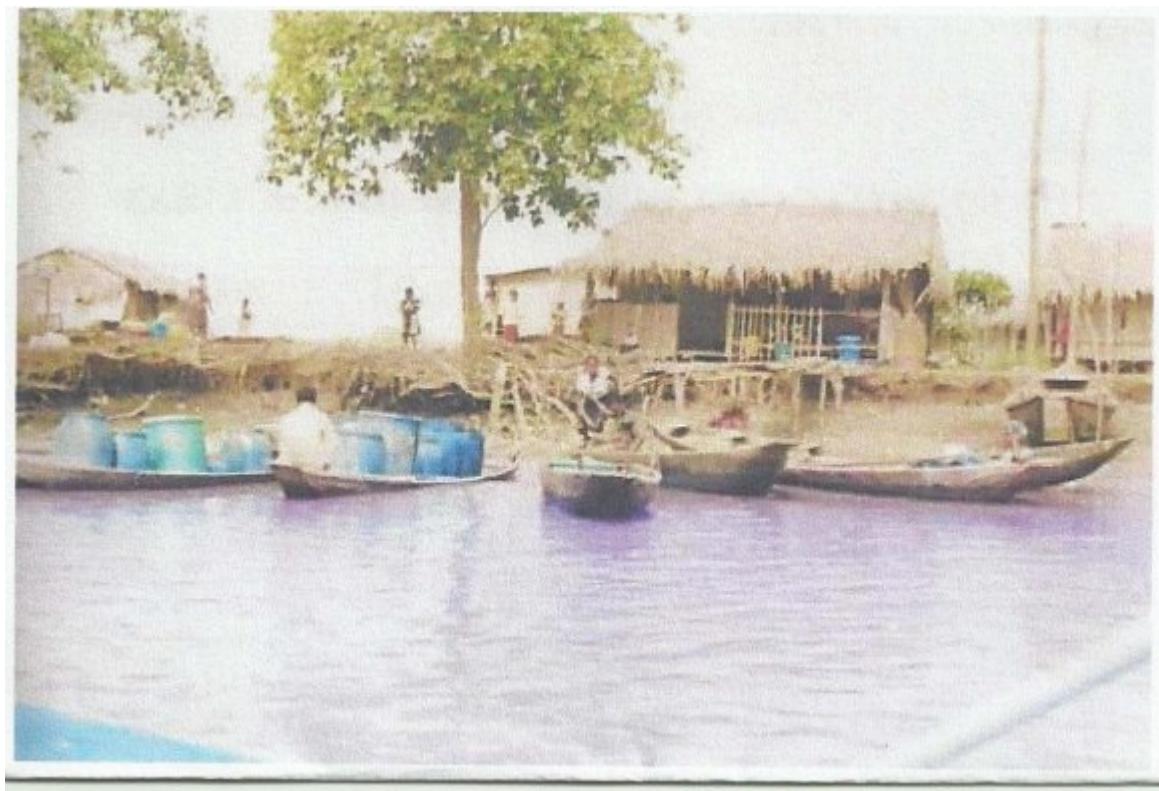


Figure 3:



Figure 4:

1

Variables	mkpanak	percentage	Upenekekang	Percentage	Percetage	total
provision of scholarship	3	3.23	2	2.15	2.68	
Provision of employment	15	16.13	17	18.28	17.20	
Building of hospital	21	22.58	23	24.73	23.63	
Training of the youths	20	21.50	19	20.43	20.97	
Give micro credit	13	13.98	12	12.90	13.44	
All of the above	17	18.28	18	19.35	18.82	
None of the above	4	4.30	2	2.15	3.22	
Total	93	100	93	100	100	

Figure 5: Table 1 :

## 11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Infrastructures	Mkpanak	Percentage	Upeneke	Percentage	Percentage
					total
Building of air port	9	9.68	5	5.37	7.52
Provision of electricity	14	15.05	15	16.13	15.55
Building of class room block	15	16.13	17	18.27	17.20
Road construction	11	7.52	13	13.07	12.90
Building of seaport	11	11.83	10	10.75	12.90
Building of hospital	9	9.67	8	8.6	9.14
All of the above	24	25.81	25	26.85	26.34
Total	93	100	93	100	100

[Note: Source : field work (2011).]

Figure 6: Table 2 :

3

Activities	Mkpanak	Percentage	Upeneke	Percentage	Percentage
					total
Drilling	19	20.43	20	21.58	20.90
Refining	7	7.53	5	5.37	6.45
Administration	10	10.75	11	11.82	0.1
Servicing/maintenance	13	13.98	14	15	14.51
Transportation	12	12.90	11	11.82	12.56
Storage	11	11.82	13	13.92	12.90
All of the above	21	22.58	19	20.40	21.50
Total	93	100	93	100	100

Figure 7: Table 3 :

3

revealed that

Figure 8: Table 3 :

2 48	A-	B	-Gas	C-	D	-Noise	E-Oil	Sewage	above	of
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90	Smoking	flaring	Solid	waste			spills	F-	the G	All
100										
Percentage 6.45		19.35	6.45		16.27	19.35		5.37	24.73	
Upeneke	6	17	6		17		18	5	23	
Percentage 7.53		21.5	8.6		15.05		17.2	7.53	22.58	
Mkpanak	7	20	8		14		16	7	21	

Figure 9:

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