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The Impacts of Oil and Gas Pollution on Female Gender in Ilaje, Niger Delta Region of Ondo State Nigeria

A. F. Fatusin, Aribigbola Afolabi and G. A. Adetula*

*Department of Geography and Planning Sciences, *Department of Pure and Applied
Psychology, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State Nigeria*

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ABSTRACT Sustainable development in this millennium entails among other things, gender equity in access to socio-economic and environmental resources. This paper continues the gender debate by evaluating the impacts of oil and gas mining on women in Ilaje region of Ondo state Nigeria. Taking a sample of five oil producing villages of Obierewoye, Ikorigbo, Obenla Awoye and Tsekelewu, 150 questionnaires were administered proportionately based on the populations of the villages on female household heads or senior wives to household heads in the settlements, on basis of systematic random sampling. Data collected were subjected to appropriate statistical analyses and the study confirmed extensive oil and gas pollution in this region particularly in Tsekelewu and Opoekaba in spite of governments' rhetoric on eliminating pollution by the year 2007. This phenomenon has had considerably high negative impacts on women, who have had to combine their traditional roles as domestic workers and mothers along with their new roles as fishermen, farmers and breadwinners thereby bridging the gap created following noticeable occupational migration of men to the oil companies to work as welders, fitters and machinists. To alleviate these problems and lessen the strains, the paper recommends increased monetisation rather than flaring of hydrocarbons and that government's policy intervention in mitigating such impacts should be targeted at women as the most vulnerable group in areas of major environmental problems.