
Revamping Local Crafts Industries to Address Economic Inequalities among Victims of Environmental Conflicts in the Oil-Producing Communities of Urhobo, Niger Delta Region, Nigeria*

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on solving the problem of economic inequalities caused by environmental conflicts in oil-producing communities of Urhobo land. The study canvasses a revamp of local craft industries to engage the people in the non-oil sector as a means of livelihood. The discovery and exploration of crude oil created environmental conflicts in the study area, leaving a trail of challenges that caused economic inequalities in the oil-producing communities. The explorative activities of the oil companies degraded the environment: it stifled economic development and created economic inequalities that arose from occupational distortion and destruction of the means of livelihood in oil-producing communities. The research design is an expository survey because it reveals the impacts of environmental conflicts on the economy of the Study Area. The research methodology is hybrid. Oral interviews and structured questionnaires were used to gather information. The research suggested alternative means of livelihood, including reviving the local economy through crop and fish farming and palm and rubber trees with attendant factories to process and produce allied materials. The reallocation of economic activities would enable victims of environmental conflicts to regain lost economic powers.

Keywords: *Local Crafts, industries, economic inequalities, victims of environmental conflicts, oil-producing communities, Urhobo*

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental conflicts refer to the different interests and needs of groups or people whose environment threatens peace and security (Bakut, 2006). The dangers of environmental degradation to humanity and the pursuit of socio-economic interests aptly indicate ecological conflicts. In the case of the oil-producing communities in Urhobo land, the discovery and exploration of crude oil have altered the ecosystem of the communities (Odikaesieme 2002, Olusiyi, 2009). The activities or interests of the Federal and State governments and the oil companies became incompatible with the host communities whose livelihood depends on the environment. The resultant conflicts that arose were occupational distortion that led to unemployment. Oil spills led to the destruction of aquatic life and health hazards, while gas flares led to the destruction of green vegetation (Atake, 2022).

Oil drilling operations pollute underground water through many unethical practices by the oil companies in the production. Polluted or waste material from production terminals and sludge from storage tanks, oil debris, and gaseous pollutants are released into the already polluted environment with economic and health consequences (Olusiyi, 2009). The activities of the oil companies created economic inequalities among the host communities. The study, therefore, was meant to revamp local craft industries to engage the people in the non-oil sector and to solve the problem of economic inequalities by highlighting other economic ventures outside the oil sector on which public-private partnerships can thrive.

Economic activities have stagnated because of environmental conflicts essentially caused by oil spills. The oil spills were caused by accident and sabotage, and this has brought untold hardship to the people of the area, as the destruction of the Urhobo ecosystem stifled economic activities. There are no investments in the ceramic industry despite the availability of natural kaolin to produce household and industrial wares. Professionals in palm oil, rubber and lumbering who make a living cannot care for their families and contribute to national development. This situation has further brought unquantifiable poverty that led to agitations by the youths and women to draw government attention to the sufferings of the Urhobo people.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to revamp local crafts industries to address economic inequalities among victims of environmental conflicts in the oil-producing communities of Urhobo, Delta State. The specific objectives are:

- i. To fashion an all-inclusive programme where victims of environmental conflicts would have their economic pains assuaged and lost economic powers regained.
- ii. To advocate animal and crop farming through cutting-edge technologies to revive the local economy threatened due to environmental conflicts.

- iii. To advocate for palm and rubber plantations and the building factories to process and produce allied materials for local consumption and export to increase foreign earnings.

The Importance of the Non-Oil Sector in Environmental Conflicts

The study examines the literature on environmental conflicts as it relates to the Urhobo oil-producing communities in particular and Niger Delta in general. Matthew and Godfrey (2000) described environmental conflicts as traditional conflicts induced by ecological degradation and characterized by the principal importance of degradation, overuse of renewable resources, overstrained ecosystem capacity, and impoverishment of the living space (Gaya, 2006). The fault associated with environmental conflicts runs along the impacts on the environment and the livelihood of the people within the host communities. The work highlights what constitutes environmental conflicts and their impacts. However, it does not discuss how environmental conflicts stifle economic development and inequalities among the Urhobo oil-producing communities. This research highlights the vocations in the non-oil sector to create employment and means of livelihood, thereby solving the problem of economic inequalities.

Bakut (2006) explained the degree of damage done to the Niger Delta due to the activities of oil companies like Shell Development Company. He said not only has their physical environment been damaged, but their source of livelihood (fish and crop farming) has been destroyed due to the contamination of the fishing areas and farmlands by oil spills, gas flaring and chemical waste dumped into the environment by the oil companies. He discusses environmental conflicts in the Niger Delta without being specific about the Urhobo oil-producing communities though they are a subset of the whole (Eregha, 2007). Ojameruaye (2004) said the destruction of the Urhobo ecosystem stifled economic activities; professionals in the non-oil sector, such as palm oil plantations and rubber lumbers could no longer contribute to national development. He emphasized the skills and technological know-how in various occupations and small-scale craft industries like palm leaves and fibres for roofing materials, baskets, racks, fishing hooks, paddles, canoes and mats made from reed.

Atake (2002) discussed the people's means of livelihood before the discovery of crude in Urhobo land; he listed the non-oil sector professions including crop farming, palm and rubber farming, fishing, canoe carving, basket weaving and pottering. They had professionals in medical herbs and barks, fish, shrimps and crabs, wood for energy and shelter, inclusive stable soil for farming and habitat for exotic wildlife. Despite the emergence and subsequent dominance of the crude oil industry, over 80% of the people are still dependent on the traditional agrarian and local craft industries. However, the people suffered environmental challenges as degradation altered the ecosystem resulting from

drilling activities that distorted the agro-allied companies. Similarly, the attractive salaries earned by oil company workers have lured and made craftsmen and women abandon their profession in perpetual search for employment opportunities where indigenes are mostly casual staff. The effect is that employable persons never practise their crafts because they have long abandoned them and are not gainfully employed by the company. After all, existing vacancies are exclusively preserved for non-indigenes whose contacts own the oil block and company. The study advocates for a revamp of abandoned local crafts industries to address economic inequalities in the oil-producing communities.

Odikasieme (2012) said the loss of livelihood and economic opportunities in the crude oil sector triggered environmental migration. The impacted areas experienced economic disasters and presented a glaring lack of opportunities for the indigenes to earn a living in the oil industry thereby triggering environmental migration to communities where agro-allied industries thrive to sustain livelihoods. Okaba (2005) discussed the predominance of agro-allied industries in the Niger Delta with a focus on Rivers State. He highlighted the availability of agricultural raw materials, their potential and the existing opportunities for small and medium-scale enterprises in the oil-producing communities. The raw materials for local craft industries are sourced from agricultural materials.

Omoweh (1995) emphasized the neglect of cultural tourism as a platform that could be leveraged by the government to generate income and create employment in the oil-producing communities. He asserted that the underdeveloped cultural industry is central to the peoples' common ancestry. There are cultural resources such as language, values, norms, traditions, beliefs, art, heritage, music, dress code, food, artwork, festivals, beliefs, dance and music through which festivals were celebrated. The study asserted an articulated master plan that covers a cultural-based tourist resource centre to boost cultural tourism and generate funds. The enterprise must be initiated through a tripartite approach for the government, oil companies and communities. He advocated the development of the cultural industry as an alternative source of employment and revenue generation to boost the underdeveloped cultural tourism industry.

The Urhobo Economic Summit

The first Urhobo Economic Summit on oil, gas and sustainable development, held by the Urhobo Foundation on 27th - 28th November 1998 asserted that the Urhobo nation produced 64 million barrels of crude oil annually. The figure represented 10% of the total national Production during which a barrel was sold at \$14, the annual sales from Urhobo was \$900 million or N76.5 billion at the exchange rate of N85 per dollar for the joint venture partners. The Foundation said the value of oil produced in Urhobo land to date amounts to over \$25.7billion or N185billion with little or nothing to show for it. The Summit recognized the convergence of the desires and grievances of the host communities inclusive of continued

environmental degradation that resulted to economic injustices and inequalities. The study is being carried out to resolve the intractable conflicts identified by the Foundation among host Communities. Sustainable development is central to the study because it emphasizes striking a balance between the economy and the environment without compromising the future of the people. Brundland Report (1987) examined the interplay between economic development and the environment and came up with the concept of sustainable development. It asserted that sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The relevance of the definition to this study cannot be over-emphasized in the quest for crude oil by the government in Urhobo land. The oil Companies prospected for crude oil, on behalf of the federal government of Nigeria, the used the money realized from the sales of crude oil to develop Nigeria. However, in the course of exploration, neither the development of the host communities was done nor the environment was left sustainable, this is why there are environmental conflicts.

Theoretical Framework

The Environmental Justice, Postcolonial Political Economy and Community Development Theories have provided the intellectual pillars on which the discourse stands.

Environmental Justice Theory

Leah Temper (2019) said Environmental Justice (EJ) is the struggle for access by a Community to a safe and healthy environment, free from pollution, and for access to the environmental resources needed for survival, well-being, and social reproduction of a people. Environmental justice (EJ) is multi-disciplined, and overview works are a broad range of scholars from geography, sociology, law, public health, anthropology, political science, urban and regional studies, ecology, environmental ethics, communications, etc. Environmental justice does not separate the environment from everyday life; it redefines the environment as the places where people live, work, and play. Human and societal dynamics have made Theorists of environmental justice continually expand to engage with multiple spatial configurations and forms of inequalities. It has brought a wider range of issues under the umbrella of the environment (Szasz and Meuser, 1997). There are single- and multiple-authored works, such as the Comprehensive Introduction to the Field by Holifield et al. (2017) and Environmental Justice and Sustainability by Agyeman et al. (2003), a critical assessment of the theory.

Key points of Environmental Justice

It is especially relevant for analyzing inequality and conflict in oil-producing communities like those in Urhobo land:

Equity in Environmental Protection

Everyone, regardless of ethnicity, class, or location, deserves equal protection from environmental harm. Environmental Justice (EJ) challenges a system, in which marginalized communities bear disproportionate environmental burdens (e.g., oil spills, gas flaring) as exemplified by the oil-producing communities in Urhobo land.

Fair Distribution of Environmental Benefits and Burdens

Environmental Justice Theory emphasizes the fair allocation of resources, development benefits (like oil wealth), and environmental services. It critiques systems, in which communities, like the Urhobo, oil-producing communities, suffer from pollution while others profit.

Recognition and Respect for All Communities

Calls for acknowledging the rights, voices, and cultures of affected groups. Urhobo and other Indigenous communities should not be excluded from decision-making on land and resource use (Ekuarhare, 1994).

Participation and Inclusive Decision-Making

Local communities must have genuine participation in environmental governance and development planning. EJ demands procedural justice—fair processes for all stakeholders.

Accountability and Redress

Polluters (e.g., oil companies) and complicit institutions should be held accountable. There must be remedies and compensation for communities hurt by environmental degradation.

Intergenerational Equity

It protects not just current but also future generations from environmental exploitation. Relevant for restoring local industries that are sustainable and community-rooted.

Postcolonial Political Economy

The Theory of Post-colonialism primarily examines the effects of colonialism by highlighting the struggles for autonomy and cultural hybridity, amidst the enduring impact of imperial rule espoused by the British in Nigeria (Rukundwa 2007). It is the critical academic study of the cultural, political and economic consequences of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. In English and Literary Studies, postcolonial theory is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, and historical.

Further, it examines the role of language in shaping colonial discourse (Achebe Chinua, 2017) and the efforts of colonized peoples to reclaim their languages and cultures.

The relevance of the theory lies in the fact that the exploitative system and structure by the British in Nigeria, as a colony, has been inherited and used by the Nigerian government in the oil-producing communities of the Urhobo people.

Key Points of Postcolonial Political Economy

Legacy of Colonialism

Colonial powers established exploitative economic structures such as the extraction of raw materials without commensurate reinvestment in local communities. These structures often continue after independence, shaping modern inequality and underdevelopment.

Unequal Global Economic Systems

Postcolonial economies are often tied to global capitalist markets in dependent or peripheral positions. Countries like Nigeria export raw materials (e.g., oil) but import finished goods, creating structural dependence.

Resource Exploitation and Marginalization

Natural resources are controlled by foreign or elite interests, while local communities face dispossession, poverty, and environmental degradation. In Delta State, and indeed Niger Delta, wealth benefits multinationals and central governments more than the Urhobo oil-producing communities.

Elites and Neo-colonialism

Local political and economic elites may collaborate with global powers or corporations, continuing patterns of exploitation. This creates internal colonialism where rural or minority groups (like the Urhobo) are sidelined.

Resistance and Grassroots Agency

Communities resist marginalization through activism, local movements, and cultural revival. Revamping local crafts can be seen as reclaiming economic agency and resisting external dependency.

Structural Inequality

Poverty and underdevelopment are not accidental, but the result of systematic, historically rooted economic structures. Solutions require structural change, not just aid or short-term interventions.

Key Points of Community Development Theory

Community Development Theory

Community development is a holistic approach and an organized effort initiated to assist a group of people in a community to lead a better lifestyle. As the term suggests, it combines community with development to enhance people's living standards. Alabi and Ntukekpo (2012) said it is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees and shareholders as well as host communities.

Community development involves sustainable development, empowerment, inclusivity, social justice, human rights, participative democracy, and equality. These community-led programmes aim to address the existing challenges and gaps among community members. The process starts with selecting issues for implementation, but the community members sit together and decide the steps.

These programmes are necessary to ensure fairness and equality within society. Furthermore, these programmes can uplift other members of society. One should note that when talking about communities in community development, it may not be limited to a particular geographical area. Community refers to people sharing the same interests, identities, heritage, or culture.

A community-based programme is a strategy for sustainable community development and a community-based approach that allows intervention tailored to local circumstances and increases the company's income.

Principles of Community Development Programme

The principles of community development can be listed as follows:

Community Participation

Every individual in the community is integral to the development and decision-making. Community development works on the principle that everyone should take equal responsibility and participate in development projects. Be it evaluation, participation, provision, or direction, members of all levels should make a valuable contribution.

Ownership and Involvement

Every member should take complete responsibility and accountability for their work. The staff, members, volunteers, and centre participants should collaborate and cooperate effectively to reach the end goals.

Empowerment

The act of respecting, enhancing and encouraging people to meet their needs and aspirations in a more informed manner. Empowering other community members means being respectful

and non-judgemental and building a relationship where other community members feel comfortable and valued. If community members are empowered, they tend to share their powers and use them for the betterment of society.

Equal Access and Opportunities

The discipline of community development aims to enhance equal participation by the members. This further increases the need to provide equal opportunities to the members and ensure that each member is aligned with the goals.

Networking

The basis of community development projects lies in the idea of networking and nurturing relationships with people from industries. Networking can help build connections with other people and groups who might be facing similar challenges. This helps pave the way for different communities to work together and find effective solutions to the prevailing challenges in society. Networking can also help bridge the knowledge gap as communities share existing knowledge, experiences and resources.

Rethinking

Rethinking aims at reviewing or assessing the situation again and bringing changes to the desired outcome. It may involve reevaluating the position from different perspectives and implementing changes that benefit the community.

Advocacy

Community advocacy provides support to others and enables them to be active citizens. Through advocacy, communities will be well-versed with their societal entitlements and human rights. It will allow the community members to get attention from the top-level professionals and have their voices heard.

Learning

Learning is a lifelong and never-ending process. The pursuit of knowledge and learning new skills

Key points of Community Development Theory

It is especially relevant for revitalizing local crafts industries in conflict-affected areas like Urhobo land:

Empowerment of Local Communities

It focuses on building the capacity and self-reliance of communities to take charge of their development.

Encourages confidence, skills, and leadership among community members.

Participation and Inclusion

Emphasizes bottom-up development where people actively participate in identifying problems and crafting solutions.

Everyone, especially marginalized groups, should have a voice and role in decision-making.

Asset-Based Development

Focuses on existing strengths and resources (e.g., local crafts, skills, cultural heritage) rather than just needs and deficits. Encourages reviving traditional industries as tools for economic recovery and social cohesion.

Sustainability

Promotes long-term solutions that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. Ideal for post-conflict recovery and environmental restoration efforts.

Social Justice and Equity

It aims to reduce inequalities and promote fairness, especially in access to resources, opportunities, and services. Fits well in regions facing historical exclusion or environmental injustice.

Holistic and Integrated Approach

Recognizes that development involves economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Supports multi-sector efforts (e.g., education, skills training, infrastructure) to rebuild community life.

Local Leadership and Ownership

Encourages grassroots leadership and local ownership of development projects to ensure relevance and sustainability

Sustainable Community Development (SCD)

The Brundland Report (1987) provides a background discussion on sustainable development. The approach identifies the capabilities of the communities to generate and sustain their socio-economic progress. The concept of sustainable community development was further amplified by Ojameruaye (2005) in *Essentials of Sustainable Development in Urhobo Land, Nigeria*. The Sustainable Community Development approach aims to help communities improve their quality of life by partnering with Government, Local and International Development Organizations. Taking the lead on issues for community development, SCD focuses on economic and human capital development and, the provision of health and basic services. This approach leverages the resources that SPDC can offer and empowers local communities through strategic alliances and programme partnerships. The intention was to increase developmental and employment-generating opportunities to reduce poverty. While the overall objective of SPDC community development Interventions was to promote and sustain wealth creation activities at micro, small and medium enterprise levels: the question is how much of that objective has been achieved? Specifically, SPDC had the objective to Increase opportunities for wealth creation; Build community capacity for sustainable development; Promote peace and security between the communities and Shell; and improve economic infrastructure in the communities, sometimes in partnership with other stakeholders.



Critically, while the Sustainable Community Development (SCD) approach has the potential to succeed where others have failed, implementation and total disregard for the input of the representatives must be addressed. However, it is noteworthy that, as remarked by the Urhobo Summit, the oil companies are paying lip service to the issue of environmental pollution and degradation and in connivance with the government have created opportunities for disunity among groups in the oil-producing areas. The oil companies have been more interested in hand-outs and not partnerships. They stay aloof. The situations in Ogoni and Ijaw lands are signals to the government and the oil companies about the urgent need to redress the marginalization of the oil-producing communities (Ahwefeada, 2014). The oil companies should work out a Marshall Plan for the development of the oil-producing communities in Delta Central.

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, Shell Petroleum has in response to the complaints about massive unemployment embarked on some development programmes like youth training programmes, entrepreneurship training programmes, education and scholarship schemes. These programmes are commendable but other oil companies and SPDC have to intensify their programmes and ensure that they are not diverted by non-oil producing communities' indigenes who occupy the key positions in the oil companies and government.

The companies should also monitor the activities of local chiefs and state governments, who collect money on behalf of the host communities to ensure the money gets to the targets.

METHOD

Study Area

The study was conducted in oil-producing communities in Urhobo Land in Delta State. The communities are Awirhe, Ekakpamre, Gana, Ukpiovwin, Jesse, Kokori, Jeddo, Ekpan, Ogonu and Utorogun. These communities are linked to different flow stations by Shell Petroleum Development Company.

Study Design and Sample

The study design is an expository survey because it reveals the impacts of environmental conflicts on the economy of the Study Area. The research methodology is hybrid: oral interviews and structured questionnaires shall be employed to gather information from victims and witnesses of environmental conflicts (primary source) made up of 100 Households in each oil-producing community.

Data Collection

A simple random technique is used to collect the data. The population comprises all families in Urhobo. The family names of 1000 Households in each oil-producing community were wrapped in paper, rolled, and dropped in a bowl. Each person picked 10 wraps, which adds to 10 persons per family from 10 families, making it 100 families in each oil-producing community. The process was repeated in all the oil-producing communities across the 9 local government areas, leading to the selection of the 1000 Households. Each household had equal chances of being picked because random balloting was used. The reasons for the selection of these households and the oil-producing communities are that some communities are more crisis-prone and they hold records of crises. The responses would reveal the nature of economic activities that members of the oil-producing communities were engaged in and how sustainable it was before crude oil discovery. Respondents speak on challenges and efforts made by the companies and the government to redirect their economic activities. The information to be generated would include but not be limited to sociology, economic and demographic features, structure and production pattern, quantities and inputs, and the financial value of each profession practised before crude oil discovery.

Data Processing and Analysis

On the completion of data collection, data from the research questionnaire were entered into data analysis software called Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 14. Frequency and percentage were used for data analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demography of Respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	MALE	700	70
2	FEMALE	300	30
Total		1000	100

The table shows that 1000 research participants were recruited for the study. All of the research participants responded to the research questionnaires. It was revealed that 70% of the participants were male while 30% were female.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

S/N	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	18 – 30	250	25.00
2	31 – 45	354	35.40
3	46 – Above	396	39.60
Total		1000	100

The participants were between the ages of 18 and 30 years. As observed from the table, participants between 18 and 30 years accounted for 25% of participants. The age group of 31 – 45 years accounted for 354 (35.4%) of the research participants. Further, the age group of 46 years and above 396 (39.6%) also participated in the research study.

Table 3: Academic Qualifications of Respondents

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Primary	368	36.80
2	Secondary	358	35.80
3	Post – Secondary	274	27.40
Total		1000	100.00

As shown in the table, the research participants included in this study had some education. The highest level of education recorded was primary, with 36.80% of participants, while secondary education was 35.80. The lowest number of participants were post-secondary, with 27.40%.

Table 4: Occupation of Respondents

S/N	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Crop farming	200	20.0
2.	Trading	150	15.0
3.	Animal Husbandry	100	10.0
4.	Civil servants	100	10.0
5.	Palm oil production	80	8.0
6.	Oil company workers	80	8.0
7.	Craftsmen/women	70	7.0
8.	Transporters	60	6.0
9.	Lumbering	50	5.0
10	Rubber production	50	5.0
11.	Herbalists	40	4.0
12.	Traditional/opinion leaders	20	2.0
Total		1000	100

It was observed that all the participants engaged in an occupation. The majority of the participants were crop farmers 20%. The majority of occupation involved in the study were trading 15%. Two occupations have the same occurrence, Animal husbandry (10%) and Civil service (10%). Further, Palm oil producers 8% and oil company workers 8% also tallied. Craftsmen/women accounted for 7% of the research participants, Transporters were 6%, Lumbering 5% and Rubber production 5%. Herbalists accounted for 4%, while traditional/opinion leaders that participated were 20 (2%).

Table 5: Distribution of Questionnaires in the Oil Producing Communities

S/N	Communities	Frequency	Percentage
1.	AWIRHE – 100 (UGHELLI NORTH)	187.5	18.75
2.	EKAKPAMER – 100 (UGHELLI SOUTH)	125	12.5
3.	GANA – 100 (SAPELE)	125	12.5
4.	UKPIOVWIN – 100 (UDU)	125	12.5
5.	JESSE – 100 (ETHIOPE WEST)	125	12.5
6.	KOKORI – 100 (ETHIOPE EAST)	62.5	6.25
7.	JEDDO – 100 (OKPE)	125	12.5
8.	EKPAN – 100 (UVWIE)	125	12.5
9.	OGUNU – 100 (WARRI SOUTH)	72	7.2
10.	UTOROGUN – 100 (UGHELLI SOUTH)	53	5.3

Question One

What are the entrepreneurial skills required to develop professionals in crop farming, animal husbandry, lumbering, and palm oil and rubber production?

The entrepreneurial skills required for professionals in crop farming, animal husbandry, lumbering, palm oil, and rubber production are categorized below:

Entrepreneurial Skills Required for All Sectors Highlighted Above:

The following are general entrepreneurial skills applicable to sectors

Business Management Skills – Planning, organizing, and decision-making.

Financial Management – Budgeting, pricing, and profit analysis.

Marketing & Sales – Branding, advertising, and customer relations.

Risk Management – Identifying and mitigating risks in production.

Innovation & Technology Adoption – Using modern techniques and equipment.

Leadership & Team Management – Supervising labor and managing workforce.

Regulatory & Compliance Knowledge – Understanding industry laws and safety standards.

Sector-Specific Skills

The specific skills required are highlighted below:

i) Crop Farming

Among other things, some of the specific skills required for crop farming are outlined below:

Knowledge of soil management

Irrigation techniques

Pest and disease control
Post-harvest handling and storage

ii). Animal Husbandry

Knowledge of livestock breeding and genetics
Feeding programs and Animal Nutrition
Application of veterinary knowledge and disease control
Techniques for dairy and meat processing.

iii). Lumbering

An understanding of environmental conservation laws
Sustainable forestry practices and timber harvesting
Knowledge and ability to saw, process, and grade wood
Technical understanding of operating chainsaws, and management of Saw Mills

iv. Palm Oil Production

Management of Oil palm plantation and cultivation
Palm oil extraction and refining
Management of palm oil production and preservation
Waste and sustenance of the environment
Palm oil products market dynamics

v.) Rubber Production

Knowledge and skills of rubber tree tapping and latex collection
Processing and refining of latex
Application of quality control measures to rubber products
Dynamics of demands and price fluctuations in the market

The required entrepreneurial skills (Independent Variables)

Technical Skills

- Modern farming techniques for animal and crop farmers
- Machinery and Equipment handling
- Pest, disease and soil management

Business Management skills

- Financial Management and book keeping
 - Marketing and sales strategies
 - Risk Management and Mitigation
 - Business Planning
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Innovation and Adaptability

- Adoption of modern agricultural technology
- critical thinking and problem solving
- value addition and product diversification

Communication and Networking

- Interpersonal skills and negotiation
- Customer relationship management
- Team work and collaboration

Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

- Sustainability of land and conservation
- Afforestation and reforestation
- Waste management
- Biodiversity

Table 6: Percentage of Required Skills (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Skill Category (Variable)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Technical Skills	280	28%
Business Management Skills	200	20%
Innovation and Adaptability	150	15%
Communication Network	180	18%
Sustainability and Environmental Awareness	190	19%

The data above assist in identifying areas of priority for human training and skills development among agro-business entrepreneurs and professional farmers' general

Question Two

What are the necessary steps and skills to revamp local craft industries to create jobs for host communities in a degraded environmentally?

To revitalize local craft industries in a degraded environment, the requirements are inclusive of integration, sustainable, viable economy, and community engagement.

There are necessary steps and skills required to ensure success, and steps are outlined below:

To analyze the level of environmental degradation and its impact on craft production

An assent of the Community Resources and Needs

Carry out a survey in the community, to identify available raw materials and skills.

To Identify and harness potential markets for local crafts to be revamped



Government Policy/Directive on Sustainable Resource Management

Implementation of afforestation policy to restorator land for raw material sustainability.

Promotion of eco-friendly raw materials such as bamboo, recycled wood, materials, clay etc

To cultivate waste-to-wealth altitude and acquaint community members with knowledge of recycling, eg plastic, wood, or metal waste

C. Capacity Building and Skill Development

Through viable partnership, technical training shall be organized on traditional and modern craft-making techniques

Introduction of business and financial literacy training to craftsmen and women.

Expose craftsmen/women to knowledge and usage of eco-friendly production techniques (e.g., solar-powered tools, biodegradable materials).

Encourage research on new craft designs to attract wider markets and patronage through digital marketing platforms for selling crafts.

E. Enhanced Market Access

Establishment of micro finance banks with lending capacity, cooperative societies alongside daily and monthly collections, to support artisans with funds to buy raw materials.

Promotion of craft works through partnerships with tourism and heritage organizations thereby linking artisans to local and international craft exhibitions.

Explore the possibility of accessing government grants, NGOs, and private sector partnerships to fund various initiatives that are beneficial to the craft industries

Conclusively, a revamp of local craft industries can create sustainable jobs, and restore the environment, to preserve cultural heritage.

Table 2: Percentage of Required Skills (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Skill Category (Variable)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Technical Craft Skills	300	30%
Business and Finanacial Management	200	20%
Innovation and Adaptability	150	15%
Communication and Networking	170	17%

As highlighted above, this structured approach would help when designing training and policy programmes. It is geared towards revamping local crafts, to promote economic activities that will correct inequalities. It is also meant for environmental sustainability

Question Three

How do you generate economic activities that will engage people to solve the problem of economic inequalities caused by the oil companies in the oil-producing communities?

Answer:

Respondents asserted that economic inequalities in oil-producing communities stemmed from the issues highlighted below; resource control issues, environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, and unequal distribution of oil wealth.

Respondents said to address these challenges, they suggested the following: economic activities must focus on job creation, sustainable industries, and equitable resource distribution. They further outlined strategies to generate economic activities that will engage people in these communities.

A. Diversification of Local Economy

The need to diversify economic activities is crucial because it has been observed that oil extraction often marginalizes traditional industries.

The diversifications are as follows:

Development of palm oil plantations, fisheries, and organic farming initiatives.

Local Manufacturing: Establish small-scale industries such as soap-making, textile production, local gin production, weaving and ceramics etc

Renewable Energy: Government should through public Private partnership promote solar power, biogas, and wind energy projects to create green jobs that are mostly needed in a degraded environment

Convert oil pollution waste: Conversion of oil pollution waste into useful products through recycling.

B. Entrepreneurship Development and Skills Acquisition

This entails providing vocational training centers for baking and decorations, tailoring, welding, carpentry, and craft-making.

Set up microfinance and cooperative lending capacity to support small businesses.

As part of corporate social responsibility, oil-companies should be encouraged to create business incubation hubs and fund startups.

C. Sustainable Environmental Restoration Jobs

A program for reforestation and land restoration programs is likely to engage thousand of unemployed persons

The concept of eco-tourism and cultural tourism built on local traditions can be developed in a curriculum of studies in HTM.

The locals should be trained and engaged in oil spill cleanup and environmental monitoring as means of livelihood

D. Strengthening Community-Based Enterprises

The concept of community-owned cooperatives to promote activities in agriculture, fisheries, and craft should be encouraged. Similarly, joint ventures between oil firms and local businesses should be encouraged with an emphasis on mutual benefits.

The old practice of promoting local trade hubs and markets to boost commerce should be resuscitated.

E. Policy Advocacy & Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The MOU should contain clauses that compulsorily make oil companies to invest in local infrastructure to be determined by the communities, beside schools, roads, and healthcare centers.

The importance of community-based resource control policies that ensure fair revenue sharing cannot be over emphasized. Further, advocacy to enforce local employment quotas in oil companies for skilled and unskilled workers is desirous and useful to solving the economic inequality debacle (Ogbogbo 2004).

Table 7: Skills Required for Economic Empowerment (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Skill Category (Variable)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agricultural and Agro-allied Skills	250	25%
Industrial and technical Skills	220	22%
Entrepreneurship and Business Management	190	19%
Environmental and Sustainability Skills	180	18%
Financial Literacy and cooperative skills	160	16%

As highlighted in the table, this approach is intentional for inclusive economic growth. The goal is to reduce dependency on oil-related jobs, and consequently bring about sustainable development among the people of the oil-producing communities

Question Four

What other economic ventures can solve the problem of economic inequalities created by crude oil exploration in oil-producing communities for the Urhobo people?



Economic Ventures to Address Inequalities in Urhobo Oil-Producing Communities

Crude oil exploration has significantly affected the Urhobo people, located in Delta State, Nigeria. This has led to economic inequalities, environmental degradation, and loss of traditional livelihoods (Iwejingi, 2013). To mitigate these issues, the following economic ventures can help address the issues through job creation, empowerment of locals, and make them reduce dependency on oil revenues if the underlisted themes are addressed:

1. Agribusiness & Agro-Processing

The degree of soil fertility in Urhobo land makes it viable for agriculture as an alternative to oil dependency.

Economic Opportunities:

The following economic opportunities offer means of livelihood and financial wellbeing: Oil Palm Farming & Processing for production. Investing in modern processing mills to boost employment.

Cassava and Yam Processing – Production of garri, starch, and cassava flour for local and export markets.

Fish Farming (Aquaculture) – Given the proximity to water bodies, commercial catfish and tilapia farming can provide sustainable income.

Poultry and Livestock Farming – Large-scale rearing of chickens, goats, and cattle can meet local protein demands and generate revenue.

Organic Farming and Export Crops – Production of plantain, maize, pineapples, and cocoa for both local consumption and export.

Marine & River-Based Economy

Given the access the Urhobo people have access to rivers and creeks, water-based businesses are viable options.

The attendant economic opportunities are inclusive of

Fishing and Seafood Processing – Development of modern fish processing facilities for dried and frozen fish export. These opportunities were once harnessed and used the Ibru Organizations

Further, water transportation and logistics such as ferry services, boat-making, and waterway transport businesses must be mentioned.

In that same vein, eco-tourism and river cruises can be used to promote cultural and nature-based tourism within the creeks and along the Warri River.

In the manufacturing sector, small-scale manufacturing and local industries should be set up to provide employment and stem the tide of dependence imported goods.

Soap and cosmetic Production can be achieved by utilizing palm oil, shea butter, and natural herbs for making organic skincare products.

The list of other economic ventures that can be used to solve the problem of inequalities are Wood and furniture Making - workshops and sawmills using locally sourced timber.

Metal & Fabrication Workshops – Producing agricultural tools, fish-smoking kilns, and boat engines.

Technology & Digital Economy; online education and content creation – Encouraging Urhobo youths to become YouTubers, digital trainers, and influencers.

Table 8: Percentage of Economic Ventures (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Skill Category (Variable)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agricultural and agro-processing	250	25%
Maritime and Aquaculture Development	200	20%
Small and Medium Enterprise(SME)	180	18%
Tourism and Cultural Heritage	150	15%
Renewable Energy and Environmental Restoration	120	12%
Financial inclusion and Cooperatives	100	10%

The table above highlights the diversification of the local economy. it points to the possibility of reducing dependence on oil related jobs. It creates sustainable means of income for the oil-producing communities

Question Five

How did the Activities of Oil Company Create Economic Inequalities among the Host Communities of the Urhobo People?

The exploration and extraction of crude oil in Urhobo land led to significant economic inequalities among host communities. These inequalities arose due to environmental degradation, loss of traditional livelihoods, uneven wealth distribution, and social dislocation.

The key ways oil companies have contributed to these disparities are highlighted below; Environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods

This refers to the destruction of farmland and fishing grounds, the

Oil spills and gas flaring have contaminated soil and water, making farming and fishing difficult. Consequently, many Urhobo people, traditionally farmers and fishermen, lost their primary sources of income. It reduces agricultural productivity and often leads to food insecurity and higher living costs.

Pollution of Water Bodies and Health Hazards

Rivers and creeks, once rich fishing grounds, are now polluted with crude oil and industrial waste. The water contamination has led to diseases, reducing productivity and increasing medical expenses and health challenges. Air pollution from gas flaring are mostly responsible for respiratory diseases. This has affected workers and indigenes with direct effect on their ability to earn a living.

Unequal Distribution of Oil Wealth

The presence of the oil companies small elite group, often politically connected, and benefits from oil contracts, while local communities suffer.

Most compensation payments meant for community development are often mismanaged or embezzled.

Neglect of Host Communities in Revenue Sharing

The oil wealth that contributes billions to Nigeria's economy scantily benefit host communities who receive little in return. Most oil-producing areas remain underdeveloped, with poor roads, schools, and healthcare services. Sadly, most Urhobo youth lack access to scholarships, jobs, and business funding, this has increased poverty levels.

Job Displacement and Unemployment Crisis

Perhaps it is needless to state that on perpetual basis, limited employment opportunities for the locals has become a slogan. The oil companies prefer to hire outsiders instead of training and employing local Urhobo youths. Sparingly, when locals are hired, they are mostly given low-paying, casual jobs.

Other inequality activities of the oil companies are:

Displacement of Traditional Industries

Land Grabbing & Dispossession

A. Forced Acquisition of Community Land

Conflicts Over Land Ownership

Socio-Cultural Disruptions

A. Breakdown of Traditional Economic Systems

Rise in Crime & Social Vices

Way forward

To reverse the economic inequalities caused by oil companies, the Urhobo people need:

1. Stronger Environmental Protection Laws – Holding oil companies accountable for pollution.
2. Fair Revenue Distribution – Ensuring host communities receive a larger share of oil wealth.
3. Job Creation & Skill Development – Training youth in entrepreneurship, agribusiness, and digital skills.
4. Infrastructure Investment – Building better roads, schools, and healthcare facilities.
5. Community-Owned Businesses – Promoting local industries like palm oil processing, fish farming, and tourism.

Table 9: Frequency, and Percentage of Economic Inequalities (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Cause of Economic Inequalities	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Environmental Degradation and loss of livelihood	300	30%
Unequal Employment Opportunities	250	25%
Poor corporate Social Responsibility	200	20%
Wealth concentration and Social Disparity	150	15%
Neglect of Local businesses and Economic Diversification	100	10%

The table above has used statistics to explain how imbalance exists in the oil-producing communities. There are imbalances in the economic benefit to the people, this is as a result of poor sustainable development efforts by the oil companies. Similarly, the policies of both Federal and State governments as regards the oil-production sustainability have been very poor. The totalities of these failures created poverty, unemployment, thus, forcing the youths to embrace other means of livelihood

Question Six

How do economic inequalities caused by environmental degradation lead to rural-urban migration?

How Economic Inequalities Caused by Environmental Degradation Lead to Rural-Urban Migration

The environmental degradation of the oil-producing communities was caused by oil exploration, deforestation, industrial pollution, and climate change. It led to economic inequalities by destroying local livelihoods. Consequently, many rural dwellers migrated to urban areas in search of better opportunities. Below is a breakdown of how this process occurs:

Loss of livelihoods due to environmental degradation

The loss of means of livelihood due to environmental degradation leads to the following:

Destruction of farmlands and fishing grounds

It should be noted that oil spills, deforestation, and poor land management reduce soil fertility, making farming unproductive. Similarly, water pollution kills fish stocks, destroying the fishing industry in affected rural communities. No doubt, without reliable sources of income, farmers and fishermen abandon their villages and migrate to cities.

Climate Change and Unpredictable Weather

The impact of climate change and unpredictable weather are practically manifested in rising temperatures, droughts, and floods caused by deforestation and oil exploration reduce crop yields. In the light of the above, farmers facing continuous crop failure are forced to move to urban areas in search of alternative jobs.

Poor Water Quality and Health Hazards

The impact of linkages and spillages as well as industrial waste is contamination water sources. This leads to poor sanitation, and makes rural life unbearable. It also creates respiratory problems, and other cancerous ailments, forcing families to relocate to cities where better healthcare is available (Chinedu and Chukwuemaka, 2018).

Economic Hardship and Unemployment in Rural Areas

Economic hardship and unemployment creates wealth disparities between rural and urban areas. While the oil-producing communities generate billions of dollars, they remain underdeveloped, with poor roads, schools, and healthcare. Also, the lack of investments in local businesses and infrastructure forces people to migrate for better opportunities.

Lack of Job Opportunities for Youths

In the face of collapsing traditional industries like agriculture, fishing, and crafts in rural communities, the absence of alternative economic ventures forces young people to migrate to urban centers in search of work.

Other reasons for urban-rural migration are:

- Declining Public Services
- Social & Security Challenges in Rural Areas
- Rising Crime and Social Unrest
- Unemployment and poverty

Insecurity forces people to migrate to cities where they feel safer.

Impacts of Youth Exodus and Aging Rural Population

As young people leave for urban areas, rural communities are left with an aging population, leading to labor shortages and further economic decline.

Urban Migration and Overcrowding Issues

Increased pressure on housing, jobs, and infrastructure.

High rural-urban migration leads to slums, unemployment, and rising crime in cities.

Conclusion

How to Stop Rural-Urban Migration

1. To reduce migration caused by economic inequalities, governments and oil companies must:

2. Invest in Rural Infrastructure – Provide good roads, electricity, and schools.

Support Local Industries – Develop agriculture, fisheries, and small-scale businesses.

3. Environmental Restoration

4. Job Creation Programs – Vocational training for rural youths to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

Enforce Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – Ensure oil companies invest in host communities

Table 10: Frequency, and Percentage of Economic Inequalities as Reasons for Rural-urban Migration Caused by Environmental Degradation (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Cause of Economic Inequalities	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Environmental Degradation, Soil Fertility Decline, Water Pollution and loss of livelihood	300	30%
Economic Hardship and Unemployment	250	25%
Social and Security Challenges in Rural Areas	200	20%
Climate Change and Unpredictable Weather	150	15%
Poor Water Quality and Health Hazard	100	10%

The study provides valuable insights, using the specific data from the survey of 1000 respondents. It details the frequency and percentage of economic inequalities caused by environmental degradation leading to rural urban migration in the study area. The patterns observed in these studies suggest a significant correlation between environmental degradation, economic hardship, and migration decisions. Summarily, it is crucial to address environmental challenges in order to mitigate economic disparities. This will reduce migration pressures on urban areas.

Question Seven

What is Cultural Tourism and in what ways can it contribute to the economy of the oil communities as a non-oil sector economic activity?

What is Cultural Tourism?

Cultural tourism is defined as a form of tourism that focuses on the heritage, traditions, arts, and way of life of the community. The characteristics of cultural tourism include: visits to historical sites, cultural festivals, traditional performances, indigenous crafts, and local cuisines. In the oil-producing communities, where economic inequalities exist, cultural tourism can be developed to provide an alternative economic sector, reducing dependence on crude oil and promoting sustainable development.

Impacts of Cultural Tourism & Its Economic Impact on Oil Communities

Job Creation & Youth Empowerment

Tourism creates direct jobs (tour guides, artisans, performers, hotel staff) and indirect jobs (transportation, catering, handicrafts). If government engages the youths in cultural entrepreneurship activities, it will prevent unemployment and rural-urban migration.

Revitalization of Local Craft Industries

Cultural tourism promotes and revitalizes traditional crafts like wood carving, bead-making, and pottery industries. The production of the aforementioned items will increase the demand there by encouraging local artisans to restart production.

Promotion of Festivals & Indigenous Heritage

As part of the initiative and efforts to solve the problem of inequalities, Oil communities can host annual cultural festivals showcasing music, dance, and folklore. A typical examples of such festivals in Urhoboland are the Owboru, Ogburie, Umaloku, Igboze festivals, these carnivals can attract tourists to boost local businesses.

Infrastructure Development

The twin purpose of developing cultural tourism and revenue generation would encourage governments and investors to improve roads, hotels, and recreational centers to support tourism. On the short run, a better infrastructure benefits tourists while in the long run, such infrastructures will be more beneficial to the locals.

Diversification of the Economy

Cultural Tourism generates revenue through gate fees, accommodation, and cultural exhibitions thereby increasing government earnings. This revenue can be reinvested in education, healthcare, and local businesses.

Environmental Preservation & Sustainable Development

Cultural tourism promotes eco-friendly initiatives, it encourages oil companies to clean up polluted sites. It prompts the oil companies and other investors to develop tourism sites thereby creating employment opportunities. This foster collaborative efforts to protect historical sites and sacred lands from destruction.

Examples of Cultural Tourism Projects for Oil Communities

Heritage Museums – Showcasing Urhobo traditions, artifacts, and history.

Traditional Dance & Music Shows – Attracting tourists and media coverage.

Local Cuisine Tourism – Promoting native dishes in restaurants and food festivals.

Handicraft & Artisans' Markets – Selling handmade textiles, carvings, and jewelry.

Eco-Tourism & Cultural Villages – Combining nature and culture for a unique experience.

Table 11: Contributions of Cultural Tourism as Non-Oil Economic Activity, to the Economy of the Oil-Producing Communities (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Contributions of cultural Tourism as Non-Oil Economic Activity	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Promotion of Cultural festivals and Heritage Sites	350	35%
Revitalization of Local Arts and Crafts	250	25%
Infrastructural Development	200	20%
Community Empowerment	200	20%
Environmental Preservation and Sustainable	100	10%

The table show cases the data from a survey of 1000 respondents in oil-producing communities. It assess the impact of economic and cultural diversity as a non-oil economic activity where economic inequalities have to address. Findings reveal from the frequency and percentage that there is potential for cultural tourism, to make significant contributions to the economic development, in the lives of the people who live in the oil-producing communities

Question Eight

What are the Traditional Crafts that should be developed to boost economic activities in the oil producing communities, and can we measure their contributions to the domestic and national economy?

Many traditional crafts existed in the oil-producing communities before the discovery of crude oil. Despite the dominance of the oil industry in the oil-producing communities, traditional Crafts can be revived and developed to create jobs, preserve culture, and

contribute to the economy. The key traditional crafts that should be promoted and ways to measure their economic contributions are highlighted below:

Key Traditional Crafts for Economic Development

Pottery and Ceramics

The availability of the clay in some of the oil producing communities gave rise to traditional clay pots, cooking utensils, and decorative ceramics professionals.

New trends in the pottery industry has given rise to modernized ceramic tiles and home décor styles, it has also created artistic pottery for tourism and export

Economic Impact:

New trends have encouraged local manufacturing and reduces imports this expanding homegrown entrepreneurship

Given the trend above, investment in creative industries have become more attractive

Basketry & Mat Weaving

Traditionally, the Urhobo people in South-South like the Nupe in Northern Nigeria are professionals in hand-woven baskets, mats, and hats for daily and ceremonial use

The eco-friendly materials for raffia and cane furniture are used for home and hotels

Further, fishing baskets are used for aquaculture businesses

Economic Impact:

These eco-friendly materials do provide sustainable alternative to plastic products

In terms of employment, basket and mat weaving provides local trade and rural economic engagement

The basketry and mat weaving industry provide export opportunities for the professionals and traders

Bead-Making & Jewelry Crafting

The celebration of royalty, festivals and weddings spur the production of necklaces, bangles, and beads. It consequently established bead makers and jewelry craft as a Profession with which people eke a living. Crafting of adornments for weddings and festivals. Bead-making and jewelry craft have been integrated into modern fashion accessories

Economic Impact:

The local fashion industry is invigorated

The cultural identity and heritage of the communities is promoted

Artisans and traders are gainfully employed

Leatherwork and Shoemaking

Availability local crafted leather works such as sandals, bags, and belts

Cultural accessories such as traditional drums are produced

It has been historically proven that locally tanned leather helps to reduce imports

Economic Impact:

Encourages the growth of home-made leather industry

Favours African fashion export

Does not depend on foreign leather products

Textile & Weaving Industry

Urhobo traditional cloth hand woven by them is Ukara, and George wrapper though the latter is not made by them. They engaged in dyeing and batik-making for customized clothing, as well as embroidery and beadwork for traditional fashion

Economic Impact:

The Profession creates jobs for weavers and fabric merchants

It plays a role crucial role, and increases demand in the entertainment and fashion industry

The industry exports African potentials to the global markets

Wood Carving and Sculpture

The Profession of wood carvers and sculptors in the communities looms more than life. They produce masks, figurines, totems, and furniture members of the communities.

In addition, they produces doorposts, walking sticks, and stools, they also design cultural artifacts for museums and tourists

Economic Impact:

Sculptors and woodworkers generate income for their families

The Profession helps to boost tourism and souvenir sales

There is the availability of local and international market

Assessment of the economic impact of traditional crafts in oil-producing communities, we can use the following measurement indicators:

Employment Generation

Number of people employed in craft-related businesses

Percentage of youth engaged in traditional crafts

Growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)

Revenue Contribution

Total sales from local markets and exports

Percentage of GDP from cultural and creative industries

Tax revenues generated from craft businesses

Export & Trade Impact

Volume of crafts exported to regional and global markets

Market demand for locally made crafts

Investment in modernizing craft production for export

Impact on Tourism & Cultural Heritage

Increase in cultural tourism revenue

Number of festivals, museums, and cultural exhibitions

Participation in international craft fairs and trade shows

Conclusion: How to Boost the Craft Industry?

To maximize economic benefits, governments and oil companies should:

1. Provide funding & training for artisans
2. Create craft markets & trade hubs in oil communities
3. Encourage craft exports through trade agreements
4. Establish craft-based cooperatives for mass production
5. Integrate traditional crafts into tourism projects
6. Bead work and Jewelry Making

Table 12 (i): Frequency and Percentage of Traditional Crafts that Boost economic Activities in Oil-Producing Communities (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Traditional Crafts that can Boost Economic Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Pottery and Ceramics	200	20%
Fishing Implement Production	180	18%
Basketry/Mat Weaving and Textile	150	15%
Canoe/Boat Building	120	12%
Bead Work and Jewelry Making	90	9%
Soap and Dye Making	80	8%
Hunting/Leather Work/Shoe Making	70	7%
Wood Carving	50	5%
Blacksmithing	40	4%
Herbal Doctors/Traditional	20	2%

The study reveals the frequency and percentage by which the traditional crafts, as highlighted on the table, can boost economic activities in the oil-producing communities.



The contribution of traditional crafts to domestic and national economy can be measured through employment generation, income generation, market expansion, GDP, trade volume and skill development. Summarily, if the traditional crafts are developed to function normally, the economy shall be boosted and economic inequalities can be gradually reduced

Table 12(ii): Category of items, Contribution to inequality, Role in Economic Revamp, Frequency of Inequality and Revamp (Frequency and Percentage Distribution (Based on 1,000))

Category	Contribution to Economic Inequality (%)	Role in Economic Revamp (%)	Frequency (Inequality)	Frequency (Revamp)
Income Disparities	30%	15%	300	150
High Cost of Living	20%	10%	200	100
Unequal Access to Infrastructure	15%	20%	150	200
Limited Local Employment	20%	25%	200	250
Dependency on Oil Industry	100%	100%	1000	1000

Table 12(ii) highlights category of items that contribution to inequality, and the role they can play to revamp the economy. The frequency of Inequality and revamp is expressed in percentage distribution based on 1,000 respondents

Question Nine

How do the civil servants and oil workers in oil producing communities in Urhobo contribute to the economic inequalities in the locality, and what is their role in revamping the economy?

How Civil Servants and Oil Workers Contribute to Economic Inequalities in Urhobo Oil-Producing Communities & Their Role in Revamping the Economy

Economic inequalities in Urhobo oil-producing communities arise due to unequal access to wealth, resources, and opportunities. Civil servants and oil workers play a dual role: they contribute to these inequalities, but they also hold the potential to revamp and stabilize the local economy.

1. How Civil Servants and Oil Workers Contribute to Economic Inequalities

Wealth Concentration among a Few

Civil servants (government workers) and oil workers earn stable salaries while many locals struggle with unemployment. These high-earning individuals invest in real estate, businesses, and luxury goods and contribute to the rising cost of living.

Inadvertently, the gap between wealthy professionals and struggling rural dwellers widens, thereby creating class-based inequality.

Land and Housing Market Inflation

Well-paid civil servants and oil workers buy land and build houses, during which the land is made unaffordable for low-income local earners there by creating inequalities..

Thirdly, the increased demand for urban housing and rental properties usually drives up rent, and push low-income earners to poorer areas.

Limited Job Creation for Local Youth

There are limited jobs for community youths government did create jobs. Also, many oil workers and civil servants do not reinvest their earnings into local businesses, limiting economic expansion.

Government employment and oil sector jobs favor skilled workers, leaving many unskilled youths without opportunities.

Poor Redistribution of Oil Wealth

Civil servants in charge of local government funds and oil revenue allocations sometimes mismanage or embezzle public money.

Oil workers benefit from corporate salaries, but oil companies neglect community development, worsening economic disparities.

Dependence on Oil Companies for Economic Growth

Civil servants and oil workers rely on oil revenues for salaries, making the local economy dependent on oil.

Other sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism are neglected, leading to economic stagnation.

How Civil Servants & Oil Workers Can Help Revamp the Local Economy

Despite contributing to inequality, these professionals can also be key drivers of economic transformation if they take the following actions:

A. Investing in Local Businesses & Entrepreneurship

Invest in agribusiness, manufacturing, and trade, creating job opportunities.

By supporting local startups multi-purpose cooperatives societies to boost economic activities in the non-oil sector.

Supporting Youth Employment & Skill Development

Sponsor training programs in digital skills, technical trades, and small business development.

Establishment of scholarship and mentorship programs to help train local youths to prepare them for better-paying jobs.

C. Advocating for Transparent Revenue Distribution

Civil society groups should team with civil servants should ensure that oil revenues are fairly allocated to develop infrastructure, schools, and healthcare.

Fight against corruption and ensure government projects benefit local communities.

Promoting Affordable Housing and Real Estate Development

Government should be encouraged to promote investment in affordable housing projects for locals

Establishment of cooperative housing schemes can help reduce displacement and homelessness.

Diversifying the Local Economy

By promoting policies that reduce reliance on oil and support sectors like:

Agriculture (palm oil, rubber, fisheries)

Promote cultural tourism (festivals, heritage sites)

Promote handicrafts & small-scale manufacturing

Advocate for stronger corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to fund non-oil businesses.

Conclusion: A Balanced Approach to Economic Growth

Civil servants and oil workers can either worsen economic inequalities or lead the movement to revamp the local economy. By investing locally, supporting youth employment, advocating for fair oil revenue distribution, and promoting business development, they can bridge the economic gap and create a sustainable, diversified economy in Urhobo oil-producing communities.

Table 13 (i): Contributions to Economic Inequality: Frequency and Percentage (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Income Disparity	280	28%
High Cost of Living	200	20%
Scanty Employment Opportunities in the Locality	220	22%
Unequal Access to Infrastructure	170	17%
Lack of Attention for Traditional Livelihood	130	13%



Table 13 (i) outlined and explained factors that contribute to economic inequality among the indigenous people of the oil-producing communities in the study areas. The factors. Frequency and percentage based on response from the respondents is captured on the table

Table 13(ii): Roles in Revamping the Economy: Contributing Items, Frequency and Percentage (Based on 1000 Respondents)

Contribution to Revamp	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Local business Invest	180	18%
CSR Advocacy By Host Communities	200	20%
Transfer of Skills Based on Mentorship	150	15%
Clamour for Employment	220	22%
Indigenous Products Advert and Promotion	250	25%
Total	1000	100%

Table 13(ii) categorized efforts and initiatives that will contribute to the revamp of the economy, in order to reverse the economic inequality trend in the oil-producing communities of the Urhobo people. The frequency of each action plan (contribution) and percentage (degree of contribution) to drive the process to stem, and reverse the inequality trend in the oil-producing communities of the Urhobo People is noted.

Question Ten

How does the Twin Professions of Herbalist and Transporter contribute the non -oil sector of the oil producing communities in Urhobo land?

The herbalist (traditional healer) and the transporter (driver, boat operator, or logistics provider) play significant roles in the non-oil economy of Urhobo oil-producing communities. These two professions contribute to healthcare, trade, employment, and rural development, making them essential for economic diversification.

The Role of Herbalists in the Non-Oil Economy

Traditional herbalists provide an alternative healthcare system that is affordable, accessible, and deeply rooted in Urhobo culture. Their contributions include:

Employment and local business growth

Promotion of indigenous knowledge

Cultural Tourism

Urhobo herbal medicine is an attraction for cultural tourism, it attracts visitors that are interested in natural healing.

Traditional healing centers can be formalized into wellness retreats, boosting tourism revenue.

Affordable healthcare and non-dependence on modern medicine



In rural areas with limited hospitals, herbalists provide accessible and cost-effective treatments. This reduces pressure on government health services, allowing funds to be used for other community projects.

Export and Commercialization of Herbal Products

Proper regulation packaging of Urhobo herbal medicines sales locally and internationally. It creates a sustainable industry that benefits farmers, researchers, and businesses.

The Role of Transporters in the Non-Oil Economy

Transporters play a crucial role in economic activities, trade, and job creation by ensuring the movement of people and goods within and outside Urhobo communities. Their contributions include:

Supporting Agriculture and Trade

Farmers and fishermen rely on transporters to take their goods (palm oil, rubber, fish, and cassava) to local and urban markets.

This strengthens agribusiness and increases revenue in the non-oil sector.

Job Creation and Income Generation

Transporters include taxi drivers, bus operators, okada (motorcycle operators) riders, and boat operators who earn a living through transportation.

The sector provides direct jobs for drivers and indirect jobs for mechanics, fuel sellers, and spare parts dealers.

Linking Rural Areas to Cities

Many Urhobo communities are riverine, and boat transport is crucial for moving goods and people.

Efficient transport encourages investment in rural areas, boosting local businesses.

Supporting Tourism & Hospitality

Reliable transport systems make cultural and eco-tourism more accessible, bringing in more visitors.

Tourists visiting festivals, herbal medicine centers, and historical sites depend on local transport services.

How to Strengthen These Professions for Economic Growth

A. Herbalists:

Government regulations– Establishing herbal medicine regulations for safe production and sales of herbal medicines

Research and Development – Collaborating between herbalists and scientists to improve herbal product quality.

Export Promotion – Encouraging Urhobo herbal products in global alternative medicine markets.

Table 14(i): Contributions of Herbalist as a Profession to the Non-Oil Sector

Area of Contribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditional Health Care	240	24%
Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge	180	18%
Apprenticeship and Job creation	130	13%
Raw Material Farming and Sourcing	150	15%
Subtotal	700	70%

Transporters:

Infrastructure Investment – Improving roads, bridges, and waterways to enhance movement of goods and services

Training and Safety Programs – Educating drivers and boat operators on modern transport management and safety lives

Cooperative Societies – Forming transport unions to access loans for purchase of vehicles and speed boats

TABLE 14(ii): Contributions of Transporter as a Profession to the Non-Oil Sector

Area of Contribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Support for Trade and Commerce	120	12%
Bridge between Communities(Link)	80	8%
Job Creation(Directly or Indirectly)	60	6%
Enhances/facilitate local Businesses	40	4%
Subtotal	300	30%

Explanation: The two tables, 10(i) and 10(ii) with subtotals of 700 respondents, and 300 respondents make up a total of 1000 respondents. Both the table for the herbalists and transporters highlights the frequency and percentage their contributions to the non-oil sector in the oil-producing communities.

Conclusion

The twin professions of herbalists and transporters are essential for diversifying the economy of Urhobo oil-producing communities. While herbalists support health, culture,

and trade, transporters enable commerce, tourism, and connectivity. Strengthening these sectors through government policies, private investments, and modernization can reduce reliance on oil and create sustainable economic opportunities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The entrepreneurial skills required for professionals in crop farming, animal husbandry, lumbering, palm oil, and rubber production have been highlighted. The following are general entrepreneurial skills applicable to all sectors; business management skills – planning, organizing, and decision-making: financial management – budgeting, pricing, and profit analysis: marketing and Sales – branding, advertising, and customer relations: risk management – identifying and mitigating risks in production: innovation and technology adoption by using modern techniques and equipment among other things. There are also specific skills required for crop farming, animal husbandry, lumbering, palm oil production and rubber production highlighted in the body of the work. The general skills are measured in percentage and frequency in order to identify areas of priority for human training and skills development among agro-business entrepreneurs and professional farmers generally, to generate employment outside the oil companies.

The necessary steps and skills to revamp local craft industries to create jobs for host communities are highlighted.

An analysis of the level of environmental degradation and its impact on craft production has been carried out, in addition to an assessment of the community resources and needs. A survey was carried out to identify available raw materials and skills in the community. It also identified and harnessed potential markets for local crafts to be revamped. The research also identified government policy/directive on sustainable resource management such as implementation of afforestation policy to restore land for raw material sustainability: promotion of eco-friendly raw materials such as bamboo, recycled wood, materials, clay, and develop waste-to-wealth altitude.

In terms of skills, capacity building, would enhance skill development through viable partnership. In this regards, it is worthy of note, that technical training can be organized for traditional and modern craft-making techniques. Introduction of business and financial literacy training to craftsmen and women, as well as their exposure to knowledge and usage of eco-friendly production techniques (e.g., solar-powered tools, biodegradable materials) is important. The initiative also include research skills on new craft designs, to attract wider markets and patronage through digital marketing platforms for selling crafts.

To revamp local craft industries micro finance banks with lending capacity, cooperative societies, alongside daily and monthly collections, to support artisans with funds to buy raw materials must be established

Promotion of craft works through partnerships with tourism and heritage organizations thereby linking artisans to local and international craft exhibitions.

Explore the possibility of accessing government grants, NGOs, and private sector partnerships to fund various initiatives that are beneficial to the craft industries

Conclusively, a revamp of local craft industries can create sustainable jobs, and restore the environment, to preserve cultural heritage.

Findings on how to generate economic activities that will engage people to solve the problem of economic inequalities caused by the oil companies in the oil producing communities revealed that:

That economic inequalities in oil-producing communities stemmed from environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, and unequal distribution of oil wealth. In order to address these challenges, respondents suggested the following: economic activities must focus on job creation, sustainable industries, and equitable resource distribution. They further outlined strategies to generate economic activities that will engage people in these communities. These include the following:

Diversification of local economy

The need to diversify economic activities is crucial because it has been observed that oil extraction often marginalizes traditional industries.

The diversifications are as follow:

Development of palm oil plantations, fisheries, and organic farming initiatives.

Local manufacturing: establish small-scale industries such as soap-making, textile production, local gin production, weaving and ceramics etc.

Renewable Energy: Government should through public Private partnership promote solar power, biogas, and wind energy projects to create green jobs that are mostly needed in a degraded environment

Convert oil pollution waste: Conversion of oil pollution waste into useful products through recycling.

Entrepreneurship development and skills acquisition

This entails providing vocational training centers for baking and decorations, tailoring, welding, carpentry, and craft-making.

Set up microfinance and cooperative lending capacity to support small businesses.

As part of corporate social responsibility, oil companies should be encouraged to create business incubation hubs and fund startups.

Sustainable environmental restoration jobs

A program for reforestation and land restoration programs is likely to engage thousands of unemployed persons

The concept of eco-tourism and cultural tourism built on local traditions can be developed in a curriculum of studies in Hospitality and Tourism Management

The locals should be trained and engaged in oil spill cleanup and environmental monitoring as means of livelihood

Strengthening community-based enterprises

The concept of community-owned cooperatives to promote activities in agriculture, fisheries, and craft should be encouraged. Similarly, joint ventures between oil firms and local businesses should be encouraged with emphasis on mutual benefits. The old practice of promoting local trade hubs and markets to boost commerce should be resuscitated

Findings further revealed how the activities of the oil companies caused significant economic inequalities among host communities. The key ways oil companies have contributed to these disparities are highlighted below;

Environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods; pollution of water bodies and health hazards: Unequal distribution of oil wealth: neglect of host communities in revenue sharing: job displacement and unemployment crisis. Similarly, other activities of the oil companies that caused inequalities are displacement of traditional industries, land grabbing and dispossession among others. The frequency and percentages of economic inequalities based on 1000 respondents is on table 5.

Economic inequalities caused by environmental degradation contributes to rural-urban migration. The degradation of the environmental of the oil producing communities was caused by oil exploration, deforestation, industrial pollution, and climate change. The latter led to economic inequalities by destroying local livelihood. Consequently, many rural dwellers migrated to urban areas in search of better opportunities.

Rural-urban migration occurred because of the following: The loss of means of livelihood due to environmental degradation: destruction of farmlands and fishing grounds: climate change and unpredictable weather: poor water quality and health hazards: economic hardship and unemployment in rural areas: lack of job opportunities for youths and social as well as security challenges in rural areas. Rural-urban migration has many impacts inclusive of mounting pressure on jobs and infrastructure. It can only be reduced through investments in rural infrastructure. These explanations have been statistically represented on the table

The study provides valuable insights, using the specific data from the survey of 1000 respondents. It details the frequency and percentage of economic inequalities caused by environmental degradation leading to rural urban migration in the study area. The patterns observed in these studies suggest a significant correlation between environmental degradation, economic hardship, and migration decisions. Summarily, it is crucial to address environmental challenges in order to mitigate economic disparities. This will reduce migration pressures on urban areas.

The study revealed that cultural tourism with its focus on the cultural heritage, traditions, arts, and way of life of the community, contributes to the community economy. Comparatively, the characteristics of cultural tourism as obtained in Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba land are applicable. The historical sites, cultural festivals, traditional performances, indigenous crafts, and local cuisines of the Urhobo people, if well managed by professionals can help improve the local and national economy. In the oil-producing communities, where economic inequalities exist, cultural tourism can be developed to provide an alternative economic sector, reducing dependence on crude oil and promoting sustainable development. The achieved through job creation, revitalization of local craft industries, promotion of festivals and indigenous heritage. These initiatives would help diversify the economy and highlight prominently the contribution of the non -oil sector to the economy of the oil producing communities. This was captured on table 7, it assess the impact of economic and cultural diversity as a non-oil economic activity where economic inequalities problems have to be solved.

The study showed that there are many traditional crafts in the oil-producing communities. Despite the dominance of the oil industry in the oil-producing communities, traditional crafts can be revived and developed to create jobs, preserve culture, and contribute to the economy.

The key traditional crafts for economic development are pottery and ceramics, basketry and mat weaving: bead-making and jewelry crafting: leather work: textile and weaving: wood carving and sculpture. They generate revenue, increased export and import.

The study reveals the frequency and percentage by which the traditional crafts, as highlighted on the table, can boost economic activities in the oil-producing communities. The contribution of traditional crafts to domestic and national economy can be measured through employment generation, income generation, market expansion, GDP, trade volume and skill development. Summarily, if the traditional crafts are developed to function normally, the economy shall be boosted and economic inequalities can be gradually reduced. Table 8 highlights category of items that contribution to inequality, and the role they can play to revamp the economy. The frequency of Inequality and revamp is expressed in percentage distribution based on 1,000 respondents

The contribution of civil servants and oil workers on to economic inequalities in Urhobo oil-producing communities, and the role they can play to revamp the economy was examined. Civil servants and oil workers play a dual role: they contribute to these inequalities, but they also hold the potential to revamp and stabilize the local economy. The factors listed below highlight how civil servants and oil workers contributed to the economic inequalities: wealth concentration among a few: land and housing market inflation: limited job creation for local youths; poor redistribution of oil wealth and dependence on oil

companies for economic growth. In addition, the negligence other sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism, have led to economic stagnation.

Nevertheless, despite their contribution to inequality, these professionals can also be key drivers of economic transformation if the following actions are taken by the government and the oil companies in harmony with the communities.

These actions include investment in local businesses and entrepreneurship; support for youth employment and skills development; advocate for transparent revenue distribution; promotion of affordable housing and real estate development; diversification of the local economy

A balanced approach to economic growth will make civil servants and oil workers to either worsen economic inequalities or lead the movement to revamp the local economy. These factors, frequency and percentages are well laid on table 9 (i) and (ii)

Table 12 (i) outlined and explained factors that contribute to economic inequality among the indigenous people of the oil-producing communities in the study areas. The factors, frequency and percentage based on response from the respondents are captured on the table

Similarly, Table 12(ii) categorized efforts and initiatives that will contribute to the revamp of the economy, in order to reverse the economic inequality trend in the oil-producing communities of the Urhobo people. The frequency of each action plan (contribution) and percentage (degree of contribution) to drive the process to stem, and reverse the inequality trend in the oil-producing communities of the Urhobo People is noted.

Finally, the study discussed findings about the contributions of the twin professions of Herbalist and Transporter, to the non -oil sector of the oil producing communities in Urhobo land

The herbalist (traditional healer) and the transporter (driver, boat operator, or logistics provider) play significant roles in the non-oil economy of Urhobo oil-producing communities. These two professions contribute to healthcare, trade, employment, and rural development, making them essential for economic diversification.

The role of the Herbalists in the non-oil economy is inclusive but not limited to: provision of alternative health care system that is affordable, accessible, and deeply rooted in Urhobo culture. The profession promotes indigenous knowledge of cultural tourism; employment and local business growth: traditional healing centers can be formalized into wellness retreats, boosting tourism revenue. Findings revealed that it makes health care accessible, cost effective and non-dependence on modern medicine. This reduces pressure on government health services, allowing funds to be used for other community projects. It also creates a sustainable industry that benefits farmers, researchers, and businesses.

On the other hand, the transporters also play a crucial role in the non-oil sector economic activities. The Transporters facilitate trade, and job creation by ensuring the

movement of people and goods as well as services within and outside Urhobo communities. They Support agriculture and trade create jobs and generate income; link rural areas to cities; support tourism and hospitality

The two tables, 10(i) and 10(ii) with subtotals of 700 respondents, and 300 respondents, make up a total of 1000 respondents. Both tables for the herbalists and transporters highlight the frequency and percentage of their contributions to the non-oil sector in the oil-producing communities.

Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that environmental degradation and loss of livelihood created economic inequalities and wealth disparity as a result of crude oil exploration by oil companies. There was need to revamp the non-oil sector economy of the oil-producing communities to create alternative means of livelihood. The alternative means of livelihood are inclusive of reviving the local economy through crop and fish farming, palm and rubber plantation with attendant factories to process and produce allied materials in the oil-producing communities, as an attempt to solve the economic inequalities. Beside the general entrepreneurial skills such as business management skills, planning, organizing, and decision-making, financial management–budgeting, pricing, and profit analysis: there are also required professionals skills in crop farming, animal husbandry, lumbering, palm oil and rubber production.

These skills highlighted above, are available in the oil-producing communities, to ignite a revamp of local craft industries by engaging the people in the non-oil sector of the economy. However, the government should play a role through directive on sustainable resource management, capacity building and skills development, as well as information technology driven system to enhance market access.

To solve the problem of economic inequalities caused by the oil companies in the oil producing communities, there is need to generate economic activities that will engage people. This can be achieved when the economic activities are diversified by establishing palm oil plantations, fisheries, and organic farming initiatives; small-scale industries such as soap-making, textile production, local gin production, weaving and ceramics. An investment in culture and tourism will promote cultural festivals and heritage, with attendant impact infrastructural development. Government should through public Private partnership promote solar power, biogas, and wind energy projects to create green jobs that are mostly needed in a degraded environment. These among others are the economic ventures that can be used to solve the problems of economic inequalities.

Government should also ensure fair revenue distribution; training youth in entrepreneurship, agribusiness, and digital skills; invest in infrastructure and promote local industries. This will stem the tide of rural-urban drift caused by economic inequalities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research is not a mere academic exercise, the data generated would serve research purposes while the entire work would serve as policy brief for the federal and state governments as well as the oil companies. The research has contributed, and expand in scope the field of structural transformation and economic growth. It has articulated master a plan that covers cultural base tourist resource centre that can boost cultural tourism and generate funds. Such enterprise must be initiated through a tripod approach of government, Oil Company and communities.

Skills and technological know-how in agro-allied and small scale craft industries should be properly managed to gainfully contribute to the national economy. This is one of the reasons why the research canvasses a revamp of local crafts industries to address economic inequalities in Urhobo oil producing communities

The identified areas of priority for human training and skills development among agro-business entrepreneurs and professional farmers should guide the government in policy making. For instance, the table in research question 2 showed a structured approach that would help when designing training and policy programmes. It is geared towards revamping local crafts, to promote economic activities that will correct inequalities.

The government should articulate policies that diversify the economy to reduce dependency on oil related jobs.

The sustainable development efforts of the companies should shore up

Environmental challenges should be addressed to reduce economic disparities

There should be investment in cultural tourism

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