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Livelihood Diversification Strategies in Oil-polluted Niger Delta Communities, Nigeria: Imperativeness for Sustainable Welfare

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ABSTRACT

Households utilise a combination of livelihood diversification strategies to survive in distress-pushed situations. This research assessed the effect of livelihood diversification on household welfare using five key areas of asset welfare (physical, natural, social, financial, and human assets) and utilising diversification strategies of non-farm, off-farm, and on-farm activities. A survey design was adopted for this research. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, primary data were generated from 750 household heads in Bayelsa, Delta and the Rivers States. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research found that households who adopt strategies that spread to non-farm, off-farm and off-farm activities have a greater chance of significantly improving their welfare. This research contributes to developing antipoverty initiatives in oil-polluted regions with interventions that would strengthen the process that leads rural households to diversify. This study will open up policy advocacy to strengthen the Niger Delta originating from the recommendation of effective monitoring of the Petroleum Industry Act. This would ensure that oil and gas companies are duly making the annual contribution of 3% of their preceding year's operating expenditure to the Host Community Development Trust to provide supportive structures to allow the people to diversify their livelihood sources.

Keywords: Development, Intervention, Poverty, Resilience, Sustainability