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IMPACT OF CHRISTIANIZATION AND WESTERNIZATION ON THE NIGER DELTA ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This paper dwelt on impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta environment. The environment is described as the total sum of water, air and land, and the inter-relationship that exists among them and with the human beings, other living organisms and materials. Christianization and Westernization are relative terms that describe the influence of Europeans on Nigeria as a nation. Christianization is a process of making a person or group of people Christian; a process of converting a person or a group of people to Christianity. Westernization is a process by which a group of people adopts ideas and behaviour that are typical of Europe and North America, rather than preserving the ideas and behaviour traditional in their culture. Before the introduction of Christianity and its westernized influences, the geographical environment known as Niger Delta in Nigeria had unique cultures and indigenous religious traditions that were enshrined in their laws and taboos. The Environmental degradation of Niger Delta was heavily orchestrated by Christian ideas and Western culture in spite the positive impact of Christianity. The paper employed historical, sociological, and phenomenological methods to analyze the impact of Christianization and Westernization on the target environment. Furthermore, the paper used social influence theory to expatiate on how the Niger Delta people were induced to neglect their environment. Research findings revealed that the change in Niger Delta religious cultures and the adoption of Christian/Western cultures have affected the Niger Delta environment negatively over the years. Therefore, the paper recommended that Niger Delta people should uphold their traditional religious cultures, laws and taboos that respect and preserve her environmental values.

Keywords: Impact, Christianization, Westernization, Niger Delta, Environment.

Introduction

The Niger Delta environment is the most blessed geographical location in Nigeria with human and material resources. However, these human and material resources had experienced

changes, creativity, transformation, and reformation by reason of revivals and discoveries that were championed by Europeans from the inception of Christianity and Westernization in Nigeria. Christian as a concept refers to a group of people who confesses that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the World. Christianity and its Westernized history in West Africa have been surveyed by scholars who posit that the upsurge of the Christian missionary enterprises in West Africa began in 15th century. The missionaries with their allied European countries had as goals to Christianize, Civilize and Commercialize the continent (Wobodo, 2018). The missionaries confronted and stopped some of the obnoxious practices and beliefs in West Africa. Yet, it has been argued that the Portuguese and their allies of Western nations treated Africans inhumanly. Africans were treated like material resources, and in their quest for materialism, African environment was subdued and exploited. According to Fleck (2013p 31) "We cannot consider the history of Nigeria without dealing with that most distressing and shameful period when human beings were sold in exchange for merchandise and for gold." It was against the backdrop that the Portuguese' effort to Christianize the West African nations failed. From incontrovertible evidences scholars are of the view that factors such as inhumane treatment of Africans, language barriers, unhealthy rivalry between the Europeans, climatic challenge to mention but few combined to frustrate the initial Christianization of West African nations. According to Tasie et al (2017 p2) "Before the more successful 19th century, missionary ventures to southern Nigeria which were sponsored mainly by the major Protestant missionary societies...some earlier known Christian missionary endeavours in the Niger Delta had occurred somewhat sporadically in the 15th and 16th centuries." The European missionaries were able to reach very notable places in Niger Delta like Benin, Warri and Itsekiri in 15th and 16 centuries. However, the Western zeal to Christianize and westernize West Africa began strongly in 17th-18th centuries. According to Rodney (as cited in Vincent, 2009):

> Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, and for most of the 19th century, the exploitation of Africa and African labour continued to be a source for the accumulation of capital to be reinvested in Western Europe.

This affirms the interest of the European countries that looted and degraded the African environment to develop their home countries. It has been said that:

> Man has always exploited his natural environment in order to make a living. At a certain point in time, there also arose the exploitation of man by man, in that a few people grew rich and lived well through the labour of others (Vincent, 2009).

It grew to the point that nations were exploited by other nations, and that has been the case of Niger Delta, Nigeria with negative impact on her environment. It is against the above stated background that this paper deals on the impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta Environment.

Clarification of the terms

Christianization

Christianization is a term for the specific type of change that occurs when an individual or group of people or something has been or is being converted to Christianity (Christianization. https//en. m. Wikipedia). Christianization in West Africa spread through missionaries by individual conversions and in some cases, conversion was as a result of coercion from the European power. Also, Christianization is the conversion of preciously non-Christian practices, spaces and places to Christian uses and names. It is the change in traditional cultures and religious beliefs in the spaces and places of the Niger Delta environment that necessitated the clarification of the said term.

Westernization

Westernization implies the adoption of the practice and culture of Western Europe by societies and countries in other parts of the world, whether through compulsion or influence (https//www.britannica.com). It is associated with Europeanization or Occidentalization which simply means a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in areas such as industry, science, technology, education, politics, economics, traditions, values, laws, norms ,diet, clothing, language, lifestyle, writing system, perceptions, religion and philosophy (westernization. https//en. m. wikipedia.org/). During the era of colonialism, it often involved the spread of Christianity. Westernization started with the traders, colonizers, and missionaries from the Western Europe and their idea of superiority over other countries they traveled to.

Niger Delta

Niger Delta is one of the geo-social structures of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is mainly inhabited by the ethnic groups that make up Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States.

> It is also worth noting that the present definition of the Niger Delta by the Federal Government of Nigeria, include areas that do not fit into the cartographic and ethnographic definition of the area" (Owete and Iheanacho 2009 p6).

According to Tasie (2012 p27) "And for the Niger Delta in this account" is the:

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> rdinary and truly geographical Niger Delta, not the extended economic or political Niger Delta of the esterwhile oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), nor of the current Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) concept and definition.

Nevertheless, the geographical contiguity and overlapping features make a less restrictive definition unavoidable (Tamuno, 2000). As cited in Owete and Iheanacho (2009 p. 6) the areas limit to the North is at Aboh; to the West, at the Benin River estuary to the East, at the Imo River estuary; and to the South, at the Palm point below Akassa, and the Nun River estuary. Thus, the political Niger Delta States are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Bayelsa and Edo. The area is the main crude oil producing base of Nigeria. Before the era of crude oil,

fishing hunting, and farming were the main sources of livelihood for the majority of her residents. The Niger Delta environment has been broken down into four ecological zones: coastal Barrier Island, mangrove swamp forests, freshwater swamps, and lowland rainforest. A great number of the people are riverine dwellers. It was argued that there has been a high degree of cultural heterogeneity among the people of the zone.

Environment

Environment is derived from the French word Environner, which means to encircle or surround. According to Ogbonda (1998 p376):

> The environment is made up of the non-living components (Abiotic) and the living components (Biotic). The abiotic components include things such as air, water, temperature, humidity, sunshine, soil etc. The biotic components are the plants and animals found in the biosphere.

Similarly, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) of Nigeria described environment to include water, air, plants, animals, and human beings, and the inter-relationship that exist among them (as cited in Amadi et al 2021).

Social Influence Theory

This paper is guided by social influence theory as proposed by Kelman in 1958. The theory in the main argues that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours are influenced by referent others through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. Kelman (1958) argues that social influence brings about change in attitude and actions, and that changes may occur at different levels. This difference in the level of changes can be attributed to the differences in the processes through which individuals accept influence. Thus Kelman (1958) explained the three primary processes of influence:

1. Compliance: This is assumed to occur when individuals accept influence and adopt behaviour to gain rewards (or approval) and avoid punishment (or, disapproval). Thus "the satisfaction derived from compliance is due to the social effect of accepting influence."
2. Identification: This is said to happen when individuals adopt the induced behaviour in order to create or maintain a desired and beneficial relationship to another person or a group. Hence, satisfaction occurs due to "the act of conforming. "
3. Internalization: This is assumed to occur when individuals accept influence after perceiving the content of the induced behaviour is rewarding in which the content indicates the opinions and actions of others. It is also argued that individuals adopt the induced behaviour realizing that it is congruent with their value system. In this case, the satisfaction occurs due to "the content of the new behaviour."

As argued above, the three processes can be represented by a function of the following three determinants of influence: (a) the relative importance of the anticipated effect (b) the relative power of the influencing agent and, (c) the prepotency of the induced response (Kelman, 1958). Since the social influence can shape an individual or a group of individual's attitudes,

belief, and actions, it could be applicable that "Impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta Environment" could be critically analyzed with the said theory.

The paper argues that the impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta Environment is basically as a result of:

(i) Most of the Niger Delta people and communities accepted Christianity and Westernization based on persuasion or induced influence from Westernized Christian agencies and their rewards. No wonder Wobodo and Onu (2022 p. 93) rightly stated that "acceptability of Christian faith by Ikwerre people was associated with the benefits such as education, health and power." The adoption of Christianity and Westernization by Ikwerre would be likened to Niger Delta experience in general, thus the people received the new faith because of its civilizing influences of School and health facilities (Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati 2013).

(II) Most of the Niger Delta people and communities adopted Christianity and Westernization in the midst of the traditional culture and religion based on relationships and conformity with some other people and regions of Nigeria.

III) Most of the Niger Delta people and ethnicities accepted Christian religion and Westernization in detriment of traditional behaviour and religion based on the opinions and actions of Niger Delta Christian's converts and Nigerians in general.

Impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta Environment

The impact of Christianization and Westernization on the Niger Delta environment is to be critically analyzed from the historical, phenomenological and sociological perspectives. The environment as noted above consists of biotic and abiotic components such as plants, animals, human beings, water, air, land among others and their inter-relationships. The question one might ask is: Is Christianity a blessing or curse to the Niger Delta? We will say it is a blessing, yet Christianization and Westernization have contributed heavily to the degradation, denigration, exploration and exploitation of Niger Delta environment. Second question would seek to know how the environmental components: water, air, land, sacred materials, and inter-relationship of organisms, man inclusive had been affected directly or indirectly by the activities of Christians, Christian's converts and Europeans in West Africa, Nigeria, and Niger Delta in particular.

Water and Air components

The water bodies in Niger Delta were sources of drinking, bathing, fishing, and religious worship before the influence of the westernized ideologies and Christian faith. The water in Niger Delta was used for ritual cleansing, and the traditional healers used to collect water from river and stream as they believed it possess healing powers from the spirit residing in them. Some water bodies are dedicated and believed to have healing powers (as cited in Amadi et al 2021). No wonder, Wotogbe -Weneka (2020 p x) rightly stated that:

> Legions of Owumini (aquatic spirits) inhabit the oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, creeks, and streams in parts of Rivers State, Niger Delta and thus influence the lives of the people who live in these areas.

The water divinity is popular among the Niger Delta communities, and is commonly called "water goddess "(Owete and Iheanacho 2009 p87). As a way of preserving the environment, some of the sacred animals associated with the water divinity such totems as python, crocodile and the turtle were respected. According to Owete and Iheanacho (2009 p89). They respect them as sacred animals, manifestations, and as messengers of the water divinity. Similarly the Niger Delta water bodies had socio-economic values as in the case of kokobedi dance a tradition celebrated in Bayelsa State and is performed during fishing festival in honour of the sea goddess (Akpahwe 2012). However, water divinities and worshipers are denigrated by Christians, and water fronts in Niger Delta are now the place of baptism by some Christian denominations. Also, most votaries of land goddess (Ali) like votaries of water goddess have been converted to Christianity and those who did not consider it unfashionable to worship or to observe some of the ritual taboos of water abound (Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati 2013). Thus, Okwuosa et al (2017) blamed the disappearing water spirit in Oguta like other Niger Delta areas on westernization and Christian religion that were craftily introduced to displace the people's cultural practices and traditions. They further observed that Western civilization in its varied forms has been blamed for the cultural change in Africa, Niger Delta inclusive. As cited in Okwuosa et al (2017 p15) "The World is changing, it is now the World of the white people." The anthropogenic pollution of Niger Delta waters and air has been traced to the discovery of oil at Oloibiri in 1956 by the multinational companies and the subsequent westernization of the geo-cultural areas.

> Following the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Oloibiri, Shell stepped up exploration in the Niger Delta and by 1958 Shell Darcy had discovered oil in twelve areas in the Niger Delta of which Oloibiri, Afam and Bomu were the most "(Oloibiri Oilfield https//en. M Wikipedia. org /).

The above assertion marked the beginning of pollutants and degradation in Niger Delta environment. The Niger Delta water bodies are polluted, and pollution is an undesirable change in the quality of water, air or soil (Anyacho 2004).The water pollution is one of the serious environmental problems in Niger Delta. It is simply the contamination of water by such substances as human/animal wastes, toxic chemical, metals, and oil (Anyacho, 2004). Water and air pollution in Niger Delta have been blamed on oil spillages, industrial wastes, sewage, chemical wastes and agricultural wastes which were majorly caused by carelessness of the European oil lord and their local accomplishers in the areas. It is worrisome to note "while the European Union experienced 10 incidence of oil spill in 40years, Nigeria recorded 9,343 cases within 10 years" (Environmental issues in the Niger Delta https//en. m. Wikipedia. org. /). This confirmed the environmental carelessness meted against Niger Delta region by the multinational corporations. According to Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) 1983 report:

> We witnessed the slow poisoning of waters of this country and the destruction of vegetation and agricultural land and good water source by oil spills which occur during petroleum operations. But since the inception of the oil industry in Nigeria, more than fifty years ago; there has been no concerned and effective effort on the part of the government, let alone the oil operators, to control

> environmental problems as with the industry"(Environmental issues in the Niger Delta https//en. m. Wikipedia. org. /).

Sadly, after over fifty years of oil production and its effect on the Niger Delta environment, the Nigerian led Federal Government and the multinational companies are still struggling to clean up the region.

Land component

Land in the Niger Delta is associated with agriculture, herbs, and grazing, forest or bush and its usage were restrained by laws and taboos traditionally enacted for effective environmental management. In Ikwerre, like other parts of the Niger Delta, land is seen as a goddess and as such referred to as a mother. Thus, activities on land were regulated in order not to desecrate it (Lawrence-Hart 2022). The environmental change in Niger Delta are not mainly caused by geological and climatic phenomena such as earthquake, drought, tornado etc rather land degradation is caused majorly by human activities. The modern environmental challenges has been blamed on the crafty introduction of Christianity and westernization into the Niger Delta region. Thus, the Niger Delta people were forced to make drastic change to the detriment of their environment (Wariboko and Asuevia 2013). No wonder Idowu (1962) blamed Christianity of complicity for the detrimental changes in moral values of most African societies. He blamed Christianity for denigrating the divinities such as mother earth with the notion of a benevolent God who is ready to forgive sin. In the same vein, Ayandele (as in cited in Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati, 2013) blamed Christianity for the crisis or confusion of moral values in Africa. He observed that missionaries did not preach a new religion but a revolutionary social ethics that life was separated into the spiritual and secular, thus an aberration to African worldview. In Niger Delta like other African regions, spirituality is not separated from the secular daily life.

The missionaries in enforcing their ideology "required of their converts the acceptance of the European value system. Thus to the individualism of the Christian Religion was added the individual of a materialistic industrial West" (Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati 2013 p168). The Christian Religion and Westernized ideologies have been detrimental to Niger Delta environment, mostly the degraded sacredness of the land. Thus the introduction of Christianity into Ikwerre like other Niger Delta ethnicities has undermined the peoples' social and moral fabric (Wotogbe -Weneka and Olumati, 2013). The loss of moral values has been the root cause of pollution and degradation of the Niger Delta land as experienced over the years. Oil spillages on land, bloodshed, suicide, homicide, incest, stealing etc were originally tabooed to the land goddess. The above environmental pollution and degradation of the land as mentioned traditionally require an elaborate placatory rites by the Chief Priest of the land in order to restore the ritual purity of the community (Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati, 2013). However, nowadays the miserable offenders prefer church confession and forgiveness rather than the traditional ritualistic cleansing, and in recent times, amnesty is granted to the offenders. For instance, as observed, Ikwerre people, who inhabit the frontier of the Niger Delta have had their tribal religion and unity eroded due to the revolutionary ethic of Christianity. Regardless that some Ikwerre people like other Niger Delta people still uphold the sanctity of the land cult, their kith and kin, who have converted to Christianity, deride

them as fetish, pagan, unbelievers, and idolaters. Thus Christianity and its westernized ideologies had weakened the environmental values and social ties associated with the Niger Delta land.

As stated elsewhere, the Niger Delta environment was rich with natural and human resources; farming, fishing, and trading was a midst of livelihood before the era of Westernized Christianity. It was the Europeans that introduced modern farming, fishing and trading which are associated with the use of chemical form of fertilizer and modern means of irrigation that has a cultural effect on the land and farming system. According to Odili and Otu (2013)"The culture of shifting cultivation is currently giving ways in Niger Delta communities for permanent mechanized farming." The modern use of fertilizer, modern trading and permanent farming system seem good but with untold environmental hazard on Niger Delta Land.

The Niger Delta environment has been affected since the slave trade and subsequent discovery of oil in 1950s till date. The discovery of material resources such as coal, petroleum, gas by the Western World had caused a social change in Niger Delta. Subsequently the industrialization, urbanization and over population are main causes of struggle in the most cities of the Niger Delta. No wonder, the natural environment of Niger Delta was scavenged and ravaged in search of resources to provide for the ever growing Nigerian population (Wariboko and Asuevia 2022). It would be argued that Niger Delta environment had been scattered in course of oil exploration and exploitation by multinational companies and the Nigerian led Federal Government without considering the health and life of the inhabitants. As both human and non-human (forest, water bodies, fish, land, animal) components of Niger Delta environment are exposed to pollution, diseases and untimely death become inevitable consequence. These hazardous environmental conditions are caused by anthropogenic activities of the listed multinational companies, consists of mostly the European and United States owned companies that are operating in joint ventures with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (Solomon et. al, 2017). According to Solomon et .al (2017) "Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mobil, Elf, Agip, Chevron and Texaco are the major petroleum industries with their allied subsidiaries." These multinational companies laid the foundation of legal and illegal refining of crude oil in Niger Delta, which has constituted environmental crisis and threats to the entire Niger Delta people. These companies neglected abiotic and biotic components of the environment in their quest for oil production in the region. They stingily and selfishly failed to take responsibilities of Niger Delta environment, neither did they take care of the wastes they generate. The UNEP (as cited in Solomon et .al , 2017) revealed how these companies have caused irreversible damage to the Niger Delta environment. Ogoniland for instance:

> has a tragic history of pollution from oil spills and oil well fires ...the Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland covers contaminated land, groundwater, surface water, sediment, vegetation, air pollution, public health, industry practices and institutional issues.

It is against the above environmental background in Niger Delta, that struggle and agitation for environmental justice will continued to reoccur daily as the Nigeria led federal government has adopted the Westernized mentality of neglect in the Niger Delta.

Inter- relationship of the abiotic (non living things) and biotic (living things)

The traditional Niger Deltan thought his world was saturated with myriads of spirit beings that were either benevolent or malevolent. In Niger Delta, there is no dichotomy between the material visible world and the invisible spiritual world; both flow together (Wotogbe-Weneka and Olumati 2013). As observed, the divinities and spirits are creation of the Supreme Being for the good order in the universe. Hence, these divinities or spirits exert control over human beings, and the interaction between spirit and matter and between spiritual beings and human beings is therefore viewed as falling within the range of human experience. Niger Delta like other African societies knows that it is abominable to destroy nature, which they ought to protect and promote, as there are divinities or spirits in nature. Thus, they protect and promote themselves with taboos and laws that prevent them from destroying nature (as cited in Lawrence -Hart 2022). Traditional Africans hold to the fact that nature belongs to the Creator, and that any aggressive manipulation of the natural environment is wrong, since the laws fixed by God cannot be manipulated, altered or tampered with. It was observed that devastation of nature would infallibly lead to the destruction of mankind. The inter-relationship between man and nature would be likened to mother - child relationship; the mutual participation in the life of each other is seen in the same way. The Niger Deltans culturally revere nature because it connects them with the invisible spiritual world (Lawrence-Hart 2022). Man, in his environment expresses and interacts with nurture and maintain strands of relationship with the two realms of living: physical and spiritual realms. The earth is composed of sacred and profane, man and nature as inhabitants. It is believed in Niger Delta that some natural entities such as rivers, hills, animals, stones or rocks, lakes, trees, and many others possess spirits and demand respect just like humans. The Niger Delta people believed that the natural environments are inhabited by spirits and nature beings live in their sacred groves. Thus, some forests, rivers, lakes, animals, stones or rocks, and other abiotic and biotic components of the environment were kept intact, treated as scared abodes of gods, and preserved out of reverence for the deity that inhabited them. Nowadays in Niger Delta the esteemed relationship between man and his environment (nature) have been eroded and denigrated by the westernized Christian culture. Christianity and its westernized ideologies misconstrue the Genesis (1:28) account "subdue and dominate" to mean destruction of the environment. Christianity created in life of the Niger Delta converts the mentality of subduing the earth and human-centred morality. Westernized Christianity had seen man's relations with nature from the viewpoint of the anthropocentric. This anthropocentric stand made westernized Christian to see nature as secondary and not part of the spiritual, but material to be used or exploited by humans. No wonder, White (1967) blamed the westernized Christianity for the destruction and abuse of nature. The foundation of man's actions on earth is based on the fact that man is created in the image of God; man is separated from nature and has privilege to exploit nature for his proper ends. This biblical justification opens the path for nature destruction by human and changes Christianity into, "the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen."

Recommendations

This paper's recommendations focus on how to restore the Niger Delta environment and so offer various recommendations. The paper suggests the need to uphold the traditional remediation of the Niger Delta Environment. Remediation of environment is one of the ways traditional societies have responded to environmental issues across the globe. The term remediation simply means the process of remedying a situation. The Niger Delta environment requires an extensive environmental remediation before it could be used for other purposes. Niger Delta people like other Africans have unique remedying practices in responding to and sustaining their environment before the era of westernization of their region. The African indigenous religion has good remedying environmental background before the era of westernized Christianity, science and technology. According to Anane (as cited in Lawrence-Hart 2022) "Environmental conservation is not a recent phenomenon in indigenous African communities." Thus, remediation or conservation or sustainability of environment vis-a-vis handling of environmental degradation has been a practice of past African generations. Therefore, it could be achieved today through keeping to conservative rules, maintaining bush fallow system in order to allow the soil to naturally regain its fertility. Offering rituals where it is applicable in Niger Delta as a way of environmental remediation can be helpful.

Also, the modern remediation that is ongoing in Ogoniland should be expanded to other parts of Niger Delta in sincerity. The Nigerian led Federal Government and its subsidiaries should stop politicizing the cleanup of the Niger Delta.

Furthermore, the paper suggests professionalism and environmental justice, avoidance of carelessness as noted above in this era of oil production, industrialization, urbanization, modern fishing and farming in the Niger Delta.

Also, the paper suggests that the modern environmental laws in Nigeria should be strengthened with the collaboration of Niger Delta traditional law enforcement agencies such as the land goddess and water goddess through ritual justice.

Finally, all forms of oil carelessness in Niger Delta environment should stop through sincere collaboration between the Niger Delta people, the Nigeria led Federal Government and the multinational companies, to avoid further oil spill, gas flaring, toxic waste among other occurrences in the Niger Delta region.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the advent of Christianity and its Westernized ideologies in the Niger Delta, and the subsequent oil production and industrialization have negatively impacted the Niger Delta environment, their positive contributions in the region notwithstanding. The unprecedented oil spillage and gas flaring which has been ongoing for over 5 decades makes the Niger Delta one of the most polluted zones in the world. The multinational corporations and Nigerian led Federal Government have committed ecocide against Niger Delta environment, and the region is heavily contaminated, the air, ground, and water with toxic pollutants.(Environmental issues in the Niger Delta https//en. m. Wikipedia. org. /.). The ugly trend has persisted because the Niger Delta people have adopted Christian faith and

Westernized lifestyles that are detrimental to the traditional religions and cultures of their forebears. Before the modern era of Westernized behaviours, traditional Niger Delta environment was sacred, interwovenly fused by biotic and abiotic beings. Thus, bloodshed, incest, denigration of votaries, carefree dump of wastes, destruction and degradation of sacred animals, land, water and plants were highly guided against by the elders, ancestors and other spirit beings, as they were considered pollutants. Regrettably, the influence of Christianity and social change occasioned by Westernization of Niger Delta environment showed eroded inter -relationship between biotic and abiotic components of the environment. The behaviour of man in Niger Delta is more of anthropocentric, subduing, destructing and denigrating other components of the environment, negating the traditional behaviours, socio-political, religious and cultural values of the forebears, the original inhabitants of the areas.

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