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Fisheries governance: Addressing fisheries versus petroleum extraction industry conflicts in Ghana's western region

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Ghana began commercial oil and gas production in the year 2010 in the country's southwestern coast where fishing is an important economic activity. There have been growing concerns especially from the coastal fishing communities about the negative impacts of the petroleum extraction activities on their fish catch and general livelihoods. This study sought to understand how the fisheries governance institutions in Ghana (at the local, regional and national levels) are addressing the concerns and conflicts regarding the impacts of petroleum extraction activities on fishing in Ghana. Adopting a qualitative, phenomenological approach, data were produced from 35 informants in the fisheries, petroleum and local (traditional) as well as governmental fisheries governance institutions in Ghana through participant observations, group interviews and key informant's interviews. It emerged that, development programs such as; the provision safe drinking water facilities, improved fish smoking ovens and scholarships have been undertaken by the petroleum industry especially within nearby communities. Irrespective of these, various concerns were expressed about the negative impacts of petroleum extraction which fisher folks interviewed linked to the declining fish catch. Such concerns include: reduced access to fishing grounds, collision of canoes with oil transporting vessels, attraction of fish by lights on the oil rigs as well as maltreatment of fishermen offshore by officers of the fisheries enforcement unit in Ghana. However, the above concerns were viewed differently by the various stakeholder groups in the fishery and petroleum industry as well as the traditional and government institutions. Implications for the various stakeholder groups in the resolution of the above concerns are discussed.

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Agricultural revolution and sustainable food security: A panacea to oil glut and economic recession in Nigeria

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Following the sharp drop in oil prize globally in the past two years and its attendant effect of astronomical Dollar-Naira exchange rate, prices of goods and services have gone beyond the reach of average Nigerians. The problem degenerated to the extent that the economic managers of the country finally owned up last year that Nigerian economy has gone into recession. As the nation tries to manage the situation, there has been renewed interest in agricultural revolution and sustainable food security related issues in virtually all the states of the federation. This revival is occasioned by the dramatic rise in food prices across the country. Of late, several agricultural policies have been formulated to curtail food security challenges. Unfortunately, these policies have not yielded the desired results of increased food production. This paper, thus, explores the various challenges confronting food security in Nigeria with a view of highlighting the reasons that account for these problems. The paper also suggests ways of addressing these challenges. The paper uses trend analysis in terms of historical and current perspective and various descriptive methods to analyze the development of Nigeria through each decade since its independence in 1960 and examines the factors that have had impact on its agricultural productivity. This will aid in describing and predicting the performance of the agricultural sector in Nigeria and as a result, the overall economic development of the country in the coming decade. The paper proves that laying less emphasis on oil and carrying out in-depth research on the development of the agricultural sector and sustainable food security is essential to economic development and progress of the country.

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