

Title of Article: The Silent ones: Women and Development in the Niger Delta: What way forward

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Abstract: Both electronic and print media reports in Nigeria have over flogged various issues relating to the crises in the Niger Delta region. Similarly, literature and various scholarly works have drawn so much attention to the challenge of environment; oil exploration and of recent hostage taking of foreign oil workers in the region. In spite of the enormous contributions of women to development, there seem to be absolute silence on them. The dearth of scholarly works on women with regards to development is worrisome considering the poverty level of women in the Niger Delta. This paper therefore, examines the contribution of women with particular focus on food production and food security in the region. The current hike in prices of foodstuff in the Niger Delta compared to other parts of the country calls for concern and a study of this nature. Relying on data from purely secondary sources, case studies, journal articles and literature shall be employed in this work. This paper argues that development in the Niger Delta is incomplete without due recognition of the role of women in food production and the neglect of women in issues that directly affect them will undermine government and non-governmental efforts at restoring lasting peace in the Niger Delta. It adopts the social-exchange theory and concludes by recommending the need to give women a chance; recognize their inputs and adequately involve them directly in policy issues that affect them. By this, stakeholders and policy makers will achieve the needed food security and overall development of the region.

Key words: Women, Development, Food security, Niger Delta