

**COMBATING CRUDE OIL THEFT IN OIL BEARING COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHERN IJAW  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA THROUGH THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY RADIO**

**Ukaegbu, Michael Ibe PhD., Berezi, Kuro Lawrence and Kuro-Berezi, Tokoni Nora**  
**Department of English and Communication Art, Faculty of Humanities**  
**Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.**

*Email: [michaelibe22@gmail.com](mailto:michaelibe22@gmail.com), [leonberezi@gmail.com](mailto:leonberezi@gmail.com), [unbeatabletoksbee@gmail.com](mailto:unbeatabletoksbee@gmail.com)*

**ABSTRACT**

The study examines the use of community radio in combating oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The rationale behind the study is to find out the role community radio plays in evoking attitudinal change towards combating oil theft and vandalism. The objectives of the study are to ascertain the source of information and education on oil theft and vandalism in the oil bearing communities, find out the communities perception of the state and private owned radio stations programmes and their impact on the audience and find out the communities opinion on the role of community radio in the fight against oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The study adopted a survey research design with the questionnaire as the instrument of data collection with a research population of 462,517; and used the Taro Yemane's formula to arrive at a sample size of 400 made up of adult male and female in Southern Ijaw local government area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. The study was underpinned by the Democratic Participant Theory. Findings from the study shows that state and private owned radio stations do not have programmes dedicated to discussing issues about oil theft. Further findings indicated that programmes are not aired in the native language of the respondents' on state and private owned radio and that respondents' find it difficult to understand the language used in broadcasting by the radio stations. The study however revealed that community radio station can provide information and education to the locals through creation and presentation of programmes on oil theft and vandalism in the native language of the people. The study also revealed that through community radio, locals can be well informed on how to notify and report cases of oil theft and vandalism to the appropriate authority. Additional finding revealed that community radio can enable stakeholders, regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies, etc, to communicate with locals, get feedback and evoke the desired attitudinal change. The paper therefore concludes that the establishment of community radio in these communities is apt and has become a child of necessity. It therefore recommends among others, to encourage the establishment of community radio, government should reduce the cost of operational license so that communities can afford them and that oil bearing communities should set aside funds to run their community radio stations from the 3 percent of companies operational cost that would be granted to the communities as contained in section 257 of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).

***Keywords: Crude Oil, Theft, Community Radio***

**INTRODUCTION**

Bayelsa State and by extension, Nigeria is blessed with large reserve of oil and gas deposit. Crude oil is one of the main sources for world energy supply (Wu & Chen, 2019). Hydro carbon otherwise referred to as Crude oil has been the main stay of Nigeria's economy since its discovery in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, Nigeria in 1956 by Shell B.P and has placed the country as Africa's biggest producer of Oil and Gas. Nigeria has a large deposit of crude oil, with proven reserves of 28.2billion barrels, making it one of the largest oil producer in Africa (Reuters, 2014; Elwerfelli & Benhin, 2018). Of

course, the returns from natural gas exploitations have enabled the country to experience a post-current account surplus over the years (Ogbonna & Orlu, 2017). However, the hope that the economy would continue to blossom is less likely in recent times. It has been reported that “in June, Nigeria produced a 1.238 million barrels per day, in July dropped to 1.083 million barrels per day and it dropped to an all-time low of 972,394 million barrels per day in August 2022, lowest production in the last twenty years (The Lead News, 2022). The fortune of Nigeria as a major oil producing nation is dwindling at an alarming proportion. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, say ... Angola and Libya overtook Nigeria by producing higher volumes of crude during the review month (Punch, 2022).

Illegal oil bunkering has made oil spillages and explosions a common occurrence in the Niger Delta region (Campbell, 2015). The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) claimed that 70 percent of all oil spills throughout the most recent five years was the after effect of sabotage on its facilities (Campbell, 2015). As the people continue to cry out for the environmental restoration of their land, oil bunkering in the Niger Delta is still proceeding with greater intensity (Campbell, 2015; Bodo, 2019).

In her resolve to end the menace of crude oil theft, the Federal Government of Nigeria put in place many measures to stem the tide including most recently, “the federal government commissioned eight NSCDC gunboats to wage a full scale war against the perpetrators of this heinous crime (Thisday, 2022) and awarded pipeline security contracts to ex-agitators from the region.

While community policing is critical in the battle against oil theft and illegal bunkering in every neighborhood, its efficacy is contingent on the community's preparation and support. Communities, according to Kpae & Eric (2017), can serve as police officers in their own right. Attesting to this fact, Obidike (1986) maintains that community development cannot be achieved without the involvement of the people in making and implementing policies that affect them; and this can only be done through effective use of mass media of communication, especially the radio. McQuail (2010) notes that the mass media serve as agents of development through disseminating technical knowhow; facilitating individual change and mobility; spreading democracy; promoting consumer demand; and assisting literacy, education, health and population control, among others.

No doubt, radio has been identified as a broadcast medium used to educate and stimulate “people’s attitude and behaviour” (Sanders & Goddard, 2002). UNESCO recognizes the role of radio as a means of communicating rural development information to the rural people. Claude Ondobo, UNESCO Deputy Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information and Director of Communication Development Division, notes that:

community radio catalyzes the development efforts of rural folk ... given its exceptional ability to share timely and relevant information on development issues, opportunities, experiences, life skills and public interests” (UNESCO, 2001).

If they are effectively used, community radios can be one of the main players in health care, poverty alleviation, and crime prevention activities (The World Bank, 2007). According to Mahmud:

...community radio is a prior agenda that can help building up participatory practice in the society which leads to people’s governance. It can facilitate people’s access and promote their participation in local level decision-making process, which ultimately results for participatory governance in the society. We can say community radio can play the role as promoter of participatory, accountable and transparent governance system in a society and it can also create enormous opportunities for growth and poverty reduction.

Tabing (2002) notes that a community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. Experts suggest that rural community

radio would be effective in facilitating orientation and education of the people of the area on attitude towards crude oil theft, vandalism and outright stealing of government facilities and installations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over 60 years after the discovery of oil, the oil industry has been characterized by illegal activities of vandals, oil thieves and unaccountability of daily crude production and stolen crude oil. Stakeholders have accused powerful business people, security personnel, oil industry operators, highest level government officials and the host community of being involved in the highly organized, sophisticated and at the same time complicated thieving cartels.

Section 257 subsections 2 and 3 of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021 criminalizes communities and holds them up as being responsible for interferences that may occur on oil facilities in their territory. The PIA which accedes 3 percent of companies operation cost to the communities states that the same 3 percent, is to be forfeited by the communities in the event of damage and sabotage to oil facilities or production. Many communities do not know the position of the PIA which has conditioned oil producing communities to assume ownership role of facilities within their domain or lose out from the benefits accrued to them by virtue of the PIA.

Therefore, it is apt to seek a communication channel made for the locals, which is domiciled with the locals, operated by the locals in a language they understand and respond to. The current situation is that most times the voice of the locals in the area where crude oil thieves and vandals carry out their activities is not heard as they lack the resources to invite the urban domiciled press to report these happenings. So, their stories are only heard when there is a major oil spill resulting from oil theft, vandalism or equipment failure which would in turn attract public outcry and attention of regulators. On the other hand, their stories are heard when a rich member of the community or monarch sponsors the urban based press to the community to report their plight.

Many campaigns on the mass media against these illicit activities have not yielded the desired result mainly because they are not given enough coverage and are not sustained enough for the message to be internalized. Also, the people of the affected area are not considered in the planning of these campaigns, so you see a case where the native language which the people understand most is not used to drive the message. Similarly, the over reliance on the mass media that favours only elites and urban dwellers for instance television, newspaper and urban based radio stations has impinged upon the rights of the people to information overtime.

The Guardian (2015) recounts that President Goodluck Jonathan approved radio licenses for seventeen community radio stations...Amassoma information and resource center, Southern Ijaw local council, and Otuoke community, Ogbia local council, Bayelsa State. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, these stations are not functional.

Hence this study is out to investigate the use of community radio in combating oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the sources of information and education on oil theft and vandalism in the oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State;
2. To find out the communities perception of the state and private owned radio stations programmes and their impact on the audience;
3. To find out the communities opinion on the role of community radio in the fight against oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

### **Research Questions**

- 1 What are the sources of information and education on oil theft and vandalism in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?
- 2 What are the communities' perception of the state and private owned radio stations programmes and their impact on the audience?
- 3 What critical role can community radio play in the fight against oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Overview of Oil Theft in the Niger Delta**

In the 1980s, there were reported cases of oil theft in Texas, USA (Telegraph, 1981 as cited by Soremi, 2020). Other countries like Indonesia and Mexico are also presently confronting this challenge (The Economist, 2012; Jakarta Globe, 2013 as cited by Soremi, 2020). But the incidence of oil theft in the Niger Delta dates back to around late 1970s to early 1980s, when the country was predominantly under military rule. It was carried out under the command of top military personnel for the purpose of enriching themselves and forcefully maintaining political stability (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). This unlawful endeavour however, took a new turn with the advent of agitation for resource control by Niger Delta indigenes and the emergence of youth militancy (Ikelegbe, 2005; Katsouris & Sayne, 2013).

At the outset of the agitations in the Niger Delta, the objective was primarily political with the citizens of the region demanding for an increase in the derivation fund (a specific percentage of oil rents accrued to the federal government), but when the government was unable to meet all their demands, many of the youths in the community took up arms against the government and engaged in criminal activities such as kidnapping, destruction of oil facilities, oil theft and sea piracy (Ikelegbe, 2005; Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). Ikelegbe (2005), the involvement of youth groups in oil theft was at first limited to providing security for oil thieves, an activity from which they were able to enrich themselves and acquire weapons, but after a while they were able to engage in oil theft autonomously and this led to escalation of the illegal activity in the region.

Oil theft, which is also referred to as oil bunkering (Watts, 2007) occurs in three different modes in the Niger Delta (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). The first mode involves locally confined activities in which oil is siphoned from pipelines that had been punctured or cut with a hacksaw, and the oil collected is then refined crudely and sold within the community (Asuni, 2009). In the second mode, oil thieves attach plastic hoses to wellheads or manifold points to divert the oil directly into barges, ships or canoes (Ikelegbe, 2005) after which the oil is transported through the 'Niger Delta's dense network of creeks, swamps and estuaries' (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013) and offloaded into tankers often anchored at the mouths of coastal rivers. When these tankers have been filled, the oil is transferred into other large tankers or mother ships in the high seas (Ikelegbe, 2005). The third mode which has also been termed the 'white collar branch of oil theft' (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013) involves lifting of excess crude oil by extraction license holders and falsification of bill of lading records to cover up the actual quantity of oil being shipped out of the country. In summary, Asuni (2009) maintains that oil theft is an act of stealing crude oil from the pipelines or flow stations, as well as extra crude oil added to legitimate cargos that are not accounted for.

Due to the enormous quantity of oil that is illegally siphoned from the Niger Delta, Nigeria is recognized as a hotspot for oil theft (The Economist, 2012 as cited by Soremi, 2020). According to the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited, between January and July, 2022 Africa's biggest oil producer lost an average of 437,000 barrels of oil a day to criminal entities and individuals who illicitly tap pipelines onshore and offshore in the Niger Delta region (Premium Times, 2022). The monumental loss continues as Nigeria lost about \$3.2 billion in crude oil theft between January last

year and February this year (TVC News, 2022) and if it stays the same, could amount to a loss of about \$20 billion in the year under review at an average price of \$100 per barrel.

### **Rural community**

Colgate (2009), as cited by Nwabueze (2010), a rural community is a place where people's living conditions are extremely poor. As cited by Nwabueze (2010), the features of a rural community include a high degree of illiteracy, low productivity, cultural homogeneity, one mode of communication, and lack of infrastructure among others. Udoaka (1998) postulates that certain images come to mind when the word rural is uttered in Africa. According to him, these images reveal significant underdevelopment and poverty, as seen by bad roads, a lack of water supply, poor housing, and a high illiteracy rate. This is perhaps why Moemaka (2009) defines a rural community as "an area with members of families residing, which is relatively small, within which the people have developed a socio-cultural characteristics with collective identification, by means of which they solve problems arising from sharing a specific area".

Majority of oil bearing communities in Bayelsa State could be said to be rural communities as the people living condition are very poor.

### **Community radio**

Soola (2003), radio is a true medium that has given a vast number of people, both literate and nonliterate, good access to communication. The role of rural radio in the introduction of change in rural communities is evident, according to Moge kwu (1990).

In developing countries where there is dire need to improve the status quo, community radio is an important concept. Vigil (1997) states that;

When radio fosters the participation of citizens and defends their interests; when it reflects the taste of the majority; when it truly informs; when it helps resolve the thousand and one problems of daily life; when all ideas are debated in its programmes and all opinions are respected; when cultural diversity is stimulated over commercial homogeneity; when women are main players in communication and not simply a pretty voice; when no type of dictatorship is tolerated; when everyone's words fly without discrimination or censorship; that is community radio.

Furthermore, Wadia (2007) writes that;

Community radio, as distinct from public service broadcasting, serves to bring small communities together, focuses on common man's day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations. In this sense it aims to contribute to the lives of the local community, through the content that is created by the people and for the people of the community.

The community is the frame of reference for shared interest and interpretation and the radio communicates and collectivizes shared experience (Vatikiotis, 2004). The meaning of community can be conceptualized either in a spatial sense or in terms of identity or shared interests (Downing, 2001). Community radio stations, which are often small and operating on low budgets, are involved in civic education and raising awareness about people's rights, but their obligations are also characterised by the ownership of the people, access by the people, people's participation and their non-commercial and non-state dependence (Alumuku, 2006). In order to ensure community participation, it is common to involve volunteers from within the community (Bosch, 2010), which is also believed to increase the credibility of the radio stations (Myers, 2000). Alumuku (2006) contends that "community radio is emerging as one of the best forms of local community communication." Such a grassroots communication approach according to Traber (1986) can become an agent for change in religious, socio-economic development, and in the struggle for human rights. In fact, the people whom the radio station serves own and run the community radio.

### **Community Radio in Nigeria**

The Word Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and the Panos Institute of West Africa (PIWA) in conjunction with the Institute for Media and Society IMS-Nigeria, launched an initiative on community radio in Nigeria. According to Akingbolu & Menkiti (2008), the steering committee which articulated an action plan put Nigerians in the forefront of the campaign. So, there were several efforts to create awareness about community radio as workshops were held to generate and stimulate interest in community radio. The Federal Government in 2004 set up a working group to review the outdated National Mass communication Policy of 1990. In another development, the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC) was formed by stakeholders in 2005. Furthermore, the Federal Government in 2006 set up a committee headed by renowned communication scholar, late Professor Alfred Opubor, to develop a policy framework for the establishment of community radio stations in the country.

Despite the efforts put in so far, the country is yet to take advantage and maximize the potentials of community radio. The effect of President Goodluck Jonathan's declaration in 2010 that the government will soon commence licensing of community radio is yet to be felt. More so, in 2017 the Bayelsa State government announced that it would be establishing community radio stations in the three senatorial zones of the state as part of measures to increase public awareness and enlightenment of the grassroots. This is yet to come to reality.

### **The need for Community Radio in Oil Producing Communities**

It is a fact that no community in Bayelsa State owns or operate a community radio station. A majority of the people in these communities are not literate in the official English language which makes it difficult for them to decipher and understand contents from these radio stations. For this reason, most rural dwellers only tune to their radio set to listen to music and entertainment that they can relate with. This has made state and private owned radio not the favourite of the rural people. Sufficient evidence exists to show that though radio has tremendous potential to engender development in the rural areas, the conventional radio system has failed toward this end (Moemeka, 1981; Brieger, 1990; El Nafaty, 1999; Ojebode, 2003 & 2005; Yahaya, 2003).

With the existence of about six radio stations all located in the state capital and city centre in Yenagoa, most development oriented programmes that are geared towards enlightening and mobilizing the rural population towards development issues and attitudinal change are produced and broadcast in English language especially because of the multi-lingual nature of the state. Overall, the rural people are rarely considered in the production of content by state owned radio stations. Moemeka (1981) observes that the people were made passive listeners in the programmes, noting that many of the producers lacked first-hand knowledge of the socio-political, economic and cultural situations of the audiences of these programmes. He concludes by saying that the producers "were in the community, but not of the community".

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted the Democratic Participant Theory. The theory was propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987. The theory emphasizes and supports the media multiplicity, local nature of the media, horizontal media involvement and interaction.

The Democratic Participant Theory calls for the decentralization and democratization of the media to allow for easy access to channels of communication and the active participation of media audience in the communication and development process and thus, the media should serve the needs, interest and aspiration of the receivers (Anaeto & Anaeto, 2010). Hasan (2013) argues that the Democratic Participant Theory favours the following:

- Multiplicity of media

- Smallness of scale of operation, and
- Horizontality of communication at all levels. It opposes uniform, centralized high cost, highly professionalized and state-controlled media.

In a nutshell, the democratic participant theory advocates that;  
 ... greater attention should be given to the needs and interests of the receiver in a given democratic society. It advocates pluralism as against monopolization...it suggests that small-scale media enterprises should... co-exist with the media conglomerates. It suggest horizontal as against to-down communication... the theory has been described as the press equivalent of "grassroots democracy" (Daramola, 2003).

To summarize this theory, Ndimele & Innocent (2016) maintained that in all, freedom of expression in the media should be extended to economic priorities and development needs of the most vulnerable group, especially in the poor nations of the world.

The theory applies to this study because it is is mainly concerned with the people's right to relevant information, the right to reply, the right to use the means of communication for interaction in small scale settings of interest groups, subculture and community.

### Empirical Review

Dan'Azumi (2015) carried out a study on "The Role of Community Radio Station in Promoting Rural Agricultural Development in Bununu, Bauchi State, Nigeria". The study seeks to find out the role played by the community radio station in Bununu in the development of rural agriculture in the areas covered by its operations. Findings from the study shows that community radio station played a vital role in providing information and education to the rural farmers through creation, production and presentation of programmes on agriculture in the native language.

In another study, Milala (2022) investigated "The Role of Community Radio in Empowering Rural Women: A study of Ticheze Amai program bu Mudzimathu Community Radio, Malawi". The objective of the study was to investigate the role Mudziwathu community radio played on women empowerment in Mchinji district. The study found that Mudziwathu radio provides better platform for sharing experiences, business opportunities and promoting knowledge sharing in many aspects like agriculture and MSME's operation.

### METHODOLOGY

Survey design was adopted for this study. Questionnaire was adopted as instrument of data collection. The population of this study is the residents of Southern-Ijaw local government area in Bayelsa State which is 319,413 at the 2006 census.

Going by the United Nations annual population growth rate of 2.8% the projected population of Southern-Ijaw local government area in 2022 is;

2996 projected population (PP) of Southern Ijaw LGA= 319,413

UN annual growth rate (AGR) =2.8%

Southern Ijaw AGR = AGR X PP = 2.8 X 319,413

$$\frac{\text{-----}}{100} \times \frac{\text{----}}{1} \times \frac{\text{-----}}{100} \times \frac{\text{-----}}{1} = 8,944 \text{ (AGR)}$$

Years difference (YD) from 2006 to 2022 =16years (YD)

Therefore, 2022 projected population for Southern Ijaw LGA = AGR X YD + 2006PP  
 = 8,944 X 16 +319,413 =**462,517**

Thus, the population for this study is four hundred and sixty-two thousand, five hundred and seventeen.

The sample size of this study is determined using Yamane Taro's statistical method. The formula presented mathematically is;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n= sample size  
N= population size  
e = the level of precision

With a population size of 462,517 the sample size is calculated below:  
Therefore, sample size =  $\frac{462,517}{1 + 462,517 (0.0025)^2} = \frac{462,517}{1 + 1,156.2925} = \frac{462,517}{1,157.2925}$   
=399.65 =**400**

The multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents for the study.

- Stage 1: in selecting the respondents, southern ijaw LGA would be divided into two (2) districts, namely:
  - a. Oporoma district
  - b. Kolu-Ama district;
- Stage 2: from each of the districts, five (5) communities would be selected, totaling ten (10) communities namely;

OPOROMA

- a. Azuzuama
- b. Otuan
- c. Opuama
- d. Ondewari
- e. Angiama

KOLU-AMA

- a. Lobia
- b. Ukubie
- c. Koluama
- d. Olodi
- e. Gbaran

- Stage 3: the selected communities would be divided into clusters of compounds;
- Stage 4: Using systematic sampling, two compounds from each communities were selected;
- Stage 5: the selected compounds would be converted in to families;
- Stage 6: the selected families would be converted in to households/plots. To select our respondents, two households/plots from each of the families would be selected;

The sampling interval or the space between each selected house/plot to be visited is every 6th house/plot where two (2) respondents would be selected from two (2) households in each house/plot using random sampling (ballot), up to the number in the sample size.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

400 residents in the selected oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State were selected for this study and the questionnaire administered to them. The response rate distribution is shown in the table below;

**Table 1: Questionnaire distribution and response rate**

| Response rate | Response | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|----------|------------|----------------|
| Responded     |          | 379        | 94.75          |
| Not responded |          | 21         | 5.25           |
| <b>Total</b>  |          | <b>400</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Table I above shows that the study sought to get information from the 400 sampled respondents, however, out of the 400, only 379 respondents returned the copies of the questionnaire fully completed making a response rate of 94.75%, while 21 copies of the questionnaire were not completed and/or not received, making the percentage of those who never responded to 5.25%.



**Table 2: Demography of Respondents**

| Item |                                | Option          | Frequency  | Percentages |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1    | Age Bracket                    | 18-30 years     | 73         | 19.26%      |
|      |                                | 30-42 years     | 139        | 36.68%      |
|      |                                | 42years & above | 167        | 44.06%      |
|      |                                | <b>Total</b>    | <b>379</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 2    | Sex                            | Male            | 174        | 45.91%      |
|      |                                | Female          | 205        | 54.09%      |
|      |                                | <b>Total</b>    | <b>379</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 3    | Marital status                 | Single          | 104        | 27.44%      |
|      |                                | Married         | 214        | 56.46%      |
|      |                                | Divorced        | 38         | 10.03%      |
|      |                                | Widow           | 23         | 6.07%       |
|      |                                | <b>Total</b>    | <b>379</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 4    | Level of Education             | No Education    | 88         | 23.22%      |
|      |                                | Primary         | 164        | 43.27%      |
|      |                                | JSSCE/SSCE      | 98         | 25.86%      |
|      |                                | OND/NCE/B.Sc    | 28         | 7.39%       |
|      |                                | Masters/Above   | 1          | 0.26%       |
|      |                                | <b>Total</b>    | <b>379</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 5    | Do you have access to a radio? | Yes             | 366        | 96.57%      |
|      |                                | No              | 13         | 3.43%       |
|      |                                | <b>Total</b>    | <b>379</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 2 shows the demographic status of respondents in which majority of the respondents are within the age range of 42 years and above. Majority of the respondents are female with a frequency of 205 representing 54.09%. A higher percentage of respondents are married while 6.07% are widowed. Most of the respondents have primary school education representing 43.27% resulting from a frequency of 164. The table indicated that respondents have access to a radio with a frequency of 366 representing 96.57%.

**Research question 1-** What are the source of information and education on oil theft and vandalism in the communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of respondents' major source of information & education about oil theft in communities.**

| Item | Option                                                              | Frequency            | Percentages |             |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 6    | which of the medium is                                              | Television           | 9           | 2.37%       |
|      | your major source of<br>information about oil<br>theft & vandalism? | Radio                | 92          | 24.28%      |
|      |                                                                     | Newspaper            | 1           | 0.26%       |
|      |                                                                     | Opinion leaders      | 176         | 46.44%      |
|      |                                                                     | Government officials | 62          | 16.36%      |
|      |                                                                     | None of the above    | 39          | 10.29%      |
|      |                                                                     | <b>Total</b>         | <b>379</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3 above, reveals that majority of respondents get awareness and information about oil theft from opinion leaders, which accounted for a frequency of 176 respondents, representing 46.44%, closely followed by radio with 24.28%.

**Research question 2-** What are the communities' perception of the state and private owned radio stations programmes and their impact on the audience?

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics of respondents' perception of the programmes on state and private owned radio stations and how they impact their audience in Southern Ijaw LGA.**

| Item                                                                                      | Descriptive statistics |                     |                     |                     |             | TOTAL | WM           | Remark   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------|--------------|----------|
|                                                                                           | SA<br>4                | A<br>3              | D<br>2              | SD<br>1             |             |       |              |          |
| 7 The radio station I listen to have programmes dedicated to discussing oil theft.        | 18<br>4.7%<br>72       | 39<br>10.3%<br>117  | 120<br>31.7%<br>240 | 202<br>53.3%<br>202 | 379<br>631  |       | 1.66<br>100% | Rejected |
| 8 I understand the information I received on radio about oil theft.                       | 27<br>7.1%<br>108      | 31<br>8.2%<br>93    | 189<br>49.9%<br>378 | 132<br>34.8%<br>132 | 379<br>711  |       | 1.87<br>100% | Rejected |
| 9 I do have access to express my views on state & private owned radio station.            | 56<br>14.8%<br>224     | 43<br>11.3%<br>129  | 142<br>37.5%<br>284 | 138<br>36.4%<br>138 | 379<br>775  |       | 2.04<br>100% | Rejected |
| 10 State and private owned radio stations have visited our community to report events.    | 101<br>26.6%<br>404    | 128<br>33.8%<br>384 | 86<br>22.7%<br>172  | 64<br>16.9%<br>64   | 379<br>1024 |       | 2.7<br>100%  | Accepted |
| 11 Programmes in my native language are aired on state & private owned radio.             | 29<br>7.7%<br>116      | 22<br>5.8%<br>66    | 208<br>54.9%<br>416 | 120<br>31.6%<br>120 | 379<br>718  |       | 1.89<br>100% | Rejected |
| 12 I do clearly understand the language used by the state & private owned radio stations. | 76<br>20.1%<br>304     | 46<br>12.1%<br>138  | 137<br>36.2%<br>274 | 120<br>31.6%<br>120 | 379<br>836  |       | 2.2<br>100%  | Rejected |

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

SA- Strongly agree. A- Agree. D- Disagree. SD- Strongly disagree. WM- Weighted mean.

Table 4 shows results from the seventh item to the twelfth item on the questionnaire which served as a precursor to finding out respondents' perception of the programmes on state and private owned radio stations and how they impact their audience in Southern Ijaw LGA. Item 7, displays result from respondents on if "radio stations have programmes dedicated to discussing oil theft?", it resulted to a weighted mean score of 1.66 and according to the decision rule for four (4) likert scale, it was rejected. Results for Item 8, which seek to find out if "respondents understand the information they received from radio about oil theft?" were rejected by respondents with a 1.87 weighted mean score. Similarly, result for item 9 which sought to find out from respondents if, "respondents have access to express their views on state and private owned radio stations" was equally rejected haven

recorded a weighted mean score of 2.04. On the other hand, result from the table in item 10, shows that with a weighted mean score of 2.7 respondents accepted that "state and private owned radio stations have visited respondents' communities to report events". Lastly, items 11 and 12 which sought to find out if "programmes in respondents native language are aired on state and private owned radio" and if "respondents clearly understand the language used by the state and private owned radio stations" were rejected as a result of 1.89 and 2.2 weighted mean score respectively.

**Research question 3-** What critical role can Community Radio play in the fight against oil theft in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State?

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics of respondents' opinion about the critical role Community Radio can play in the fight against oil theft in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.**

| Item                                                                                                                                                                                          | Descriptive statistics |                      |                    |                   |  | TOTAL               | WM           | Remark   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------|--------------|----------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | SA<br>4                | A<br>3               | D<br>2             | SD<br>1           |  |                     |              |          |
| 13. Community radio station provides information and education to the locals through creation and presentation of programmes on oil theft and vandalism in the native language of the people. | 108<br>28.5%<br>432    | 105<br>27.7%<br>315  | 86<br>21.1%<br>172 | 80<br>2.63%<br>80 |  | 379<br>100%<br>999  | 2.63<br>100% | Accepted |
| 14. Through community radio, the people can be well informed on how to report cases of oil theft and vandalism.                                                                               | 130<br>34.3%<br>520    | 125<br>33%<br>375    | 65<br>17.1%<br>130 | 59<br>15.6%<br>59 |  | 379<br>100%<br>1084 | 2.86<br>100% | Accepted |
| 15. Community radio enables stakeholders, regulatory agencies, law enforcement, etc to communicate with the people, get feedback and evoke the desired attitudinal change.                    | 174<br>45.9%<br>696    | 109<br>28.8%<br>327  | 52<br>13.7%<br>104 | 44<br>11.6%<br>44 |  | 379<br>100%<br>1171 | 3.08<br>100% | Accepted |
| 16. Members of the community can use community radio to raise alarm about activities of oil thieves and vandals.                                                                              | 123<br>32.5%<br>492    | 121<br>31.90%<br>363 | 79<br>20.8%<br>158 | 56<br>14.8%<br>56 |  | 379<br>100%<br>1069 | 2.8<br>100%  | Accepted |
| 17. Community members can be mobilized to police oil installations and facilities with community radio as a tool.                                                                             | 99<br>26.1%<br>396     | 116<br>30.6%<br>348  | 88<br>23.2%<br>176 | 76<br>20.1%<br>76 |  | 379<br>100%<br>996  | 2.62<br>100% | Accepted |

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

SA- Strongly agree. A- Agree. D- Disagree. SD- Strongly disagree. WM- Weighted mean.

Table 5 shows results from the thirteenth item to the seventeenth items on the questionnaire which served as a precursor to finding out respondents' opinion about the critical role that community radio can play in the fight against oil theft in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area. Results of the finding from Item 13, which sought to find out if "community radio station provides information and education to the people through creation and presentation of programmes on oil theft and vandalism in the native language?", respondents' feedback polled a weighted mean of 2.63 and according to the decision rule for four (4) likert scale, it is accepted. Item 14 which sought to find out if "through community radio, the locals can be well informed on how to report cases of oil theft and vandalism" realized a weighted mean of 2.86 and were accepted. Similarly, item 15 which sought to find out if "community radio enables stakeholders, regulatory agencies, law enforcement, etc, to communicate with the locals, get feedback and evoke the desired attitudinal change", was also accepted with a weighted mean score of 3.08. Item 16 which are if "members of the community can use community radio to raise alarm about activities of oil thieves and vandals?", garnered a weighted mean score of 2.8 implying that it was accepted. While item 17 on the questionnaire which is if "community members can be mobilized to police oil installations and facilities in the event of any eventuality, with the aid of community radio as a tool", realized a weighted mean of 2.62 which means it was accepted.

### **Discussion of Findings**

**Research question one** was designed to find out the source of information and education about oil theft and vandalism in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Finding revealed that majority of respondents get awareness and information about oil theft from opinion leaders, closely followed by radio. This finding implies that there is a diffusion of information from the media (mainly radio) to opinion leaders (who may be exposed and literate more than the respondents and have the means to access the urban mass media where they get information from) then to the respondents. This finding complements the submission of Dan'Azumi (2015) who documented that community radio stations play a vital role in providing information and education to the rural...in the native language.

**Research question two** was designed to ascertain audience perception of programmes on state and private owned radio stations and how these programmes impact on the audience. The findings revealed that state and private owned radio stations do not have programmes dedicated to discussing issues about oil theft. Findings revealed that even when respondents come across information about oil theft on radio, they hardly decipher or understand such contents. Furthermore, findings revealed that although state and private owned radio stations had visited respondents' community to report events, respondents do not have access to air their views via these radio stations. Also, findings indicated that programmes are not aired in the native language of the respondents' on state and private owned radio and that respondents find it difficult to understand the broadcast language used by these radio stations.

These findings also amplifies, Dan'Azumi (2015) assertion that community radio stations play a vital role in providing information and education to the rural...in the native language. It also corroborates and brings to the fore Akingbulu (2009) postulation that rural Nigeria is grossly underserved by existing radio stations. Additionally, the findings align with Moemeka (1981) observation that the people were made passive listeners in the programmes, stressing that many of the producers lacked first-hand knowledge of the socio-political, economic and cultural situations of the audiences of these programmes.

**Research question three** was designed to find out respondents' opinion about the critical role that community radio can play in the fight against oil theft in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State.

The finding shows that community radio station can provide information and education to the locals through creation and presentation of programmes on oil theft and vandalism in the native language of the people. Additional finding revealed that through community radio, locals can be well informed on how to notify and report cases of oil theft and vandalism to the appropriate office. Also, finding revealed that community radio can enable stakeholders, regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies, etc, to communicate with locals, get feedback and evoke the desired attitudinal change. Furthermore, finding shows that members of the community can use community radio as a tool to raise alarm about illegal activities of oil thieves and vandals as well as mobilize locals to police oil installations and facilities. These findings validate Alumuku (2006) statement that "community radio is emerging as one of the best forms of local community communication.

### CONCLUSION

It has been established in this study that the establishment of community radio in oil bearing communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State and by extension other oil bearing communities in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria is apt and has become a child of necessity. Data from this study have shown that oil bearing communities are grossly underserved by existing urban based radio stations. The study nevertheless revealed that establishing community radio stations will create a platform for effective communication and sensitization of the locals, as well as foster cooperation between all stakeholders in the fight against crude oil theft and vandalisation of oil installations with members of the community taking active role.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the researchers, therefore, made the following recommendations:

1. The policy of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should take into consideration the inclusion of community radio as the third in the sector of radio broadcasting in Nigeria after public and commercial ownership.
2. To encourage the establishment of community radio, government should reduce the cost of operation license so that communities can afford them.
3. Oil bearing communities should set aside funds to run their community radio stations from the 3 percent of companies operation cost that would be granted to the communities as contained in section 257 of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).
4. The community radio should ensure effective programme selection and scheduling to raising awareness about oil theft and vandalism in oil bearing communities.
5. The community radio should ensure interactive approaches in their programme production which would give listeners a chance to clear their doubts and seek clarification on complicated issues.

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