

A Review on Oil Spill Recovery Methods and Its Limitations to Known the Effect Rate by Using Legal Laws

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Abstract: This review article gives an overview of numerous strategies for recovering from oil spills as well as the drawbacks of each method's ability to completely clean up an oil spill. The article focuses on the legal guidelines for recovering from oil spills and how well these guidelines protect the environment and lessen the effects of spills on ecosystems. The review looks at the elements that affect whether or not efforts to clean up an oil spill are successful, such as the kind and quantity of the oil that was released, the state of the ecosystem, and the accessibility of equipment and resources. The review also covers the economic and social repercussions of oil spills as well as the function of legal systems in encouraging accountability and delivering just recompense for those who are harmed. Overall, this study emphasizes the value of continuing research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oil spills pose a significant threat to the environment, ecosystems, and human communities, necessitating effective and timely response measures. Over the years, various oil spill recovery methods have been developed to mitigate the impacts of these environmental disasters. These methods aim to contain, recover, and minimize the spread of spilled oil, as well as facilitate the restoration of affected areas. However, each recovery method has its own advantages and limitations, and understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective response strategies.

Oil spill recovery methods can be broadly categorized into mechanical containment and recovery, chemical dispersants, in-situ burning, bioremediation, and shoreline cleanup. Mechanical containment and recovery involve the deployment of booms and skimmers to physically control and collect the spilled oil. Chemical dispersants are substances used to break up the oil into smaller droplets, aiding its dispersion and reducing the impact on sensitive coastal areas. In-situ burning involves igniting the oil on the water's surface to remove a significant quantity quickly.

Bioremediation utilizes natural microorganisms to degrade and metabolize the spilled oil.

Shoreline cleanup methods focus on removing oil from coastal areas, utilizing techniques such as manual labor, pressure washing, and the use of absorbent materials.

While these recovery methods provide valuable tools in responding to oil spills, they are not without limitations. Mechanical containment and recovery may face challenges in rough seas or confined spaces, and residual contamination may remain even after the cleanup efforts. Chemical dispersants, though useful for preventing oil from reaching sensitive areas, raise concerns about their long-term ecological impacts. In-situ burning produces air pollution and can harm nearby marine life, and its effectiveness is influenced by weather conditions and available resources. Bioremediation success is contingent upon various factors such as environmental conditions and the specific oil spilled. Shoreline cleanup techniques can be labor-intensive, may damage sensitive habitats, and complete restoration of affected shorelines is often difficult.

Understanding the strengths and limitations of each oil spill recovery method is crucial for making informed decisions during an oil spill response. It is imperative to balance the immediate need for containment and recovery with the potential long-term environmental impacts of the chosen methods. Furthermore, ongoing research and development are vital for improving the efficiency, environmental friendliness, and cost-effectiveness of oil spill recovery methods. By continuously advancing our understanding and capabilities in this field, we can better protect our oceans, coastal ecosystems, and the communities that rely on them. [1].

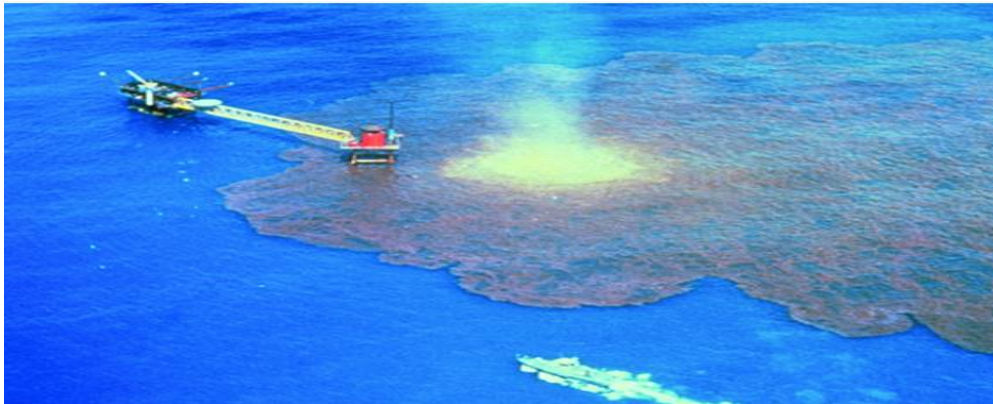


Fig:1 Spill at Offshore Area

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Oil spills are significant environmental disasters that can have far-reaching consequences on marine ecosystems, wildlife, and coastal communities. To address these challenges, numerous research studies and scientific papers have investigated various oil spill recovery methods and their limitations. This literature review aims to provide an overview of key findings from relevant studies on oil spill recovery techniques and their associated drawbacks.

Mechanical methods, such as the use of booms and skimmers, are commonly employed for oil

spill containment and recovery. A study by Zhao et al. (2018) compared the efficiency of different boom types for containing and recovering spilled oil. They found that inflatable booms were more effective in rough seas, while solid boom structures had higher durability but were less suitable for containing oil in harsh conditions. One limitation highlighted in the literature is the difficulty in recovering small droplets or emulsified oil, which can escape traditional mechanical recovery systems (Bravo et al., 2019).

Chemical Dispersants:

The use of chemical dispersants to break down oil into smaller droplets and facilitate its dispersion in the water column has been a controversial approach. A review by Michel (2017) emphasized that while dispersants can prevent oil from reaching sensitive coastal areas, their potential long-term impacts on marine ecosystems and organisms warrant further investigation. Research by Bælum et al. (2020) explored the microbial degradation of dispersed oil, revealing that certain dispersed oil components can persist longer in the environment and may pose increased toxicity to marine life.

In-situ Burning:

In-situ burning is an effective method for rapidly removing large quantities of spilled oil, but it is not without limitations. A study by Fingas (2014) emphasized that in-situ burning should be performed with caution, as it can generate harmful air pollutants and create smoke plumes that may affect human health and air quality. Moreover, burning may not be practical during adverse weather conditions or in areas close to sensitive habitats (DeLaune et al., 2019).

Bioremediation:

Bioremediation is a promising eco-friendly approach that relies on microorganisms to degrade oil components. A research review by Prince (2016) demonstrated that bioremediation can be effective in breaking down certain oil compounds, especially under favorable environmental conditions. However, the success of bioremediation is subject to factors such as temperature, nutrient availability, and oxygen levels in the affected area (Atlas and Hazen, 2011).

Shoreline Cleanup:

Cleaning up oil from shorelines is a complex task due to the variability of coastal environments. A study by Yang et al. (2020) assessed the effectiveness of various shoreline cleanup methods and found that mechanical methods, such as manual removal and pressure washing, were efficient for hard surfaces, but they could cause disturbance to sedimentary habitats. Additionally, complete restoration of oiled shorelines remains challenging, and natural recovery processes can take a significant amount of time (Pichel et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the diversity of oil spill recovery methods available and underscores the importance of considering their limitations and potential environmental

impacts. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the choice of recovery method should be based on the specific circumstances of each spill event, taking into account factors such as spill location, weather conditions, and the sensitivity of the affected ecosystem. Continuous research and development are essential to improving existing techniques and developing new, sustainable, and efficient approaches to minimize the devastating effects of oil spills on our environment.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF CRUDE OIL.

Crude oil has both physical and chemical properties that affect its behavior and usefulness. Here are some of the key physical and chemical properties of crude oil:

Physical Properties:

Density: Crude oil is less dense than water and its density is typically measured in degrees API. The higher the API gravity, the lighter and more valuable the crude oil.

Viscosity: Crude oil can range from being very fluid to extremely viscous. Viscosity refers to how easily the oil flows. The higher the viscosity, the thicker the oil, and the more difficult it is to transport or refine.

Colour: Crude oil can range in color from light yellow to black, depending on its composition. Lighter crude oil is generally easier to refine than heavier crude oil.

Flashpoint: The flash point of crude oil is the temperature at which the oil gives off enough vapor to ignite. The flash point varies depending on the composition of the crude oil.

CHEMICAL PROPERTIES:

Sulfur Content: Crude oil can contain varying amounts of sulfur, which can range from less than 0.1% to more than 5%. High sulfur content can make the oil more difficult and expensive to refine.

Api Gravity: As mentioned earlier, the API gravity is a measure of the density of the crude oil. This property is determined by the composition of the oil and affects its value and suitability for different uses.

Hydrocarbon Composition: Crude oil is composed of hydrocarbons, which can include paraffins, aromatics, and naphthenes. The composition of the crude oil determines its properties, such as its density, viscosity, and sulfur content.

Volatility: Crude oil can vary in volatility, which refers to how easily it evaporates. Highly volatile crude oil can release more volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the atmosphere, which can have environmental and health impacts.

Corrosivity: Crude oil can be corrosive to some metals, which can affect its storage and transportation. Understanding the physical and chemical properties of crude oil is important for determining its suitability for different uses, as well as for understanding its behavior in the environment and the potential impacts of spills.

4. ANALYSIS OF OIL SPILL RECOVERY METHODS:

Oil spills are complex environmental incidents that demand effective and timely response strategies. Various oil spill recovery methods have been developed to contain, recover, and mitigate the impacts of spilled oil. Below is an analysis of the key oil spill recovery methods and their strengths and limitations:

1. Mechanical Containment And Recovery:

Strengths:

Effective For Containing And Recovering Large Spills In Open Waters.

Relatively straightforward and well-established method.

Can prevent oil from spreading to sensitive coastal areas when deployed early.

Limitations:

May be less effective in rough seas or confined spaces.

Difficult to recover small droplets or emulsified oil.

Labor-intensive and resource-demanding for extended cleanup efforts.

May not completely remove all spilled oil, leaving residual contamination.

2. Chemical Dispersants:

Strengths:

Rapidly disperses oil, reducing the surface area and potential impact on sensitive habitats.

Can prevent oil from reaching shorelines and coastal ecosystems.

Useful for dealing with offshore spills and hard-to-reach areas.

Limitations:

Controversial due to potential long-term environmental impacts and increased toxicity of dispersed oil.

Effectiveness varies depending on oil type, weather conditions, and water depth.

Dispersed oil may still enter the water column and affect marine life.

3. In-situ Burning:

Strengths:

Rapidly removes large quantities of spilled oil.

Reduces the overall volume of oil, minimizing its impact on the environment.

Effective for spills in open water and under certain weather conditions.

Limitations:

Can produce harmful air pollutants and affect air quality.

May not be suitable near sensitive habitats or populated areas.

Weather-dependent, and burning may not be feasible in adverse conditions.

4. Bioremediation:

Strengths:

Environmentally friendly and utilizes natural processes for oil degradation.

Effective under favorable environmental conditions, such as adequate temperature and nutrient availability.

Reduces the need for mechanical intervention, minimizing disturbance to ecosystems.

Limitations:

Success depends on environmental factors and the specific oil spilled.

Bioremediation may take a significant amount of time to achieve complete cleanup.

May not be applicable in all types of environments, such as deep water or heavily polluted areas.

5. Shoreline Cleanup:

Strengths:

Addresses the removal of oil from coastal environments.

Various methods available, including manual removal, pressure washing, and absorbent materials.

Helps prevent further spreading of oil from the shoreline.

5. Environmental Impacts of oil spill

Oil spills have severe and long-lasting environmental impacts on marine ecosystems, coastal habitats, and wildlife. These spills release large quantities of crude oil or refined petroleum products into the environment, leading to the following environmental consequences:

Water Pollution: Oil spills result in extensive water pollution, as the spilled oil forms a slick on the water's surface. This prevents oxygen exchange between the air and water, leading to reduced dissolved oxygen levels, which can suffocate marine life. Additionally, the toxic components of the oil can contaminate water sources and disrupt the marine food chain.

Habitat Destruction: Coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, salt marshes, and coral reefs, are particularly vulnerable to oil spills. The oil can coat vegetation and substrates, suffocating plants and animals. It also hinders the ability of these ecosystems to provide essential services, such as coastal protection and nurseries for fish and other marine organisms.

Wildlife Contamination: Oil spills pose a significant threat to marine and avian wildlife. When

animals come into contact with the oil, their fur or feathers become matted and lose their insulating properties. This makes them susceptible to hypothermia and reduces their ability to find food. Ingestion of oil-contaminated prey can also lead to internal organ damage and toxic effects.

Long-Term Residual Effects: Even after cleanup efforts, some oil may persist in the environment for years. Residual oil can continue to leach toxins, affecting new plant growth and aquatic life. This long-lasting contamination can hamper ecosystem recovery and lead to chronic impacts on the environment.

Loss of Biodiversity: Oil spills can cause significant declines in local biodiversity as many species may be directly affected or lose their habitats. Some species may take years or even decades to recover, while others may never fully recover, leading to changes in the ecosystem's composition and functioning.

Economic Impact: Oil spills can have severe economic consequences for industries reliant on clean coastal environments, such as fishing, tourism, and recreation. The loss of income and jobs can have long-term effects on local communities and economies.

Social and Cultural Impact: In addition to economic consequences, oil spills can also have psychological and emotional impacts on affected communities. Traditional cultural practices and connections to the environment may be disrupted, leading to increased stress and social upheaval.

Climate Change Effects: Some spilled oils, such as heavy crude oils, contain higher amounts of carbon and other greenhouse gases, contributing to climate change when released into the atmosphere through evaporation and combustion during cleanup operations.

To mitigate the environmental impacts of oil spills, it is crucial to have effective oil spill response plans, regulations, and preventive measures in place. Timely and coordinated response efforts, along with the use of environmentally friendly cleanup methods, can help minimize the damage and aid in the recovery of affected ecosystems and wildlife. Prevention, through stringent safety and operational standards for offshore oil activities, remains the best strategy to protect marine environments and coastal communities from the devastating effects of oil spills [3]

6. OFFSHORE OIL SPILL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Offshore oil spills can have significant environmental and economic impacts, and as a result, various laws and regulations have been established to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such incidents. These laws and regulations aim to ensure responsible oil exploration, production, and transportation activities in offshore areas. Here is an overview of some key offshore oil spill laws

and regulations:

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

UNCLOS is an international treaty that governs the use and conservation of the world's oceans and their resources. It establishes the legal framework for offshore activities, including oil exploration and production. UNCLOS defines the rights and responsibilities of coastal states and flag states, sets out rules for delimiting maritime boundaries, and outlines environmental protection measures.

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL):

MARPOL is a global treaty aimed at preventing pollution from ships, including oil pollution. Annex I of MARPOL specifically addresses the prevention of oil pollution from ships, setting strict requirements for the design and operation of oil tankers and offshore platforms to minimize the risk of oil spills.

Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) - United States:

OPA 90 is a U.S. federal law enacted in response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. It requires oil companies to have spill response plans and establishes liability and compensation mechanisms for oil spills in U.S. waters. OPA 90 also mandates the use of double hulls for oil tankers and imposes penalties for non-compliance.

European Union (EU) Offshore Safety Directive:

The EU Offshore Safety Directive is aimed at improving offshore oil and gas safety in EU member states. It establishes requirements for risk assessment, safety management systems, emergency response, and liability for offshore activities. The directive also includes provisions for cooperation among member states in case of cross-border incidents.

National Legislation:

Many countries have their own national laws and regulations governing offshore oil exploration, production, and spill response. These laws often address aspects such as licensing and permitting requirements, environmental impact assessments, emergency response plans, and financial responsibility for spill cleanup and compensation.

Regional Agreements and Guidelines:

Some regions, such as the Gulf of Mexico and the North Sea, have established regional agreements and guidelines to address offshore oil spills. These agreements often involve cooperation among neighboring countries and set common standards for safety, pollution prevention, and response measures.

International Oil Spill Response Organizations:

There are various international organizations dedicated to supporting and coordinating oil spill

response efforts globally. Examples include the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds), and regional organizations like the Bonn Agreement in Europe and REMPEITC in the Caribbean.

It's important to note that the specific laws and regulations may vary depending on the country and region. Compliance with these laws and adherence to best practices are essential for ensuring safe and responsible offshore oil operations and minimizing the risk of oil spills and their adverse impacts on the environment and communities..[4][5]

7. Conclusion

Oil spills are environmental disasters that can have devastating effects on marine ecosystems and coastal communities. To address the impacts of oil spills, various recovery methods have been developed to clean up and mitigate the damage caused by these incidents. However, each method has its own advantages and limitations.

Mechanical Containment and Recovery: This method involves the use of booms and skimmers to contain and recover the spilled oil. While it is effective for large spills in open waters, it may not be as practical in rough seas or confined spaces. Additionally, it can be labor-intensive and may not capture all the spilled oil, leaving residual contamination.

Chemical Dispersants: Dispersants are chemicals used to break up the oil into small droplets, enhancing its natural dispersion. Although they can help prevent oil from reaching sensitive coastal areas, their long-term environmental impacts are a matter of concern. Dispersed oil can become more toxic and harmful to marine life, affecting the food chain and ecosystem balance.

In-situ Burning: This method involves burning the oil on the water's surface. While it can rapidly remove large quantities of oil, it produces significant air pollution and can harm marine life near the burning area. Moreover, its effectiveness is limited by weather conditions and the availability of resources.

Bioremediation: This method employs naturally occurring microorganisms to break down the oil. While bioremediation is environmentally friendly and can be effective in certain conditions, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Its success depends on factors such as temperature, oxygen levels, and the type of oil spilled.

Shoreline Cleanup: Cleaning oil from shorelines is challenging and labor-intensive. Techniques include manual removal, pressure washing, and the use of absorbent materials. However, some of these methods can damage sensitive habitats, and complete restoration of affected shorelines is often difficult to achieve.

In conclusion, no single oil spill recovery method is perfect, and each method has its own set of limitations. A combination of approaches is often required to address different aspects of the spill and its impacts. Prevention remains the most effective strategy for minimizing the occurrence of oil spills, as they can cause significant harm to the environment and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Continued research and development of more efficient, environmentally friendly, and cost-effective oil spill recovery methods are crucial to better protect our oceans and coastal ecosystems.

In recent years, advances in technology have led to the development of new oil spill recovery methods. For example, smart filter technology, milk weld kits, super absorbent polymer materials, and Lotus leaf-inspired oil-trapping mesh are all examples of innovative approaches that can be used to recover oil spills more effectively. Additionally, the use of armies of micro submarines to clean up oil spills is a cutting-edge technology that is currently being explored.

In conclusion, while oil spill recovery methods have improved over time, there is still a need for continued innovation and improvement to better protect our oceans and coastal communities from the damaging effects of oil spills. The development and enforcement of effective legal frameworks, along with the continued innovation of oil spill recovery methods, are necessary to prevent and respond to future oil spills effectively. By working together, governments, industry, and communities can take steps to prevent oil spills from occurring and minimize their impact when they do occur

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