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## **Globalization and Environmental Governance in Nigeria, 2000-2015**

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### **Abstract**

*The impact of the globalization process on the environment has grievous consequences on the overall development of many countries of the world. The degree of these consequences appears to be felt more in the third world countries because of their position and manner of engagement in the process of globalization. This process comes in form of 'global trade policies and agreements which tend to create conditions for maintenance and sustenance of MNCs activities such as oil explorations, deforestation, irresponsible constructions, and irresponsible e-waste management among others. This paper examines the impact of the globalization process on environmental governance in Nigeria. Using the dependency theory and utilising data sourced from secondary sources, the paper found out that globalization has negative environmental consequences and is to be blamed for the depleting environmental situations of many third world countries like Nigeria. The paper advocates that Nigerian state should consider the impact of any globalization policy on her general environmental concerns before such policies are made or allowed to be implemented.*

**Keywords:** Globalization, Environmental Degradation, Third World Countries, Nigeria, State.

### **Introduction**

In the past few decades, of globalization has become a regular subject of scholarly discourse and analysis because of its impact on human and physical environment. In its process, evolution, form and practice it has always attracted the attention and interest of scholars across the globe especially in the developing and third world countries. This is because, the globalization process is one that offers a prospect, a common world where all human activities are subjected to interconnectivity which can be likened to a village setting where one can observe the condition of intimacy, common features of culture, language and communication, informational and technology, free movement of people and goods among others. The notion that many people of the world are leaving in a borderless society is a common expression and this gives an impression of a beautiful society of friendly, integrated, and peaceful human society. Through this can be appreciated the migration of people across different countries and continents, free movement of goods, easy access to information, free flow of communication and technology among others. However, a majority of developing countries believe that they are excluded from the process or are participating in the process in marginal ways that are often detrimental to their interest. The wind of globalization does not spare third

world countries like Nigeria as consequent upon the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta areas of the country, by the British imperialists, Nigeria has been made a free heaven for the western capitalist countries and their associates. Oil exploration and exploitation is a big business that requires high capital and technological skill. Unfortunately following the antics and principles of globalization hence, liberalization and commercialization, the Nigerian government in her economic policies opened up investment space for multinational corporations of western capitalist origin through which they are overseeing the extraction and other processes of the oil resource. Thus, the oil industry in the Niger Delta region is dominated by multinational corporations such as Chevron, Texaco, Exxon-Mobil, Total, Agip, SPDC, ELF and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Presently, there are over 600 oil fields 5,284 Onshore and Offshore oil wells, 10 Export Terminals, 275 flow stations, 4 refineries and Liquefied National Gas project in Nigeria (Lubeck et al, 2007:5).

The process of extraction and processing the oil affects the ecosystem of the area concerned as cases of oil spillage, gas flaring, acid rain among others are common features of environmental degradation in Nigeria. In a related manner, the proliferation and usage of computers, appliances of Information and Communication Technology registers high impact on environment. Moreover, activities of deforestation being brought about by cutting down trees of economic value for income generation and profit maximization by the state and private investors are other activities give rise to environmental degradation. Also, the current issue of Fulani cattle herders who move across borders from Niger to various settlements in Nigeria and from Nigeria to other countries in search of pastures also has great impact on the ecosystem. Meanwhile, this situation is made possible following the adoption and implementation of the principles of the globalization process by national governments often to their own detriment. It is on this basis that this paper examines the relationship between globalization and environmental degradation in Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the paper commences with as conceptual analysis of the subject matter, globalization and environmental degradation.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Globalization**

The concept of globalization is perceived and expressed differently by scholars of politics and international relations. Globalization is regarded as a relatively new field in the study of international system and as such lacks a common definition. Its earliest appearance was in the 1960s, and it is commonly term used in both academic literatures to describe a process, a condition, a system, a force, and an age in human transitional history (Steger, 2003). Globalization in its true form and processes spread its tentacles across all human endeavour and exerts tremendous influence on the international political system as virtually every aspect of human activities cannot escape the force of this trend.

Globalization covers all aspect of human life such as the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of human existence. All peoples, societies, groups,

and individuals feel the powerful impacts of globalization and as such the trend has received different reactions and perceptions depending on the nature of its effect, whether of benefit or adverse, on the recipients. In this vein; it has assumed a contested concept in the North/South dialogue and is used to explain developments in the countries of the Northern hemisphere and to rationalize the underdeveloped countries of the South (Igwe 2013 & Khor, 2005). The International Monetary Fund (1997:15), defines globalization as, “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through technology. In the same vein, Ohiorhenuan (1998:6), refers to globalization as the broadening and deepening linkages of national economies into a worldwide market for goods and services, especially capital. Tandon (1998:2), avers that globalization seeks to remove all national barriers to the free movement of international capital and this process is accelerated and facilitated by the supersonic transformation in information technology. It is principally aimed at the homogenization of ideas, culture, values and even life styles; as well as, at the de-territorialisation and villagization of the entire world. In a related manner, Oluwabunwa (1999:20), opines that globalization can be seen as an evolution which is systematically restructuring interactive phases among nations by breaking down barriers in the areas of culture, commerce, communication and several other fields of endeavour.

However, Odoziobodo (2014), views globalization as the process by which more emphases are laid on the economic, political and cultural relations among the diverse and different peoples of the world whereby trade barriers are broken down and market integration encouraged among different nations of the world. Furthermore Mbah (2008), contend that globalization is itself a phase of capitalist development in which the West and United states established political, economic and cultural and military hegemony over counties of the world particularly through the activities of the multinational corporations of advanced capitalist states. Asobie (2007), also, remarked that globalization is the ideology of the capitalist state of America and Europe which they enjoy as big leaf to mask the interest of the ruling class in each of their countries. Amuwo, (2001:15), went further to contend that globalisation is an economic orthodoxy that is failing the people and enriching investors and big corporations. When Africa's political leaders rein into it, it is problematic; and when nation-states propose or seek to implement alternatives, they are pundits. They are reminded by the rich and powerful nations, that there is no alternative to the only way-the market path-of running the 'global economy.

Based on the foregoing, globalization is a capitalist instrument for economic and socio-political domination of states with less capital by the states with super capital high technology characterised by less restriction of goods, services and cultural traits across national frontiers.

### **Environmental Degradation**

The Glossary of Environment Statistics (1997), defines environmental degradation as, “the deterioration in environmental quality from ambient concentrations of pollutants and other activities and processes such as improper land

use and natural disasters". It could also be seen as the erosion and decline of the quality of the natural environment, which is caused directly or indirectly by anthropogenic activities that extract various environmental resources at a faster rate than they are replaced, and thus depleting them. On this regard, degradation means damage or reduction in quality of environmental features, primarily influenced by human activities. Some natural events such as landslides and earthquakes may also degrade the nature of our environments (<http://www.earthclipse.com/environment/causes-and-effects-environmental-degradation.html>). Environmental degradation can also be seen as the disintegration of the earth or deterioration of the environment through consumption of assets, for example, air, water and soil; the destruction of environments and the eradication of wildlife. It is characterized by any change or aggravation to nature's turf seen to be pernicious or undesirable. Ecological effect or degradation is created by the consolidation of an effectively substantial and expanding human populace, constantly expanding monetary development or per capita fortune and the application of asset exhausting and polluting technology. It occurs when earth's natural resources are depleted and environment is compromised in the form of extinction of species, pollution in, water and soil, and rapid growth in population (<http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/cause&-and-effects-degradation.php>). Based on this, the concept of environmental degradation connotes deterioration and disintegration of the natural environment through exploration and exploitation of natural resources such as oil, air, water, agro and wildlife.

### **Theoretical Nexus**

This study on globalization and environmental governance in Nigeria adopts the dependency theory as the framework of analysis. Dependency theory was developed in the late 1950s under the guidance of the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Paul Prebisch and his colleagues who were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries (Mbah and Obiora, 2015). Dependency, according to Theotonio Dos Santos (1971:226), is a ...a historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies. Unlike the Marxist theory of imperialism which explains dominant state expansion, the dependency theory explains underdevelopment which is a wholly negative condition which is self-perpetuating. The globalization process reinforces dependency in all facets and ramifications because as Andre Gunder Frank (1972:3), points out, the dependent states supply raw materials, agricultural products, cheap minerals which are produced from the environment. The production of these products have far-reaching implications on the environment of poor countries like Nigeria.

A case in point is crude oil and other minerals which are produced by Multi-national corporations. These multi-national corporations are agents of the globalization process and they fuel it and sustain it with far-reaching negative

consequencies on the environment and ecosystems of third world countries like Nigeria.

### **Globalization and Challenges of Environmental Degradation In Nigeria**

The issues of environmental degradation have continued to demand greater attention on the need to address it. Also, globalization and its effect on humanity and the environment have also been a subject of everyday discussion According to Panayotou, (2000), globalization contributes to economic growth and thereby affects the environment in many ways, it accelerates structural change, thereby altering the industrial structure of countries and hence resource use and pollution levels. Pollution of the environment is attributed to the increase in industries, burning of fossil fuels to run the industries, machines and for transport of both raw and finished products to different places. Scholars believe that many dimensions of globalization adversely affect the natural environment. Jorgenson and Kick, (2003: 196), observed that global modes of production and accumulation are ultimately linked to environmental degradation (e.g. extraction of natural resources and multiple forms of pollution via commodity production). In the same vein, it is observed that globalization, which is partly synonymous with rising international trade, has fostered the rapid production, trade and consumption of material goods in unprecedented quantities. This has weighted the ecological footprint of human activities around the world.

Although it is still difficult to assess the impact of globalization on the environment, it's quite obvious in some areas. Today, globalization's negative environmental effects are more apparent. For example, increased pollution linked to transport immediately comes to mind (Huvart and Verdier, 2013).Obi (1999), in a study on globalization contends that it is not only the issue of power and control of the environment for oil production and capital accumulation, the distribution of oil rents or surplus in favour of the ruling class and related interests but also the critical one of equation of state to oil power. Thus, the social forces of local resistance in the Niger Delta seeking to block extraction from, expropriation and degradation of their environment have had to contend, not just with the might of the transnational global oil interests, but also with the power of the state itself. From the above perspective, we can add that the process and activities of globalization give rise to environmental degradation and conflict of interest among political actors. Jaja (2010), contends that globalization has helped to liberalize national economics by creating a global market place in which all nations must participate directly or indirectly. This situation, he argued, has undoubtedly led to growing activities and power of international financial investors mainly presented by multinational corporations. Also, Ogunlana (2004), observed that environmental, social and cultural issues were made worse by the operations of the global free-market economy, a factor considered to be responsible for the economic woes of the third world countries. One major activity of these multinational companies that has a tremendous environmental impact is gas flaring.

According to the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation Report (2002), gas flaring in Nigeria has contributed moregreenhouse gas emissions than all other sources in sub-Saharan Africa

combined. As, Ugochukwu and Ertel (2008), noted, laying of oil and gas pipelines in the Niger Delta Region fragments rich ecosystems such as rainforests and mangroves in the region while the clearing of pipeline tracks also reduces habitat area, segregates natural populations, which distorts breeding behaviour. Jedrzej (2009), has also observed that environmental risks of oil and gas operations are heightened because oil and gas deposits are often located in developing economies near areas of high biological diversity and high ecological vulnerability, such as rain forests, mangroves. This is typical of Nigeria's Niger Delta that holds Nigeria's oil and gas deposits. Oil producing areas in Rivers, Delta and Cross Rivers are most affected. The impact of the exploratory and extractive activities of global forces such as Shell whose operation in Nigeria alone accounts for 14 % of its total global operations, Mobil, Agip, Chevron, Texaco, Total, etc. -have basically affected the social organization of the Ogoni people and the Niger Delta in general (Kelbessa, 2007).

Another area where the impact of globalization on environment has been identified is on the issue of deforestation. There have been widespread consensus that globalization has been often viewed as the root cause of deforestation because of its overuse of natural resources due to increased demand and also the removal of ecosystems as a consequence of population growth which have had a large negative impact on the environment (Adesina, 2012). Though, deforestation through the activities of logging industries is a global phenomenon, it also has its negative impact in Nigeria. Thus, deforestation from whatever angle it is viewed is causing a loss of biological diversity on the planet. The country's rain forest is experiencing depleting effect as observed by Kalbessa (2007), cited in Adesina, (2012).

Transnational corporations under the current international law are at liberty to promote their interest in any part of the world without hindrance. Their activities through establishment of industries have continued to destroy the natural forest and dismantling the source of the peasant farmers' survival. The grave consequence is that the chances of survival of various plant and animal species are bleak as they are doomed to extinction owing to the loss of forest through the negative impact of globalization. Also, impact of deforestation is not only felt on ozone layer depletion it could also be seen from the negative impact it has on underground water. The destruction of the forests through the impact of globalization reduces the natural process of extracting ground water by the trees through their roots which is then released into the atmosphere making the climate drier. Deforestation reduces the content of water in the soil and groundwater as well as atmospheric moisture. Deforestation reduces soil cohesion, so that erosion, flooding and landslides become common occurrence. (Kelbessa, 2007).

Electronic waste is another major challenge of globalization in Nigeria. Electronic waste or e-waste may be defined as all the secondary computers, entertainment device electronics, mobile phones and other items such as television sets, refrigerators whether sold, donated or discarded by their original owners. By this definition it includes used electronic which are destined for reuse, resale, salvage, recycling or disposal (Omatek Ventures, 2011) in Adesina (012). The massive rise in electronic waste has been blamed on the globalization which appears to have

triggered electronic dump in Africa and Asia. Large number of manufactured computers and mobile phones in developed world find their route to Africa due to competition, massive production and technological advancement. Many electronic products become obsolete within a very short period of time, creating a large surplus of unwanted electronic products courtesy of globalization. E-waste is considered a crucial environmental issue due to its rapidly growing volume and hazardous content which may leak into the environment if it is not properly disposed of, and cause adverse effect on human health and the environment. Improper disposal of e-waste in any environment including Nigeria has negative health consequences such as leaking toxins into the soil, air and groundwater which later find its way into crops through underground water, and later through crop to animals and human body systems causing contamination and pollution.

Another major environmental hazard associated with globalization is the influx of generating sets as a result of incessant electricity power outage in Nigeria. Most homes and industries rely on the use of generators as an alternative source of power supply. There is evidence to suggest that Nigeria is the largest importer of generators in the world, with over N1.3 trillions expended in the last four years for the purchase of generators in an effort to respond to the declining power supply in the country (Adesina,2012). Nevertheless, generator is a source of noise and air pollution in the country as many industries as well as many homes use generators on daily basis as an alternative source of power supply. Apart from the environmental nuisance it constitutes as a result of noise pollution, many Nigerians have lost their lives from the use of generators either through an electrical shock or the inhalation of generator fumes, which often contain carbon monoxide.

In 1988 there was a case of e-waste dumping in Nigeria in Koko village in Warn North local government of Delta State. The e-waste dump which was done by an Italian company was one of the factors that gave rise to the creation of Basel Convention which came into force on 5 May 1992, party aimed at the regulation and management of e-waste in Nigeria. Generally, globalization has become a "threat to the poor rather than an opportunity for global action to eradicate poverty" (Obadina, 1998:32). Arguing further, Obadina (1998), contends that the "concept of absolute freedom that underlies the rationale for globalisation is the same notion" used to justify slavery and colonization. It is equally anchored on the "belief that the strong, however defined, should be free to exercise their strength without moral or legal limitations that protect the weak". Thus, it is distinct from positive freedom which states that: People should be free as long as they do not deny the rights and freedom of others. People should not be at liberty to deny others freedom and basic rights. There must be limits on freedom otherwise the liberty of the powerful becomes the oppression of the weak (Obadina, 1999: 32).

Obadina (1999), further argued that the free-market undertone of globalisation is anchored in "greed and ethos of winner takes all" and a "beggar their neighbour" philosophy irrespective of its seeming moral terms of freedom and, this, in itself, has increased the debt burden of most countries in Africa.



These predicaments are explicable within the context of the (deliberate) inability of the Nigerian government to equitably protect the interests and environment of the people of the Niger Delta particularly the oppressed Ogoni people from the rapaciousness of the forces of globalisation (ably represented by the multinational oil companies). This is evident from the fact that oil exploration has negatively affected the environment of the Niger Delta and, the Ogoni people in particular, leading to a worsening socio-economic situation for the people. In fact, more than 2 million barrels of oil are explored from the Niger Delta daily (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

Despite the immense contributions of the Niger Delta (particularly the Ogoni people) to the fiscal basis of the Nigerian State as well as to global capital, the area remains basically underdeveloped due to deliberate neglect and eclipsing from the rational policy agenda of the Nigerian State. The area continuously lacks basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, schools, electricity, communications, hospitals and so on. In addition, oil spills have drastically affected the supply of potable water, leading to the high prevalence of water-borne diseases. Also, the impact of the exploratory and extractive activities of these global forces — Shell whose operation in Nigeria alone accounts for 14% of its total global operations, Mobil Agrip, Chevron, Texaco, Total, etc. have basically affected the social organization of the Ogoni people and the Niger Delta in general (Omede, 2006). A manifestation of these negative impacts is the replacement of the traditional economy that was founded on fishing, farming and hunting for economic sustenance with a petrol-dollar economy. Thus, as the World Bank (199 ), noted, the impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta Area (particularly in the Ogoni Communities), by the forces of globalization has decreased agricultural productivity and fishing in the areas, leading to the prevalence of poverty which was put above the national average.

The attempts by the people of the Niger Delta and the Ogoni people to challenge the inhuman and mindless capitalistic wastage of their marine life and environment through series of mass protests and attacks on the forces of globalization have been smothered by the Nigerian State using the instruments of coercion, repression, intimidation and unjustifiable killing of the leaders of the oppressed. The unnecessary and avoidable supreme price through hanging which Kenule Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni Environmentalists were made to pay in 1995 offers a useful explanation of the predicaments under reference here. These inhuman measures were embarked upon ostensibly to continuously generate capital for developing needs, debts (re)negotiation and, to ensure that the process of capital accumulation is not altered against neo-colonial compradors (Turner, 1995). These developments have created renewed determination by the people to prevent further degradation of their eco-system hence, the constant conflicts between them and the Nigerian State on the one hand and, the multinational oil companies on the other hand. These conflicts and the predicaments of the Ogoni people continue to persist because the Niger Delta and its resources (oil) are significant to the existence of the Nigerian Nation and its economy. Oil has become and, largely remains the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, accounting for 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 90% of foreign

exchange earnings and more than 70% of budgetary expenditure (Ashton-Jones et al, 1998; 135). Oil is the most strategic commodity on which Nigeria's attempts at industrial capitalist development and is dependent hence, the Nigerian State found it difficult to lose the resources to such agitations regardless of their rationality.

The determination of the Nigerian State to maintain the status quo in this regard, despite its accompanying problems of legitimation occasioned by domestic crises, depicts its rentier status and, relegation to the sphere of dependence on collection of - (externally realized) - oil rents for reproduction rather than engaging in productive service(s) (Obi, 1997). It equally depicts the continuous rapaciousness of the forces of globalization in their quest for the critical needs - (e.g. oil) - of the G8 Countries in the Ogoni area of the Nigerian polity. Indeed, the dominance of the forces of globalization in the Niger Delta areas of Nigeria accounts for the incidence of mass pauperisation in the midst of affluence.

### **Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

In conclusion, this paper examined the impact of the globalization process on environmental governance in third world countries with particular references to Nigeria. The paper observes that globalization has brought both positive and negative impact on the Nigerian environment. This is made manifest in free movement of capitals, personnel, goods, services and technologies, cultures among others, which has brought about changes in ways of life. The principles of globalization which necessitated the condition also makes it difficult for the changes in Nigeria's natural ecosystem. It makes it difficult for the political actors who controls the instrument of the state to take decisive decision in her effort to regulate activities of the multinationals and other agents of globalization, These multinationals are agents of the super powers whom the actors lack courage to take decision against their interest because they need their aid and support for power acquisition and consolidation.

The paper recommends that there is need for creation of environmental awareness both through formal and informal means as it can be of great benefit for the environment. Programmes such as seminars, workshops, panels and other educational activates would be very useful in raising the environmental awareness of the people. Local governments, *universities*, non-governmental organization, formal and informal institutions should work together and support all activities in this regard while the media has an important role to play in informing people about the environmental problems. Local environmental problems can be addressed by local television channels and newspapers and thus people's attention can be drawn to environmental problems. Educational programmes for all age groups can be presented on such local TV channels. Students in all level of schools from elementary to higher education should be given environmental education as the negative effects of globalization can be tackled only by creating environmental awareness to the people. We believe that environmental education is a very important tool for environmental governance.

To this end, agencies of government responsible for environmental activity regulation, maintenance and sustenance of the environment should empowered and

strengthened to perform optimally, while government should also come up with policies that should address the negative impact of globalization on the environment.

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