

TRANSNATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS' OPERATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN NIGERIA, 1956-2010

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ABSTRACT

Many scholars have argued that globalization and liberalization have subverted nations' ability for self-determination and that neo-liberal policies have been producing inequality and deterioration in living standards especially in sub-Saharan Africa without the improvements in efficiency which is predicted. Some anti-corporate organizations also believe globalism changes economic and government policies to increase the power of corporations and large businesses and a shift to benefit the developed countries over the underdeveloped ones through gross economic exploitation. But according to its advocates, globalization has aided the integration of national economy into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flow, migration, and the spread of technology. Indeed, it has created new opportunities for many, but not without its enormous costs; most especially-the ecological costs. It has placed uncontrollable pressures on the global environment and on natural resources, straining the capacity of the environment to sustain itself. However, the primary concern of this essay is to examine the environmental problems arising from Nigeria's natural resources exploitation exercise and the roles of foreign interest as made manifest by the activities of the profit driven Transnational oil corporations in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Transnational Corporations (TNCs) or International Corporations (INCs) are business enterprises with manufacturing, sales, or service subsidiaries in one or more foreign countries.¹ They are also corporations registered and operating in more than one country at a time, usually with its

headquarters in a single country.² These corporations originated early in the 20th century and proliferated after World War II as a result of the demise of economic protectionism and the triumph of economic liberalism substantially represented by the international institutions such as the IMF, WTO, World Bank etc. These institutions along with the MNCs are the sole agents of economic globalization in recent years; and given the structure and composition of the present international economy system, these agents are physically, politically, and economically present in every shores of countries of the world. The MNCs have activities in the fields like gold mining, petrol, chemicals and food industry which have high potential effects on the environment in developing countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Nigeria.

Globalization has aided the integration of national economy into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flow, migration, and the spread of technology.³ This has created new opportunities for many, but not for all. It has also placed pressures on the global environment and on natural resources, straining the capacity of the environment to sustain itself and exposing human dependence on our environment. However, what is of concern at this juncture is to examine the environmental problems arising from Nigeria's natural resources exploitation exercise and the roles of foreign interest as made manifest by the activities of the profit driven oil multinational companies in the country.

According to Human Rights and Environmental Activist, Oronto Douglas, "the multinational companies are assassins in foreign lands".⁴ Their mission is to maximize profit, suck and rape their hosts' natural resources with little or no regard for the environment. Aside the relative economic prosperity that goes along with transnational trade, the cost benefit- in terms of the heavy environmental degradation, coupled with dwindling of natural resources (especially on the part of developing countries like Nigeria) is alarming!

Nigeria booked its place in the global market with her abundant natural resources. Out of these resources, oil has been the only economic driving force. Currently, Nigeria is the 8th largest oil exporting country in the world with oil revenue accounting for about 80 percent of total government revenue, 95 percent of foreign exchange earnings, 40 percent contribution of GDP

and 4 percent of employment.⁵ Nigeria's proven oil reserves are estimated to be 36 billion barrels while the country's natural gas reserves are even bigger, estimated as well as 100 million cubic feet. However, the structure of Nigeria's oil industry has been in favour of foreign domination. The legal leverage given to Shell D'Arcy now Shell in 1938 to prospect for and exploit oil over the main land of the country, an area of about 367,000 square miles was more of a blank cheque which essentially transferred the economic fortunes of the state to foreign conglomerate from colonial times to date.⁶ To further open up the economy for further foreign domination, Shell's area of influence was reduced to 16,000 square miles in 1957 to accommodate other oil firms.⁷ This led to the admission of other firms like Mobil, Texaco, Elf, Chevron, (Formerly Gulf Oil) etc into the oil trade. The table below shows clearly the dominant foreign interest in the Nigerian oil sector. This domination and the activities of these oil firms remain central to most of Nigeria environmental problems and to a large extent, the crisis in the Niger Delta region. For in the view of Ike Okonta and Douglas Oronto, "the multinationals in the Niger Delta are the people's number one enemy".

Table: Foreign Interest in Nigeria as Represented by the Major Oil Firms

S/N	Oil Company	Shareholders (percent)	Operator	Share of National Production (percent)
1	Shell Petroleum Development Corporation	NNPC – 55 SHELL – 30 ELF – 10 AGIP – 5	Shell	42.0
2	Mobil Producing Nigeria	NNPC – 50 Mobil – 42	Mobil	21.0

3	Chevron Nigeria	NNPC – 60 Chevron – 40	Chevron	19.9
4	Nigeria Agip Oil	NNPC – 60 AGIP – 40	Agip	7.5
5	ELF Petroleum Nigeria	NNPC – 60 ELF – 40	ELF	2.6
6	Texaco	NNPC – 60 Texaco – 20 Chevron – 20	Texaco	1.7
	Total			93.8

Source: Ikporukpo, C.O (1996), “*Federation, Political Power and the Economic Power Game: Conflict over Access to Petroleum Resources in Nigeria*”, in *Environmental and Planning: Government and Policy*, Vol. 14

THE MNCS AND THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENT

With the aforementioned facts, it has become clear that the oil industry has a significant adverse environmental impact upon the human environment of the producing areas of the country. Its activities not only exacerbate other environmental problems but also create unique problems, which are worse than they need to be because the industry as a whole is corrupt and careless, and clearly does not operate to the standards; which are exacted elsewhere in the world. Asking him why in the first place, the activities of the MNCs in Nigeria bring so much environmental problems, Dr. Oshita Okechukwu gave the following reasons:

*Firstly, dirty industries are choosing the countries that do not have severe legal arrangements. Secondly, the public opinion in developing countries like Nigeria is unconscious of the harms that economical activities gives to the environment ... This information gives the MNCs the assurance that they won't face the opposing activities of the public.*⁸

The environmental problems of Nigeria are both significant and consequential. These problems which include air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, land degradation etc. have continued to multiply due to the carelessness and nonchalant attitudes of the foreign oil firms. Consequently, petroleum exploitation activities in the oil producing areas of the country have had unpleasant environmental effects. Streams, creeks and other water bodies in the area have become highly polluted to the extent of making them really very harmful to both terrestrial and marine lives.⁹ They have caused the deaths of plants, animals, fishes and crabs.

In 1970, the quantity of crude oil production recorded was 395,689,000 barrels. Then there was just one reported case of oil spills which accounted for a loss of 150 barrels of crude oil.¹⁰ However, the 1979 and 1980 periods witnessed crude oil productions totaling 845,463,000 and 760,117,000 barrels respectively. The quantities of oil spills during these two periods were respectively 630,405 and 558,053 barrels. These were the largest spilled during the 14 year period. One source calculated that the total amount of oil in barrels spilled between 1960 and 1997 is upwards of 100 million barrels (16,000,000 m³).¹¹

Oil spillage has a major impact on the ecosystem into which it is released. Immense tracts of the mangrove forests, which are especially susceptible to oil (mainly because it is stored in the soil and released annually during inundations) have been destroyed.¹² Several species of fishes, crabs and other marine lives were decimated. Moreover, large areas of agricultural land were covered and rendered useless by crude oil. An estimated 5 to 10 percent of Nigeria's mangrove ecosystems have been wiped out either by urban settlement or oil. The rainforest which previously occupied some 7, 400 km² of land has disappeared as well. Spills in populated areas

often spread out over a wide area, destroying crops and aquacultures through contamination of the groundwater and soils.¹³ The consumption of dissolved oxygen by bacteria seeding on the spilled hydrocarbons also contributes to the death of fish.¹⁴ In agricultural communities, often a year's supply of food can be destroyed instantaneously. Because of the careless nature of oil operations in the Delta, the environment is growing increasingly uninhabitable. The Niger River is an important ecosystem that needs to be protected, for it is home to 36 families and nearly 250 species of fish, of which 20 are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else on Earth.¹⁵ The Niger Delta has the third largest mangrove forest in the world, and the largest in Africa. Mangrove forests are important for sustaining local communities because of the ecological functions they perform and the many essential resources they provide including soil stability, medicines, healthy fisheries, wood for fuel and shelter, tannins and dyes, and critical wildlife habitats.¹⁶ Oil spills are contaminating, degrading, and destroying mangrove forests.

Gas flaring is another major problem associated with oil exploitation activities in Nigeria. Nigeria flares more natural gas associated with oil extraction than any other country on the planet, with estimates suggesting that of the 3.5 billion cubic feet (100,000,000m³) of associated gas (AG) produced annually, 2.5 billion cubic feet (70,000,000m³), or about 70% is wasted via flaring.¹⁷ This equals about 25 percent of the United Kingdom's total natural gas consumption, and is equivalent to 40% of the entire African continent's gas consumption in 2001.¹⁸ Table 4 below shows the volume of natural gas produced as well as the volumes and percentage of gas flared away in the flow stations during the 1983 – 1992 period.

The volumes of natural gas flared away increased almost proportionately with the total volume gas produced. In fact, the percentage of natural gas flared away decreased from 81.49 percent in 1984 to 71.94 percent in 1987 and increased from 72.76 percent in 1988 to 78.26 percent in 1992.

The compositions of the flared away gas included such toxic pollutants as carbon monoxide (CO), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x).²⁰ Apart from the injurious effects of these pollutants to health, they also add appreciably to the problem of global warming and the

consequent green house effect. Moreover, the excessive heating of the soil and vegetation around the flare sites in the oil and gas field results in soil degradation. Another problem gas flaring poses is the release of large amounts of methane, which has very high global warming potential. The methane is accompanied by the other major greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, of which Nigeria was estimated to have emitted more than 3,438 metric tons of in 2002, accounting for about 50 percent of all industrial emissions in the country and 36 percent of the total CO₂ emissions.²⁰

Acid rain, a direct result of gas flaring, is taking its toll on the Niger Delta. Acid rain not only deprives people of drinkable rain water and stunts crops growth (as in Eket and other communities in Akwa Ibom State), it is also affecting people's homes.²¹ In Iko, Eket, and Etageri we were told that Zinc roofs which formerly lasted 7-10 years (and were good alternative to labour – intensive thatched roofing), are now destroyed within one or two years by acid rain.²²

Gas flares can have potentially harmful effects on the health and livelihood of the communities in their vicinity, as they release a variety of poisonous chemicals. Just some of combustion by-products include nitrogen dioxides, sulphur dioxide, volatile organic compounds like benzene, toluene, xylene and hydrogen sulfide, as well as carcinogens like benzaphyrene and dioxin.²³ Human exposed to such substances can suffer from variety of respiratory problems which have been reported amongst many children in the delta but have apparently gone uninvestigated. These chemicals can aggregate asthma, cause breathing difficulties and pain as well as chronic bronchitis.²⁴ Of particular note is that the chemical benzene, which is known to be emitted from gas flares in undocumented quantities, is well researched as being a causative agent for leukemia and other blood related diseases.²⁵ A study done by Climate Justice estimates that exposure to benzene would result in 8 new cases of cancer yearly in Bayelsa State alone.²⁶

Another problem facing the people of the Niger delta is the illicit use of land by oil companies. In the community of Umuebulu, River State, hardly 50 meters away from its perimeter, there is an unlimited chemical waste out belonging to shell.²⁷ The company reportedly acquired this land

under the pretense of building a “life camp” – shell’s lingo for an employee housing complex.²⁸ The construction of infrastructure for oil facilities is done with little or no regard for environmental consideration. To facilitate road construction, waterways are frequently diverted to the detriment of fish population.²⁹ Sudden and drastic changes to the local environment by oil companies are sometimes accompanied by direct loss of human life. For example, the Egi community has reportedly lost five children in the last few years who during the rainy season drowned in “burrow pits” dig by Elf to extract sand and gravel for road construction.³⁰

The Niger Delta region could experience a loss of 40 percent of its inhabitable terrain in the next thirty years as a result of extensive dam construction in the region.³¹ The carelessness of the oil industry has also precipitated this situation, which can perhaps be best encapsulated by a 1983 report issued by the NNPC in 1983, long before popular unrest surfaced:

“We witnessed the slow poisoning of the waters of this country and the destruction of vegetation and agricultural law by oil operations. But since the inception of the oil industry in Nigeria, more than 25 years ago, there has been no concerned and effective effort on the part of the government let alone the oil operators, to control environmental problems associated with the industry”.³²

For a region where peasant agriculture is the major economic activity of the survival, depends on the sanctity of the environment. The various incidences of environmental degradation result in the scarcity of the already limited arable land and freshwater. The people are dislodged from their traditional economic activity without any alternative. With time, hunger, misery and a feeling of hopelessness will pervades the land. It is when viewed from this perspective that the observation of a Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) official that:

Part of the problem of the Niger delta is that the resources for creating wealth before the oil companies came were destroyed with the advent of oil exploration and production³³ (can be appreciated)

Commenting on the deleterious effects on his community, Bernhard Ujo, the Ovie of Uzero once noted that “before the oil our crops, yams, plantains, cassava, cocoyam and different kinds of beans were good. But no good soil again to enable us continue to produce”³⁴

For Irume Okonko, a school teacher at Iko village in Cross River state, nobody really cares to go fishing again because the fishes smell of petroleum when eaten.³⁵ It is based on these dastardly effects of the oil industry in the Niger delta that oil has been described paradoxically as Frankenstein monster that is slowly killing the areas that produce it.³⁶ The effects of these spillages and gas flaring often persist and last for over two decades. In reality, the full impact of the degradation of the environment is usually felt immediately, but the nuisance caused continues for a long period, often lasting for over two decades.

Moreover, the pollution of the environment renders a large chunk of the rural dwellers of the Niger delta redundant and unemployed. Both, the fishermen and the farmers’ fishing ponds, rivers and farmland are displaced by the activities of the explorers for crude oil. At other time the pollution of the farmlands and fishing areas renders the people redundant and puts them in a state of hopelessness. The restriction of the flora and fauna often affects the ecosystem. Thus, even animal life is threatened and hunting activities impeded. The cumulative effect of the degradation of the Niger Delta environment is the decline in agricultural productivity, fisheries depletion, deforestation, toxic and hazardous substance pollution and erosion.

RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT

Whereas the interests of the oil firms in the Delta Centre around maximization of profit and the unhindered production of crude oil, the Nigerian state is largely concerned with the continued flow of her royalties and taxes from these oil firms. To ensure regular payment, the government consistently secured and protected the oil firms from manners of adversity that could rise in the troubled region. The government also “guarantees the oil companies a conducive environment to pursue their profit maximization objective”.³⁷

To realize this, the instruments of coercion and violence as well as the apparatus of state including the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the legislature and the executive arms of government are mobilized to the service of the firms against the people.³⁸ It was the judiciary with the authoritative prompting of the military despots that promulgated the Anti-sabotage Decree of 1975 which imposed death sentence or 21 years imprisonment for activities adjudged detrimental to oil production and distribution.³⁹ Again the 1978 Land Use Act constitutionalised by the 1979 constitution aimed to ensure uninterrupted production for oil firms on the one hand and the expropriation of indigenous lands from the local population without their consent as the ownership of all the land and mineral deposits were vested on the federal government.⁴⁰

In Nigeria, the ruling elites continuously pander to the yearning of the corporations especially on the legal and judicial front, while litigation against the firms are desperately delayed, thereby frustrating and impoverishing the aggrieved natives. Financially, an important element must be re-iterated to the effect that the alliance of foreign capital and its Nigerian collaborators have played the major role in brutalizing and subjugating indigenous population and in the process accentuate the heightening of crisis and conflict in the region.⁴¹ The execution of Kenule Saro-Wiwa on November 10, 1995 along with eight other Ogoni by the despotic regime of the General Sanni Abacha for championing the campaign against environmental abuse by the oil-producing companies and calling world attention to the plight of the people in the Niger Delta region negatively impacted by oil exploration activities is just a perfect example of how the Nigerian government has helped in silencing its peoples agitations against the oil multinationals.

However, government response to environmental challenges in Nigeria has not been all that negative. Though it might be ineffective and inconsistent, Nigeria government has made some positive steps in managing and addressing environmental problems in the country. Firstly, an important step taken by the Federal government was her participation in the United Nations Conference on the “problem of the human environment” held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. This Conference gave Nigeria the opportunity to examine its environmental problems in a national report to the conference. The awareness of the existing problems led to the establishment of National Advisory Committee on the environment which was later replaced by

the Environmental Planning and Protection Division of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Environment.⁴²

Secondly, another significant step taken by Federal Government was in the area of policy development as it affects the environment in the third and fourth National Development Plan (1975-1980) and (1981-1985) respectively.⁴³ During this period, the government expressed concern over the need to protect the environment and to incorporate environmental considerations into planning and policy making.

Thirdly, the federal government promulgated the monthly national clean up exercise decree which made it mandatory for every citizen of Nigeria to clean-up his or her environment every last Saturday of the month. The enforcement and execution of this law is still in doubt as many of our Urban Centres and Rural areas are littered with filth. Again, the National Resources Conservation Council (NRCC) was established in 1988, while the National Policy on the Environment was launched in 1989.⁴⁴

The discovery of a major toxic waste dump at Koko, a small port town in the then Bendel state in 1987 led to the establishment of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) a year later.⁴⁵ In 1992, the agency's mandate was expanded by law to cover conservation of natural resources and biological diversity⁴⁶. These represent the efforts made by successive administrations to ameliorate environmental problems of the country. The Obasanjo administration, instituted on 29 May, 1999, gave a new fillip to the environmental battle by according it priority in its development programmes. Accordingly, it created, for the first time in the history of the country, a Ministry of Environment in June, 1999, barely a month after taking office.⁴⁷ Naturally, the federal environmental protection agency (FEPA) was absorbed and its functions taken over by the new ministry. Moreover, being an administrative agency, FEPA's ability to realize the goal set by the decree that created it is suspect. Part of its inability to realize the goals set by the decree that created it was associated to funding and bureaucratic web in which the agency is enmeshed.⁴⁸ Furthermore; institutional problems of overlapping roles among

the agencies constitute a major source of weakness in their strategies of the management of the environment.⁴⁹

Communities in the affected areas of oil production have consequently protested seriously against further elimination of their livelihood. It was as a result of persistent protests that the federal government had by Decree No.23 of 1992 established the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC).⁵⁰ The first of such moves to address the Niger Delta question was the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board, NDDDB.⁵¹ This was the product of sir Henry Willink's Commission of 1958, which recommended that the area deserved special developmental attention. But for the seven years it existed, it made no significant mark. It faded in to oblivion with the military coup of 1966.

The Shehu Shagari administration set up a presidential task force, better known as the 1.5 percent committee in 1979 with the same course of addressing the peculiarities of the region. However, it was later abandoned by the Babangida regime, and replaced with the OMPADEC in 1992.⁵² with little or no effects in solving the heavy ecological problems facing the region. Obasanjo government in 1999 came up with the NDDC, with the mandate of facilitating "the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, and ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful."⁵³ This commission is also faced with such problems as poor funding and lack of political will from the government. The last administration released less than N100billion to the commission from 2001 to 2006, which was about eight percent less than what it should have got during the period.⁵⁴ It took the commission's ingenuity and contributions of other stakeholders for it to raise over N241billion.⁵⁵ Yet it has to work in nine states. This situation leaves the commission with about N5billion to spend annually on each of the state that makes up the Niger delta, an amount which is not even enough to execute some major projects.⁵⁶

The above listed response and effects of government are commendable but, the threat to our environment is on the increase, showing that government effort is still inadequate. The increase in the threat to the environment has been matched with institutional and organizational

framework capable of eliminating or minimizing such threat. There is apathy and inertia in the various level of government to all services connected with environmental issues and protection. For instance, in the 1990-1992 rolling plan, the total expenditure envisaged for environmental planning and protection was ₦267.485million to be allocated to federal environmental protection agency.⁵⁷ This allocation is small when compared with allocation to other sectors; more disturbing is that the local governments which are at the grassroots made no provision for environmental planning and protection in the plan.

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

Indeed, Saro-wiwa may be dead and buried, but his dogged fighting spirit lives on. And Shell, which is believed to have had its corporate image tainted with Saro-wiwa's blood, is certainly not having a tea party in what has become Nigeria's turbulent oil industry. It is not the only offending oil company against whom the people are outraged over the issue of pollution. In the early hours of Monday January 7, 2007, some aggrieved youths in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta blew up the Beniboye flow station pipeline belonging to the Nigerian Agip oil company, NAOC, and Shell's 48-inch" pipeline which transports crude oil to its loading platform SBM 1 and 2 at Beniboye for export.⁵⁸ Their grievance was the alleged pollution of their environment and failure of the companies to clean up the spills as demanded. This is partly some of the "echoes from the wasteland".

The early 1990s saw the unrest in the Niger Delta reach new heights. Whilst in the 1970s and 1980s Delta communities expressed their grievances through disparate and uncoordinated protests blocking access routes to oil installations, in the 1990s civil society emerged "as a mobilisational platform of popular struggle".⁵⁹ The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was formed in 1992. MOSOP, spearheaded by Ogoni playwright and author Ken Saro-Wiwa, became the major campaigning organization representing the Ogoni people in their struggle for ethnic and environmental rights. Its primary targets, and at times adversaries, have been the Nigerian government and Royal Dutch Shell company.⁶⁰ Beginning in December

1992, the conflict between Ogoni's and the oil infrastructure escalated to a level greater seriousness and intensity on both sides. Both parties began carrying out acts of violence and MOSOP issued an ultimatum to the oil companies (Shell, Chevron, and the NNPC) which demanded some \$10billion in accumulated royalties, damages and compensation, and "immediate stoppage of environmental degradation", and negotiations for mutual agreement on all future drilling.⁶¹

The Ogonis threatened to embark on mass action to disrupt their operation if the companies fail to comply. By this act, the Ogoni shifted the focus of their actions from an irresponsible federal government to the oil companies engaged in their own region. The rationale for this assignment of responsibility was the benefits accrued by the oil companies from extracting the natural wealth of the Ogoni homeland, and neglect from central government.

The December 1998 All Ijaw youths conference, crystallized the Ijaw's struggle for petroleum resource control with the formation of the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) and the issuing of the Kaima declaration. In it, long-held Ijaw concerns about the loss of control of their homeland and their own lives to the oil companies were joined with a commitment to direct action. In the declaration, and in a letter to the companies, the Ijaw called for oil companies to suspend operations and withdraw from Ijaw territory. The IYC pledged "to struggle peacefully for freedom, self determination and ecological justice", ⁶² and prepared a campaign of celebration, prayer, and direct action, operation climate change, beginning December 28. In December 1998, two warships and 10-15,000 Nigerian troops occupied Bayelsa and Delta States as the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) mobilized for operation climate change. Soldiers entering the Bayelsa state capital Yenagoa announced they had come to attack the youths trying to stop the oil companies. On December 30, two thousand young people processed through Yenagoa, dressed in black, singing and dancing. Soldiers opened fire with rifles, machine guns and tear gas, killing at least three protesters and arresting another twenty five.⁶³

Nonetheless, operation climate change continued, and disrupted Nigerian Oil Supplies through much of 1999 by turning off valves through Ijaw territory. In the context of high conflict

between the Ijaw and the Nigerian federal Government (and its police and army), the military carried out the Odi massacre, killing scores if not hundred of Ijaws.⁶⁴ Subsequent actions by the Ijaws against the oil industry included both renewed efforts at nonviolent action and attack on oil installations and foreign oil workers.

The Odimodi community, co-host of shell forcados terminal with Ogulgha, had on December 1, 2007,⁶⁵ handed down an ultimatum to NAOC “to quit and vacate at the Beniboye land areas and territory ... on or before the 31st day of December 2007”. The quit notice which was contained in a petition addressed to the state governor decried what the community described as NAOC’s “Criminal archaic, abysmal and antediluvian” environmental standards. Further identified as “a serial and deliberate polluter”, Odimodi⁽⁵³⁾ community said “NAOC’s environmental standard in the Beniboye area is an affront on our statute books on environmental law”, adding that, “on the last count, we have eight unresolved oil spills from NAOC Beniboye flow lines.”⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

This research work has examined the effect of the modern trend of globalization on the Nigerian Environment. The environment itself has caught the eye of a number of international and local actors that have created the need for a truce between the Nigerian economy and her natural resources; both of which are essential for her development. This was aptly put by Victor Ukogo

*“Environment security in the context of Niger Delta (Nigeria) is best measured by the ecological scenario vis-à-vis international environmental politics. It could be best examined by the interplay of forces and stakeholders on the local, natural and international levels”.*⁶⁷

Thus, the unequal balance between both spheres – economy and the environment is basically due to the importance of the Nigerian government, as it is only natural for foreign investors interest “to centre around maximization of profit and the unhindered production of crude oil, while the Nigerian state is largely concerned with the continued flow of her royalties and taxes from these

oil firms”.⁶⁸ These multinational companies, viewed as the Calvary of globalization covers all spheres of the Nigerian state, spreading her tentacles to mining, Agriculture, Transportation, Communication etc. However, as the above reveals, their major influence centres on Nigeria’s most strategic commodity - oil.

The structure of the Nigerian oil industry has been in favour of foreign domination. The legal leverage given to Shell D’Arcy, now Shell essentially transferred the economic fortunes of the state to a foreign conglomerate from colonial times till date. The government, on her part, while lacking capital, technology and skilled personnel, took on the status of an on looker and rent/royalty collection, thus becoming a proverbial ‘monk without a hood’.⁶⁹ The oil and state nexus sharpens with the domineering role of foreigners in the state economy and reveals in sharper focus the conspiracy within the ruling elites that are even fragmented due to interest, alliances and realignments. Thus armed with governmental influence, the firms take pleasure in violating all known legal environmental regimes or provisions including international practices, thus sacrificing the ecology and environment of a people on the altar of profit and the market place. In the words of Ambassador Falola

*“The western natives come to Nigeria aimed with attractive capital
and one motive on their minds - profit maximization at all costs”⁷⁰*

Thus globalization through the activities of MNCs have devastated the physical environment and biodiversity, rained environmental plagues on the already suffering natives and also spawned conflicts that have threaten to destroy the very foundation the nation was laid on. The Niger Delta issue for instance has been a war between fundamental and constitutionally specified rights and the Nigerian state – albeit with pressure from the MNCs, especially Shell. This influence reached its pinnacle with the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni nine in 1996. Agitations, conflict and violence in the region is thus traceable to decades of manifest criminal neglect and wanton marginalization. Thus, striking a balance between governance, foreign interests, and development is at the epicenter of the crisis in the region of Niger Delta’s human resources, and partly that of the whole nation as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effects of globalization on the Nigerian environment, its causes, the consequences, and would now seek ways to help resolve the unsuitable combination of globalization and the environment. Before moving further, one must understand that globalization is a sensitive issue that nations cannot shy away from - it is either to be in it or to remain an impoverished Island on its own. Thus, the question is not on the necessity of globalization in Nigeria – the trend is already here. However, what is needed is the ‘cultured hybridization’ of the benefits of the trend of globalization and the development (intercalary) of the people. This is one basic headache the Nigeria government has had, as they diffuse every vice and pros of globalization in an illusion of prosperity. It is pertinent to note that these multinational companies come from organized societies that define the pace and influence of these companies, knowing fully well their powers and cunningness.

In keeping up with hybridization, a strict enactment of laws is almost inevitable to achieve a sustainable environment. The government uses instruments of coercion and violence as well as the apparatus of state including bureaucracy, the judiciary, the legislature and the executive arms of government to service the MNCs against the people. Thus, draconian laws such as the Anti-sabotage Decree of 1975, the 1978 hand use Act are means used to ensure the environmental rape of the region. However, the enactment and unconditional upholding of environmental laws and standards, as echoed by Ambassador Falola and Ayodele Sulaimon would be of immense value to the cause. On oil production, there is the need to carry out on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of all the activities capable of causing environmental degradation, probably before all other activities.⁷¹

The need for adequate legislation of this is a necessity. Other legislation include the Oil Pipeline Act (1958); Petroleum Regulations (1967), Oil in Navigation Waters Act No 3A (1968); the International Convention for the prevention of pollution of the seas by oil (1954); the Petroleum Act of 1969. The problem or weakness of this planning motive is lack of or ineffective

implementation. According to Anne Ene-Ita (1984); it appears as if little or no cognizance is taken of the existing laws since there is no mechanism to enforce them by the government.

However, despite the initial link, more legislation has been put in place since then not only for the oil industry but for other solid mineral resources. Pursuit of more realistic laws is needed, such as the mineral (safety) regulation act of 1963 and their updates. The gap is practical prosecution of defaulters. Thus, although the government had set up parastatals such as Natural Resources Conservation Council of 1989; the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), more organizations should be created and inspected to manage the environment.⁷² It is only with those laws that the nation can successfully shield herself against the lure of unbridled globalization.

Perhaps one of the most important solutions to the terrible incursion of globalization in Nigeria is the need for evolution of a new crop of selfless leaders, with respectable knowledge of management. The absence of this has made the people believe that oil is a curse rather than a blessing. Since 1958, when exploration of oil began in the Niger Delta it has been known that over 20 trillion dollars has been realized as proceeds, yet the central government does not see a decaying environment of one of the richest yet poorest regions of the country as a threat! The environment is so bad that the inhabitants are used to witnessing first degree environmental degradation. To buttress this point a report of petroleum resources state that over 95% of the volume of oil spilled in the region is not recovered. Thus, the question of having a government whose agenda is citizens' welfare is one that is needed to solve these myriad of environmental and environmental induced problems. Astute leadership would help to insulate the nation from the unbridled incursion of the multinational companies. Interestingly, as Ambassador Falola had noted, the organization of exploration at the parent countries of MNCs have standard systems of mining and industrial activities. However, on reaching the third world nations, they take some steps that naturally would be outlawed in their respective nations.

Furthermore, proper environment management strategies can help ameliorate pollution implications on human activities. It may not be able to stop man from performing different

activities in the environment, but the onus resting on man is to effectively control the nuisance from such activities. One area of this environmental management application is in the effective management in the generation, collection, disposal of industrial, domestic, agricultural, commercial in other types of wastes arising from man's activities. In addition, the pursuit of recycling culture in Nigeria is one way of pursuing a pollution free environment. The gas flares for instance is hundred of feet high flamed natural gasses – a valuable asset to the epileptic power supply of the nation.

No doubt, it is no longer in dispute that Nigeria is faced with a catalogue of environmental problems created by a number of factors, especially the heinous activities of the MNOCs which have constituted ecological imperialism. In the inter-connectivity of nature, Nigeria bears the brunt of global warming and all the ills connected with it. Thus, it has become an imperative that global frameworks such as Agenda 21 which reiterated its stand on the environment in the 1992 World Conference on Environment and Development and the Subsequent follow-up international meetings of the United Nations General Assembly. Thus, acceptance of this international framework and advice from NGOs such as Green peace international would not only help individual countries to embark on the path of sustainable development but will also represent a means of forging greater international cooperation, realization of faster economic growth in a better and safe global environment.

ENDNOTES

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