

Gender, Human Rights, Environmental Security and the Peace Question in Nigeria Development

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Abstract

Freedom, equality and justice are among the basic pillars of contemporary liberal democracy. However, the realities of the Nigerian state in terms of freedom of choice, equality before the law, gender equity and social justice appear to contradict these liberal democratic values and ethos. The implication of the scenario is that Nigerians are habitually denied equal treatment and opportunity not just to participate in public life; but the conducive atmosphere and healthy environment needed for self preservation through social production and reproduction, which in turn denies the country the benefit of lasting period of peace. The study investigated the link between gender inequality, human rights violation, environmental insecurity and the peace question in the country. Data are generated mainly from secondary sources, as such adopted qualitative descriptive method of data analysis. The relative deprivation model of frustration-aggression theory forms the premise for assessment. Extant literature examined shows that the in Nigerian society that women marginalization in public life, human rights violation and environmental insecurity constitute threats to peace in the country. It is therefore recommend that gender mainstreaming, respect for human rights and institutionalization of environmental security regime aimed at addressing the various natural and human induced environmental despoliations around the country that usually results in one form of conflict or the other will facilitate and promote enduring peace in the country.

Keywords: :

Gender, Human Rights,
Environmental Security,
Conflict, Peace and
National Development

Background to the Study

One of the basic functions of the state is to ensure peace and security for citizens and/or subjects. This role is not only onerous but very challenging. Since the world today is full of conflict, violence, wars and man-made disasters. Due to the pervasive influence of selfish materialism, ignorance, greed, hatred, corruption and lust for power in our communities, there is peace neither in human heart, in the society, in the nation nor in the world at this time. It is impossible to have any meaningful human progress when the society is riddled with injustice, man's inhumanity to man, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease and violence; and without peace and security in the society and in the world the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set out for human betterment and well being by the United Nations will be nigh impossible to achieve (Juwe, et al, 2004).

Meanwhile peace, which describes a relationship between people that is characterized by respect, justice and goodwill, is more than the mere absence of war or hostilities; and in any case, absence of conflict is not possible. This is compounded by the fact that the issue of peace in any human society is dependent on the societal structure and dynamic of society in question. Thus, for a society to organize and reproduce its social order there is need for social harmony, tolerance, accommodation, social justice, rule of law among others.

However, the human society is fundamentally characterized by series of unequal relationships and deficiency of social justice among people that covers a wide range of issues. Interestingly, the quest for enduring peace and human security has been a recurring decimal of the Nigerian state over the decades. Besides, various groups and segment of the country have been agitating either for greater political participation and representation at levels of decision-making, promotion and protection of human rights as well as environmental sustainability for the survival of the human species therein. These factors among others have been identified as source of conflict, which by implication constitute threats to peace in the country. It is therefore, within this context that this paper attempts to explore the synergy between gender inequality, human right violation, environmental insecurity and the problem enduring peace in Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the link between gender inequality, human rights violation, environmental insecurity and the peace question in the country.

Conceptual Literature

Gender: a Conceptualization

Basically the term gender is often used both synonymously and interchangeably with sex and women in political discourse. Hence it is imperative that we clarify the conceptual fog that beclouds the meaning and application of the word gender. While sex is a biological fact, gender on the hand depicts the social construction of the biology. Chhabra (2005) noted that gender describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine. He went on to assert that the concept of gender has been used in research as an analytical tool to draw attention to the way in which gender differences are

constructed and conveyed in social groups, institutions, the media and law et cetera. Shapiro (1991) opined that we are all trying to pass as a gender which is decided by cultural systems, not our biological sex. Meanwhile, gender division in the society are not fixed biology, but constitute an aspect of the wider social division of labour and in turn, is rooted in the conditions of productions and reproduction and reinforced by the cultural, religious and ideological systems prevailing in a society (Frye, 1983; Frank, 1995; Kendall, 2004). Scott (1986) argued that gender is a “constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences in the sexes” as well as “a primary way of signifying relationships of power”.

Gender as defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1986: 258) refers to:

... the qualities associated with men and women that are socially and culturally, than biologically determined. Gender includes the ways in which society differentiates appropriate behaviour and access to power for women and men. Although, the details vary from society to society and change over time, gender relations tends to include a strong element of inequality between women and men and are strongly influenced by ideology.

Oostergaard (1992) in his part perceive it as the qualitative and interdependent character of women's and men's position in society. According to him, gender relations are constituted in terms of the relations of power and dominance that structure the life chances of women and men. Such relations are not necessarily biological but a matter of social convention. Historically, these attributes, opportunities and relations are skewed against women in favour of men (Omotola, 2007). Thus the universal asymmetrical pattern of gender relationship in which women are subordinated to men is cultural and not biological or immutable.

Observing and analyzing the various dimensions of the power and social relations between the masculine and feminine gender in the society Gauba (2007) noted that:

Gender perspective on power is represented by feminist theory. It recognizes the division of society into two broad groups on the basis of gender: men and women who act as dominant and dependent groups respectively. This division was created by nature for sustaining the human race and to enable the human beings to build up an excellent civilization and culture, but it is society which placed men and women in dominant and dependent positions respectively. Feminists demand a thorough-going change in this arrangement and wish to liberate women from undue dominance of men.

In its account of the domination and exploitation of women by men counterpart; the United Nations (1980) reports that “Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of the work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income, and own less than one hundredth of the world's property.” The Report also shows that in other spheres of life, such as, cultural and social sphere, similar data to show the extent of exploitation of women by men might not be available, but a general awareness about this exploitation had led to strong protests manifested in Women Liberation Movement which emerged in the United States since the early 1970.

Human Right: An Overview

Human right is the political and civil liberties recognized by the international community as inalienable and valid for individuals in all countries by virtue of their humanity (Kegley, 2007:221). Nevertheless, Ibeanu, (1999:40) sees human right as those rights generally claimed by human beings as members of society.... In which case, they are rooted in three original instincts of man via: self preservation, self extension and self fulfillment. Practically, human right or cases of human right should be evaluated by specifying the benefits and harms that might attack human rights initiatives in particular cases, under specific conditions and in particular time.

Again, Heywood (2005:302) noted that:

Human rights are rights to which people are entitled by virtue of being human; they are a modern and secular version of natural rights. Human rights are Universal in the sense that they belong to all humans rather than to member of any particular state, race, religion, gender or other group. They are also fundamental; in that they are inalienable; unlike civil rights, they do not depend on the freedoms and status accorded citizens in particular societies.

He further observed that supporters of the doctrine of human rights portray them as universally applicable moral principles that stand above traditional ideological divide. Opponents, on the other hand, argue that it is nonsense to suggest that individuals have rights that are separate from the traditions, cultures and societies to which they belong.

Human rights are basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled merely by reason of being humans (United Nations, 2010:1); they are international norms that helps to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal and social abuse (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006:1). Basically, human rights derive from the universal and egalitarian conception that individuals and aggregates of people are entitled and should be accorded shared norms of human moralities or natural and legal rights at the national and international levels.

According to Stanford Encyclopedia (2006:2) human rights have certain defining characteristics namely:

1. Human rights are political norms that define how people should be treated by governments and institutions. Therefore, they are not ordinary moral norms applying mainly to interpersonal conduct. It is therefore, the responsibility of the government to regulate the behaviour of people who are engaged in interpersonal relationships against racial, sexual or any form of abuse and discrimination. Governments should not discriminate in their actions and policies against any person or group.
2. Human rights are derived from moral or legal rights and can exist as a shared norm of actual human moralities and justified by strong reasons. It may exist as civil or constitutional rights at the national level or as a legal right within international law.
3. Human rights are numerous each addressing specific problems. They have moved from philosophical abstractions to legal instruments that can be applied by lawyers to protect people against abuses of their dignity and fundamental

- interests. They are no more limited to rights to life, liberty, property etc but now include a splendid array that covers rights to fair trials, education, ending slavery, good work environment, equitable remuneration, gender empowerment, preventing genocide, environmental rights, minority and group rights etc.
4. Human rights prescribe minimal standards by concerning itself with lower limits on tolerable human conducts rather than 'great aspirations and exalted ideal'. This allows for opening or opportunity for democratic decision-making at the national and local level taking cognizance of cultural and institutional variations among countries.
 5. Human rights international norms covering all counties and all people across the globe. This makes then universal and as international law, they do not provide room for evasion. This accounts for their effectiveness in tracking and bringing international criminals to book.

Meanwhile, human rights theorists explain three approaches to human rights. First, is the naturalist approach, which claims that human rights derive from natural law. These rights are conferred by God naturally and are discernible by human reason. Second, we have the positivists approach. For members of this school of thought, human rights are those rights which have become part of the positive legal system, and derive either from the will of the state or command of the sovereign. They reject the notion that human rights can exist without specific legislation – domestically through constitutional processes and internationally through voluntary agreements among states leading to treaties - that provide enforcement remedies. The positivists secularized the notion of law and rights, thus, they removed rights from the realm of the supernatural and metaphysics (church) influences. Third, is the Marxist approach, which sees human rights as the product of the material conditions of the people and the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (dominant and dominated classes in a society as they try to push their different class interests. on this basis, these various classes define rights to suit their differing class interests and try to make law to protect them from threats. Indeed, no matter, which of the differing approach one subscribes to, we have to note that human rights, continues to evolve, develop and has acquired universal character.

Human rights which is generally the same as fundamental human rights are the basic principle of just and fair treatment of the individual person or groups, generally arrived at by experience, common sense and some consensus, and confirmable either by municipal law and or international treaties and conventions, all of which are influenced by the stage of human development, diverse interests and ideologies (Obasi, 2005:165). Although human right is a broad concept that encompasses all factors that influence the freedom and liberty of human beings as they co-exist, interact and counteract with the endowments of nature, it is the subconscious and involuntary feeling that overwhelms the psyche of every individual from birth and it is bequeathed by nature to explore and subdue nature itself, without compulsion or interference.

Nonetheless, the classification of human right is a matter left at the discretion of individual authors, scholars, organizations and even the government. Ikhariale, (1999:52) is of the opinion that there is no specific right or class of right, which are *ab-initio* considered fundamental. The adjective “fundamental”, mainly qualified certain rights for reasons of emphasis or importance. Consequently, a right is a right to the extent that the legal order accepts it as such.

Environmental Security

The relation between the environment and the security of humans and nature has been the object of much research and the subject of many publications in recent decades, but it is only recently becoming an important focus of international environmental policy. A recent comprehensive overview of the environmental security field observes that:

1. The environment is the most transnational of transnational issues, and its security is an important dimension of peace, national security, and human rights that is just now being understood;
2. Over the next 100 years, one third of current global land cover will be transformed, with the world facing increasingly hard choices among consumption, ecosystem services, restoration, and conservation and management;
3. Environmental security is central to national security, comprising the dynamics and interconnections among the natural resource base, the social fabric of the state, and the economic engine for local and regional stability; and that,
4. While the precise roles of the environment in peace, conflict, destabilisation and human insecurity may differ from situation to situation and as such are still being debated in relation to other security and conflict variables, there are growing indications that it is increasingly an underlying cause of instability, conflict and unrest.

According to Wikipedia the free encyclopedia “Environmental security examines threats posed by environmental events and trends to individuals, communities or nations. It may focus on the impact of human conflict and international relations on the environment, or on how environmental problems cross state borders”. The Millennium Project assessed definitions of environmental security and created a synthesis definition in which it sees environmental security as the viability for life support, with three sub-elements:

1. preventing or repairing military damage to the environment;
2. preventing or responding to environmentally caused conflicts; and
3. protecting the environment due to its inherent moral value.

In fact, environmental security considers the abilities of individuals, communities or nations to cope with environmental risk, changes or conflicts, or limited natural resources. For example, climate change can be viewed a threat to environmental security. Human activity impacts CO₂ emissions, impacting regional and global climatic and environmental changes and thus changes in agricultural output. This can lead to food shortages which will then cause political debate, ethnic tension, and civil unrest.

Environmental security pertains to environmental threats that are associated with, or arise from, the implications of intensive and prolonged use of natural and non-natural resources. Years of intensive industrialization and resource use in various parts of the world have led to pollution and to the destruction of ecosystem (UNDP, 1994:43).

Conflicts caused by environmental issues and threats to the wellbeing of the global environment constitute environmental security. And this is becoming increasingly recognized as a fundamental element of the concept of security. Lorraine Elliot has described the two camps that make up the current concept of environmental security. The first, which calls “environment-and-security analysis”, notes the threat posed to the nation state by environmental degradation. This includes conflict caused by resource scarcity and the resource degradation caused by the direct effects of warfare. The second, which she calls “securing-the environment literature”, has as its goal the maintenance of the planetary ecosystem for the good of the world and all humanity. On the basis of the first camp, Thomas Homer-Dixon examined six types of environmental changes that are potential sources of violent conflict:

1. Depletion and pollution of fresh water supplies;
2. Depletion of fisheries;
3. Degradation and loss of good agricultural land;
4. Degradation and removal of forests;
5. Greenhouse-induced climate change; and
6. Stratospheric ozone depletion (Homer-Dixon, 1994)

Meanwhile, the second camp has much in common with the concepts of societal security and human security. Indeed, Jessica Mathew presented a compelling summary of the environmental security as population; depletion of non-renewable resources; deforestation; loss of genetic diversity; inefficient pattern of land ownership; and depletion of the ozone layer leading to greenhouse global warming (Mathew, 1989).

Environmental hazard as defined by Wikipedia the free encyclopedia denotes “the state of events which has the potential to threaten the surrounding natural environment and adversely affect people's health. This term incorporates topics like pollution and natural disasters such as storms and earthquakes”. Flowing from the above we conceive environmental security as those activities that due to over exploitation of natural resources directly and indirectly undermine the capacity of the environment to support and sustain life; such as pollution, deforestation and oil spillage among others.

Peace: an Overview

Peace as a social concept derives from the Latin word “Pax”, which has been seen to be one of man's highest treasures and to which he tends. While some see it as a lack of conflict of any serious kind, others see it as a conflict resolution without the use of violence; for others; it means the co-existence of different cultures to be obtained by improved communication with others, common understanding and the ability to tolerate one another (Jeong, 2009:19). Thus, it is a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices and norms.

Ibeanu (2007) conceive peace as a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict both within specific societies and in the wider international community. Peace is a relative condition of society, friendly climate that allows individuals and group relations to progressive order and stability. He further remarks that peace does not mean the absence of conflict or war. It reflects the security, friendly system that frees individuals and groups of people from fears and dangers of losing such inalienable human rights as life, liberties and property. Similarly, Akpuru-Aja (2007) noted that peace is the human desired condition and order of existence that allows the ruler and the ruled fulfill life obligations with minimum fear or danger on life, liberty and property.

Peace is the prime value in contemporary Africa today, the most valuable public good; but yet the most elusive (Francis, 2011). Peace is generally conceptualized as the absence of war, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and about peaceful co-existence. It is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means. In general six meaning of peace are agreed on by many peace researchers including; peace as absence of war (absence of direct violence), peace as justice and development (absence of structural violence); peace as respect and tolerance between people; peace as Gaia (balance in and with the ecosphere); inner peace (spiritual peace); and peace as “wholeness' and “making whole”.

In his contribution towards a clear understanding of the concept of peace and conditions that are anti-peace, Galtung (1996) identified three types of violence namely (a) direct violence – such as physical, emotional and psychological violence; (b) structural violence – deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm; and (c) cultural violence - this has to do with cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering. Moreover, he outlined two aspects of peace, which he called “negative peace” and “positive peace”. While negative peace denotes the absence of direct violence war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels; positive peace on the other hand denotes absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, injustice and inner peace at individual level. Rummel (1981) defined peace as the absence of dissension, violence or war; a state of concord, harmony and tranquility. Peace is a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices and norms (Miller & King, 2003). It is dangerously misleading to think that the absence of war means the presence of peace. It is also important to know that simply avoiding conflicts, does not mean peace, but acting in accordance to some of the conditions that must be met to guarantee peace in any society (Durojaye, *et al*, 2006).

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is the Marxist theory of relative deprivation, rising expectation and frustration-aggression model. The proponent of this theory are Gur (1970); Dollard *et al* (1939); Berkowitz (1962); Davis (1972); Galtung (1969); Welch (1980); and Anifowose (1982). This central thesis of this model is that aggression is always a consequence of discontent of a kind. That is to say, that violence occurs when

the want – get gap becomes intolerable.

According to Dollard *et al* (1939) anger induced by frustration is a motivating force that disposes men to aggression; as frustration is an interference, with goal-directed behaviour. Therefore, using deprivation as a form of frustration, Gurr (1970) argues that relative deprivation is a necessary condition for violence; and defines it as a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities.

Gurr suggests some variable that affects the intensity of emotional response to the perception of deprivation. The first proposition is that the greater the extent of discrepancy that men see between what they seek and what seems to be attainable, the greater their anger and consequent disposition to aggression. The second proposition relates to opportunities. Men who feel they have many ways to attain their goals are less likely to become angry when one is blocked than those who have few alternatives. A third proposition, which appears to be general, is that the greater the intensity of men's expectations, the greater their anger when they meet unexpected or increased resistance. Davis (1972) attributes outbreak of violence to the frustration that results from a short-term decline in achievement, following a long-term increase that generates expectation about continuing increase. He is of the view that violent revolutions do not occur during period of prolonged abject or worsening situations, contrary to the Marxian expectations. It is Davis contention that revolution occurs during periods of relative prosperity and improvement. Prosperity offers opportunity for comparative analysis of progress of each component of the society. No social system exists without inequalities and not all inequalities are politically relevant as to warrant sedition, as it is obvious that political resources are never distributed equally. But when such contrasts (uneven distribution of resources) become pronounced or activated on ethnic, religious, class, gender, group or political foundations or on a varying combination of these variables, there develops clear polarization leading to “we” versus “them” situation, which ultimately surcharges the environment and political space of the entity. It is inequality perceived as inequity that gives rise to status and wealth, and predicated by ethnic, religious, class or political configurations, in turn, become basis for resentment (Okanya, 1996:16).

Relative deprivation theory holds the view that where expectation does not meet attainment in comparison with other sections of the society; the general tendency is for the aggrieved people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions. The relative deprivation thesis holds the argument that the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will occur. The New Encyclopedia (n.d. 565) states that deprivation, discontent and frustration are frequently assumed to be sufficient causes for initiating or joining a social movement. This relationship is not a simple one. There is abundant evidence in the study to show that the most deprived segments of a population are the most likely to participate in social movements.

In applying the fundamental propositions of the theory to the perennial challenges to peace and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, we discover that the reason for the enduring conflictual relations that exist between the Nigerian government and the various militant groups in the Niger Delta region; feminist groups non-governmental organizations, cum various communities across the country as well as individuals alike is as a result of the perceived sense of relative deprivation. In which the actors believed that had it not been for the deficiency of social distributive justice and the absence of equal opportunity and level playing ground that their situation and performance with their environment and/or system would have been better than it were. It is therefore, within this context that we explained the perennial and perpetual search for enduring peace between and among the various interests, class and groups in Nigeria using the analytical utilities of relative deprivation model of aggression-frustration theory.

Interfacing Gender, Human Right, Environmental Security and Challenges to Peace in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the vexed issues of gender inequality, human rights violation and environmental security have been posing serious challenges to peace in the country. This scenario have led to the formation of many pressure groups and militant group (both legal and illegal), which in most cases had threatened not just the corporate existence of the Nigerian state but the life and property's of the people that inhabit the country, in their attempt to press home their demand as well as to promote and protect their groups interest.

First, the underrepresentation of women in elective positions and political appointments in the country had both in the past and present resulted in the formation of many pressure groups and NGO's that sought to promote and protect the interests of women in the country vis-à-vis their male counterpart. On a similar note, the feminine gender had equally witnessed various forms of abuse such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, wife battering; human trafficking et cetera that necessitated the establishment of such organizations as WIN, WHERIN and WACOL *et cetera*. As a result of these social marginalization women have on number of occasions organized demonstrations, sent delegates and petition letters all in an attempt to register their grievances. At the height of it, women in some states had in the past sealed off the entrance of their states government house and House of Assembly. Thereby refusing the entrance and functioning of government officials; on the condition that their request and plight be attended to.

Second, the systematic abuse of and denial of the people's human rights had constantly served as source of conflict and violence in the country. At no other place is this flagrant act more pronounced than in the area state backed and sanctioned electoral malpractice, which either disenfranchise the people or declare an unpopular candidate the winner of an electoral contest, which otherwise he could not have won. This in most times triggers electoral violence and conflict. For instance, between 1999 through 2007 the country witnessed a number of electoral related violence that resulted in loss of thousands of lives, arson, and destruction of properties worth billions of naira. This violence of times transmute into ethnic violence, thereby widening the scope and dimension of the conflict

by pitching the once peaceful neighbours against themselves; as the case of Tiv-Jumokun, Zango-Kataf, Ife-Modakeke and host of others typifies. Moreover, the religious conflict that trailed the introduction of Shariah Islamic laws in most states in Northern Nigeria represents yet another case of human rights abuse and/or violation. This is so because the country's constitution is clear in its provision on the secularity of the Nigerian state.

According to the U.S. Department of State (2011):

The most serious human rights problems during ... [2011] were the abuses committed by the militant sect known as Boko Haram which was responsible for killings, bombings, and other attacks throughout the country, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, and the widespread destruction of property; abuses committed by the security services with impunity, including killings, beatings, arbitrary detention, and destruction of property; and societal violence, including ethnic, regional, and religious violence. Other serious human rights problems included sporadic abridgement of citizens' right to change their government, due to some election fraud and other irregularities; politically motivated and extrajudicial killings by security forces, including summary executions; security force torture, rape, and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of prisoners, detainees, and criminal suspects; harsh and life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; prolonged pretrial detention; denial of fair public trial; executive influence on the judiciary and judicial corruption; infringements on citizens' privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and movement; official corruption; violence and discrimination against women; child abuse; female genital mutilation ...; the killing of children suspected of witchcraft; child sexual exploitation; ethnic, regional, and religious discrimination; trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution and forced labor; discrimination against persons with disabilities; discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; vigilante killings; forced and bonded labor; and child labor.

Specifically, Part II, Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution while prohibiting the introduction and/or adoption of state religion either in the country or any part of it thereof stated that "The Government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as State Religion". Besides Part II, Section 38, Subsection 1 of the 1999 Constitution provides:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and the public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Moreover, Part II, Section 38, Subsection 2 of the Constitution provides:

No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious instruction or to take part in instruction, ceremony observance if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or a religion not approved by his guardian.

The implication of the citations above were that the introduction of state religion in most northern states namely; Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara; in early 2000's as well as the subjection of non-Muslims to the dictates of the Islamic Shariah law (penal code) not only contravene the supremacy and sanctity of the country's democratic constitution, but practically constitutes violation of the human rights of citizens in that part of the country. Interestingly, the country's human rights profile was abysmally low as the Maplecroft in its 2014 Human Rights Risk Atlas ranked Nigeria the world's 10th worst human rights offender. In fact the country falls within those classified as extreme. On the economy and environment, the report said, "the economies of Myanmar (8th), Nigeria (10th), Ethiopia (28th), and Indonesia (30th), present a particularly high risk to business. "In such economies, a high rate of deforestation, coupled with the unchecked conduct of security forces and a climate of impunity for human rights violations has led to a high risk of 'land grabs' at the expense of indigenous peoples rights, property rights and minority rights."

Third, the various cases of oil spillage, gas flaring, soil erosion, land slide, flooding, acid rain and desertification that is mostly induced by human activities and over exploitation of natural resources are all manifestations of environmental insecurity in the country. Basically, the problem of environmental security and its radicalization and/or politicization in the country have over the year's generated series of environmental induced conflict and militancy as is the case in the Niger Delta region, where decades of unregulated oil production resulted in various forms of environmental despoliation and climate change. However, the most disturbing aspect of the phenomenon is its threat to the human rights of the people as it aggravates the crisis of food security, access to good drinking water through air, land and water pollution. It equally triggers the spread of various diseases and ailment that go with environmental degradation. Besides, these activities and its concomitant effects accounts for the increased disappearance of the acclaimed fauna and flora of the Niger Delta region.

Indicating the enormous nature of the threats posed by environmental challenges to the human security of the people of the Niger Delta region, which emanates from the combined efforts of nature and human activities; especially the latter. Chief Francis Doukpola (2013) noted that:

...hardly at any other time in recorded history has our world faced the same intensity and wide variety of environmental challenges as the conspiracy of natural ecological forces and human abuse or mismanagement imposed on us at the present time. From the cumulative effect of over a century of reckless emission of green house gases since the advent of the industrial revolution, to the spectrum between floods and tsunamis, to overall climate change, to the plague of oil pollution of our lands and seas, ..., it is apparent that our world is facing a grand push back by the environment. While there may be a roughly balanced spread of natural ecological disaster between the continents, I dare say that nowhere is the environmental threat from a combination of nature and human agency more evident than Africa. ...the continual hemorrhaging of oil pipelines are two general examples. Unfortunately, our country, in fact the Niger Delta region, takes the lead amongst the venues of hazardous environmental practices such as gas flaring and oil pollution (Doukpola, cited in Apah 2013:1).

Meanwhile, part of the problems in Jos (Plateau State) had been blamed on climate change induced desertification that is sweeping across most northern states. Besides, climate change itself has been proved to be a by-product of human activities (anthropogenic factor in climate change). The phenomenon force Hausa-Fulani herdsmen into moving their animals southwards and in the process not only trespass but destroy the crops of the local farmers. Hence, conflict usually ensues in the attempts of the local farmers to prevent and protect their means of livelihood from being encroached upon. Specifically, the decline and deterioration of environmental resources usually increase human vulnerability to threats, which expose them to environmental hazards while at the same time reduce their capacity to cope with these hazards, which push individuals, communities and ethnic groups in Nigeria against their environmental tolerable limits to precipitate and exacerbate conflict that could escalate to the level of threatening national peace and security (Phil-Eze, 2009).

Conclusion

The paper was an attempt to explore the synergy between gender inequality, human right violation, environmental insecurity and the problem enduring peace in Nigeria. From the assessment it is clear that the quest for enduring peace and human security has been a recurring decimal of the Nigerian state. This has been expressed through various political activities which included, agitating either for greater political participation and representation at levels of decision-making, promotion and protection of human rights as well as environmental sustainability for the survival of the human species therein. Despite this trend, the controversies remain. The study therefore concludes that the quest for lasting peace in the country, must take into cognizance the link between gender inequality as manifested in the ratio of male-female political representation, both in elective posts and other political appointments; as well as the systematic exclusion of women in the process of conflict resolution and peace-building.

Recommendations

To achieve the above expectations, the study recommends as follows,

1. There is need to institutionalize and domesticate the Beijing Declaration and UN Resolution 1325 in the country, both of which calls for greater involvement of women in the process of conflict resolution and the politics of their country.
2. Also, fundamental the human rights of Nigerians, irrespective of status or social class must be respected and upheld above the whims and caprices of the any group or individual.
3. To compliment the second view above, managers of the Nigerian state must ensure that the desires and aspiration of the citizen both in terms of electoral options (candidate) and other public policy matters are constantly respected by conducting its activities within the confines of the law and democratic rules of the game.

4. More so, in order to limit and prevent further environmental degradation induced conflict that results in from human activities, there is the dire need for the Nigerian state to ensure that all the companies engaged in the extraction of raw material in the country especially Multinational Oil Cooperation (Oil MNCs) that operate in the Niger Delta region, which is the mainstay of the country's economy carry-out their operations in an environmental friendly manner and in strict compliance with the international standards and best practices.

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