

Socio-Cultural and Economic Challenges of Globalization on the Nigerian Social Structure and Way Forward for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The article which is on the Socio-Cultural and Economic Challenges of Globalization on the Nigerian Social Structure attempts to make an x-ray analysis on a number of factors which are considered as hindrances to the attainment of sustainable in Nigeria. To begin with, the concepts of globalization, sustainable development and the dimensions of globalization have been elucidated in the article. The article also identified the socio-cultural and economic challenges of globalization on the Nigerian social structure. Some of the challenges discussed were widening the gap between Nigeria and advanced nations, marganalization, dependence on raw materials, privatization, the removal of subsidy, the reduction of sovereignty, change in the norms and values, the change in the nature of food, the language and also the change in the mode of dressing. Furthermore, the article suggested a possible scenario for the attainment of sustainable development. It was recommended that the government in Nigeria should intensify more research on science and technology, more workshops on the importance of the Nigerian indigenous cultures should be organized, the government should intensify the application of managerial know-how, the government should also be risk bearing and make effective utilization of the country's natural resources. Lastly, there should be a political stability in Nigeria so that sustainable development can be attained.

Keywords: *Globalization, Sustainable Development, Socio-Cultural and Economic Challenges, Nigerian Social Structure*

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Background to the Study

As the world is now continuously becoming a global village which is looked at as a single community that is connected by highly sophisticated electronic communications systems, more and more nations and countries are assiduously and adequately preparing to maintain strong socio cultural, political and economic ties for their development. This also vividly indicates that the globalization process easily and smoothly operates all around the world. It can be clearly understood that both the developed (industrialized) and the developing (third world) countries are now working harmoniously together in order to maintain mutual relationships which as a result of that, the developing countries such as Nigeria, for example, are seriously at disadvantaged due to low technical knowhow and managerial skills. This also implies that the level of scientific and technological development is considerably low in the country and in addition, the managerial knowledge to be utilized in other activities most particularly in the international scene cannot adequately assist Nigeria to prosper and develop.

Basically, there are some factors responsible for global. Interdependence, but within the context of this article the factors are the information technology and trade. The information, technology connotes the sharing of ideas or interactions among different countries or nations of the world and it involves the utilization of different electronic means of communication which comprise the internet, radios, televisions, GSM phones etc. According to Olarinsola (2007), communication is interaction in one form or the other either by visual or auditory symbols. This is further buttressed by the fact that numerous people are now continually interacting with themselves and with their environments by talking to their friends, watching television, listening to radios, reading printing text calling or sending away domestic or other animals (Onasanya, Fakomogho, Shehu and Sodan, 2010). It should therefore be understood here that, the people find it easy to interact or communicate or do their business transactions in different parts of the world and they also do that with the help of information technology. The second factor responsible for global interdependence of countries or nations of the world is the trade. The trade simply refers to the buying and selling of goods and services and it adequately provides an opportunity for global integration of business transactions and capital flows in different parts of the world. This also entails that the role of financial markets in the process of globalization is fundamentally important because the financial markets means gains for private capital which can now flow around the world in search of highest returns (kwanashie, 1998). It is pertinent to note that the developed and developing countries of the world play prominent roles in the business transactions and the developed countries here include England, France, Germany, Italy, USA, Japan, China and the rest while the developing countries are mainly the African, Asian and Latin American countries (Ogunbameru and Rotimi, 2006).

Conceptual Framework

To simply gain a clearer understanding of this paper, there are some concepts which are very significant and they need to be conceptualized for clarifications.

Concept of Globalization

There used to be several definitions given by scholars from different perspectives with regard to the concept of globalization. Globalization can be literally defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Giddens, 1997). The concept of globalization can also be referred to all those processes through which the peoples of the world are incorporated in to a single society – a global society (Albow, 1990). Globalization can be perceived as a process of integrating economic decisions making such as the consumption, investment and saving process all across the world (Ogunbameru and Rotimi, 2006). However, any process of creating a global market place in which increasingly all nations are forced to participate can also be referred to as a globalization (Olayode, 2006). It should be noted that the key elements of this process are the interconnection of sovereign nations, through which trade and capital flows, harmonization of the economic rules that govern relationships between these sovereign nations, creating a structure to support and facilitate dependence and interconnection and creation of a global market place (McGrew, 1992).

From the foregoing it can therefore be asserted that globalization is all about the various kinds of socio cultural, political, economic as well as even the religious relationships take place among numerous nations and countries of the world for easy understanding, progress and development. The relationships are also between the developed and developing nations of the world.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development has been defined by the Bruntland commission (1987) as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable Development was also defined by Munasinghe (2004) as the process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspiration and full potentials over sustained period of time while maintaining resilience of economic, social and environmental systems. It is therefore, worthy of note that the rationale behind the maintenance of solid socio cultural, political and economic relationships among the various nations and countries of the world is purposely for the attainment of an indispensable sustainable development that is capable of eradicating or minimizing, substantially the challenges of development.

Dimensions of Globalization

According to Giddens (1997), there are basically four (4) fundamental dimensions of globalization which make up the world system and give it its basic institutional shape. The following are the dimensions of globalization.

Nation States

A nation is a group of people with the same language, culture and history who live in a particular area under one government. Nigeria, for example, is a nation. Numerous nations states are now participating in the process of global political order and the states are the principal actors within the global political order and the large business companies are the

dominant agents within the world economy. The business of their activities depends on the profit for profit and the states derive their power from sovereign capabilities (Morgenthau, 1960). However, they do not operate as economic machines, but as actors who are jealous of their territorial rights, concerned with fostering of national cultures and having strategic geo-political involvement with other state or alliances of states.

World Capitalist Economy

A capitalist economy normally is an economy whereby the means of production such as land, labour and capital are owned and controlled by the private individuals and the global interdependence of countries is operated under the capitalist system. The main centers of power in the world economy are the capitalist states, that is the states in which the capitalist economic enterprise is the chief form and international economic policies of these states involve many forms of regulations of economic activity, but as noted their institutional organization maintains on insulation of the economic from the political (Ogunbameru and Rotimi, 2006).

World Military Power

This is the third dimension of globalization. It has been noted that the global interdependence of countries or the nation states ginger them to gain the military power which is fundamentally important in giving them protection. The globalization of the military power is obviously between the armed forces of different states; it also concerns war itself where the participants are drawn from virtually all regions of the world so that they can ensure the maintenance of peace, stability, progress and development.

International Division of Labour

This is the fourth dimensions of globalization. Researchers indicated that there is now the expansion of global division of labour between more and less industrialized areas in the world and the international division of labour is also concerned with the industrial production where different kinds of goods and service are produced. However as a result of that, more employment or job opportunities are adequately created to the people (Riggs, 2010, Scholte, 2000).

Socio Cultural and Economic Challenges of Globalization on the Nigerian Social Structure

The Nigerian social structure is characterized by some socio cultural and economic challenges which are adversely posing threats to the future Sustainable Development of the country and the following are the challenges:

Globalization Widens Gap between Nigeria and Rich Nations

Many researchers indicated that the globalization processes have deeply widened the gap between the haves and have not that is to indicate the rich nations which are popularly referred to as the scientifically and technologically or the industrially advanced nations and also the countries such as Nigeria which are the developing or the less industrially developed nations of the world Hurrel and Wood, 1996). As a result of the intense gap between Nigeria

and western countries such as USA, England, France, Germany etc., many challenges are occurring in the country such as corruption, unemployment the decay of the local industries and other socio-cultural and economic challenges of Sustainable Development (Olayode, 2000)

Marginalization

As a result of the global interdependence and relationships of Nigeria and the industrially advanced countries, the country is adversely suffering from marginalization which seriously occurs due to some factors. The first factor is poor technological development which implies that the level of scientific and technological advancement in Nigeria is extremely very low considering the fact that the country is not capable of producing heavy capital goods such as machineries that could be adequately utilized for industrial development. The second factor is poor managerial knowhow. Nigeria is abundantly blessed with numerous intellectual resources such as the engineering talents, the technocrats and others but the poor managerial knowhow has become a clog in the wheels of attaining a prosperous industrial development in the country (Anao, 2002).

Nigeria's Dependence on Raw Materials

In the global international market, Nigeria is a producer of raw materials from her agricultural and the solid mineral resources e.g cocoa, cotton, palm oil, crude oil etc. but the challenge is that the country does not substantially benefit in the exportation of all those raw materials and as a result of that, Nigeria cannot adequately develop an independent, self reliant and self sustaining economy that can boost socio-cultural and economic opportunities of sustainable development (Ogude, 2000). It should be noted that most of the challenges of social security that the country is facing today are as a result of the inability of developing a self reliant and self sustaining economy.

The Global Impact of Privatization in Nigeria

Numerous literatures indicated that the privatization of public enterprises in Nigeria such as NEPA, NITEL, NIPOST etc. had contributed in no small measure in bringing about huge losses of jobs which made numerous masses to be redundant in the country. The situation also made the Nigerians to lose their jobs leading to notorious criminal activities. However, Adewumi (2001) opined that the globalization constitutes the most potent threat to the well being of developing countries in general and the working people in particular.

Removal of Subsidy as a challenge

The removal of subsidy is also one of the challenges of globalization and it hinders the attainment of sustainable development in the country. According to Man (2003), the removal of subsidy in Nigeria created two major challenges which were poverty and high cost of living which all made the lives of the masses deplorable. There are millions of Nigerians that are living in object poverty because they could not cater for their needs to sustain food, shelter and clothing and also lack the accessibility to education which is a weapon of liberation from ignorance, poverty and diseases and also a tool for sustainable development. However, as a result of globalization, the removal of subsidy resulted in the high cost of food and

accommodation in most of the Nigerian towns and cities where the unemployment and other social problems are very prevalent. This is further buttressed by Ilo (2003) that the continuous trade and capital liberalization led to growth of informal sector which engaged workers under wrong employment practices like the casual contract employment and deplorable working conditions and environment. Furthermore, the inability of labour to flow/migrate to another part of the world for improved standard of living as part of components of globalization has further worsened the labour situation.

Reduction of the Sovereignty of Nigeria

Within the context of this article, the concept of sovereignty refers to the state or condition of being politically independent. Sovereignty is also one of the features of a state because there is no geographical area or territory that can be considered as a state without being sovereign. As a result of the global interdependence and interaction, the sovereignty of most of the states particularly Nigeria has been eroded by the multi functional companies of the world. It should be noted that the incapability of Nigeria to substantially gain from global internationalization is limited by some factors such as poor domestic management of the economy, the inherent structural contradictions of the economy and some policies of the western industrial countries coupled with the state of technological backwardness which made Nigeria to vulnerably rely on the foreign supply of industrial inputs capital equipment, raw materials, spare parts and other intermediate materials (Sivandan, 1999).

Change in the Nigerian Norms and Values

The norms and values simply refer to the rules and regulations of a society which all the members are anticipated to comply so that social control and conformity can be ascertained. As a result of globalization, the norms and values of Nigeria are currently changing in a negative manner. The values are now daily defined and sold to the Third World via media like internet and satellite television where the Nigerian family responsibilities and care are considerably reduced to the consumption of Junk food Mr. Bigg's chicken George etc. and in addition, there is also the buying of videos cassettes and C.D plates which has all become the order of the day in different nooks and crannies of the country (Alubo, 2002)

Changing Nature of Food in Nigeria

This is also part of the challenges of globalization on the Nigerian social structure. Researches indicated that the Nigerian diets which are, rich in fiber and other natural ingredients have been replaced by the fast foods which are now sold in the expensive food and snacks stores by the hawkers in the traffic and also the food are served complete with coca cola and other forms of soft drinks in the towns and cities. In addition, there are the deluxe restaurants where various kinds of imported drinks such as the Five Alive juices are served with the meals which as a result of that, there are many Nigerians that begin to forget about their traditional food such as Amala, Eba and others (Alubo, 2002) (Lar, 2001)

Language

Language is one of the challenges of globalization on the Nigerian social structure and this is in view of the fact that it has now been discovered that the slangs and the languages of the

“Ghettos” are very fast becoming popular most particularly among the youth and the students in most of the Nigerian university campuses, a behavior which is considered very unpleasant as it becomes a cultural erosion. BThe globalized language is also complicated with the confusion of many Nigerian youth who do not have the capacity of speaking their indigenous languages very fluently (Alubo, 2002), (Abdullahi, 2004).

Mode of Dressing

This is also another factor which constitutes a serious challenge of globalization on the Nigerian social structure. As a result of globalization, many Nigerian youth and students are now dressing in a manner that is not socially approved and recognized by the society and some of the indecent dressings used by the youth are the Jeans, T-shirts, and Designer Shoes which are also given different names as Kelvin, Versace, St. Michaels and the others. However, the indecent dressings which are used by the Nigerian youth especially the girls and women exposed them to different forms of sexual harassment which are also social problems that deter the progress and development of the Nigerian societies (Alubo, 2002).

Conclusion

It can be clearly understood that the contemporary era of globalization produces numerous socio cultural and economic challenges on the Nigerian social structure and the challenges also adversely hinder the attainment of sustainable development in the country. The paper vividly highlighted on the challenges such as widening the gap between Nigeria and the industrially advanced countries of the world, the marginalization of Nigeria in the global international system, the Nigeria's dependence on raw materials, the global impact of privatization in Nigeria and also the removal of the subsidy as a challenge. However the other challenges elucidated in the article were the reduction sovereignty of Nigeria, the change in the Nigerian norms and values, the changing nature of food in Nigeria, the languages and finally the mode of dressing as challenges of globalization on the Nigerian social structure. Therefore, the only way out is for the Nigerian leaders and followers to devote their times, energies and also sink all their religious and ethnic differences in the struggle of the attainment of socio economic independence and sustainable development.

Recommendations for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Based on all the findings and discussions of the article, the following are some of the recommendations for the attainment of sustainable development in the country:

1. There is the need for the intensification of research on science and technology in Nigeria and this means the Federal Government should adequately mobilize resources in order to support the universities and other scientific research institutes so that they can sufficiently contribute their own quota. With that, the sustainable development can be prosperously attained.
2. The government should continue to organize workshops or public enlightenment campaigns on the importance or preference of the Nigerian indigenous cultures and here, the sociologists, anthropologists and other personalities with the knowledge of culture can contribute in no small measure in mobilizing the masses towards the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria.

3. In Nigeria, the application of managerial know-how is something that is fundamentally significant. The government should therefore, continue to adequately inject more funds on the acquisition of managerial skills by its citizenry so that the potential managers and technocrats can be produced in such a manner that they can contribute to the attainment of sustainable development in the country.
4. In the contemporary globalization era, there is the need for risk bearing in Nigeria. This means that the government should never relent on the pursuance of its laudable and potential national capital projects in the attainment of sustainable development.
5. Another interesting issue is the efficient and effective utilization of natural resources of Nigeria. The government, therefore, should put much emphasis on the proper utilization of the abundant natural resources of Nigeria such as the human, agricultural, solid mineral water and atmospheric resources towards the attainment of sustainable industrial development of the country.
6. However, there is also the need for political stability in Nigeria. It should be noted that all the challenges of globalization on the Nigerian social structure highlighted in the article can only be rectified when there is political stability and for this reason, the government should put in place adequate security measures on Nigerian democracy so that sustainable development can be attained.

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