



NIGERIAN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN GLOBALIZATION

Uba, Isaac Andiyawa, & Ibrahim Ahmed Jajere
Department of Geography

Federal University Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria

E-mail: isaacandiyawa@gmail.com; iajajerez000@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Globalization creates global consciousness and socio-political impulse resulting to various reactions in form of human right abuses and crimes. The influence of globalization on social differentiation in the rural areas is determined by the degree of cultural complexities of the rural community. The relationship between the communities' functional characteristics and globalization in Nigeria is the concern of this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Like generally across the globe rural communities in Nigeria had over historical period developed their functional characteristics by which their livelihood were maintained. But as societies undergo changes caused by either endogenous or exogenous factors, by the way another strong factor, if not the most influential emerged and is termed as globalization. Globalization has its associated technology, ideology and resultant modernization with which it engulfed the globe and concomitantly bringing changes that impacted the livelihood of all the people (rural communities inclusive) around the globe. The paper therefore, presents the characteristics of the attributes of the Nigerian rural communities' in globalization. But let's get started with the conceptual definition of rural area and of globalization.

"The term rural connotes the non-urban sector of any area or country. It is normally characterized by relatively small settlements (as contrasted to the large sizes of urban settlements); and heavy dependence on primary production activities (such as hunting/fishing, pastoralism and agriculture)" (Baba 1988).

In addition to forming the largest size of the population in the developing countries, the rural population is also commonly known as the poorest. Therefore, the term rural is associated with poverty, deprivation and drudgery. In line with this, rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of the rural poor people on a

self-sustaining basis. Baba (1988, op cit.) explains that the backbone of the traditional rural economy and livelihood depended on the exploitation of natural resources from land, forest, water and human resources. This means that the people's ability to source their means of livelihood depends on how sophisticated they have developed their socio-economic attributes. As everywhere across the globe rural communities in Nigeria have established some functional characteristics by which they sustain their livelihood before the rapid proliferation of a phenomena called globalization.

Coming to the term 'globalization', Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia defines globalization as "the process of interaction and integration between people, companies, and governments worldwide." It explains that even though history of globalization can be traced back to European age of discoveries and voyages, the wide spread globalization seems to begin in the 1820s. Globalization is a worldwide intra-firm division of labour. In these strategies, activities are established in many sites spread over the world, based on a country's comparative advantages and specialization of production. The connectivity of the world economy and culture are seen to have grown rapidly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "Globalization has speeded up dramatically in the last two decades as technological advances make it easier for people to travel, communicate and do business internationally" Sylvester (2011). It further explains that conflicts and diplomacies also manifested in the process of globalization. Modern globalization involves goods, services, capital, data and socio-cultural activities circulating around the globe. Transportation and telecommunication are two major factors of globalization. Prominent agents of globalization identified with transportation are- steam locomotive, steam ship, jet engine, drone aviation, pipeline, container and vessel ships; while in the areas of telecommunication are- telegraph, space station, internet, mobile phone, Global Positioning System and Geographic Information System. Other factors linked with globalization include environmental challenges such as climate change, cross-territorial water and air pollution. It is observed that most of these factor agents have generated further interdependence of economic and cultural activities around the world. In summary globalization operates physically, economically, politically and socio-



culturally. The relationship between the communities' functional characteristics and globalization in Nigeria is the concern of this paper. To get the attributes of the rural communities in Nigeria we borrowed from the works of social scientists such as Smith and Zopf (1970) who identified some variables which distinguish rural from urban communities. These variables are- the main occupation, size of the community, natural rural environment, social differentiation, social stratification, social interaction and basis for group unity. Therefore, the following examines the main feature of the variables and how globalization has re-sharpened or altered their functions to develop or under-develop the rural communities in Nigeria.

The Main Occupation

Main occupation is one of the criteria considered for distinguishing rural from urban communities in developing countries such as Nigeria. Primary economic activities constitute the main livelihood of rural dwellers. Such activities comprise gathering wild foods, hunting wild animals, fishing aquatic lives, farming crops, and pasturing domestic animals. In contrast, the main livelihood engagement of the urban communities are secondary and tertiary activities. The examples of the secondary activities include tailoring, carpentry, itinerant trading, machine repairs to mention a few; and examples of the tertiary activities in the cities include services such as civil service work, legal advocates, health services, agency services to mention a few also. But in the last few decades of rapid globalization in which rural development is a part, some considerable secondary occupations such as teaching in primary and secondary schools, working in rural dispensaries, agriculture and veterinary offices and other services such as driving, tailoring, itinerant trading have grown considerably in the rural areas of Nigeria. Due to globalization, most of the manufactured goods consumed in Nigeria are imported foreign products. On the other hand most of Nigerian industries are no longer in production to provide employment in urban areas because foreign products new and fairly used have flooded both the urban and rural markets in Nigeria. The development of industries, physical infrastructure and social amenities are copied from the developed nations into Nigeria by the process of globalization. The effect of globalization has diluted the usual sharp contrast between the rural and

the urban occupations. Specialization has also sprung up among the rural farmers where modern methods of irrigation are modernized. Adoption of modern method of Storage has also become another area of specialization in rural agriculture in Nigeria. These are all strongly connected with globalization.

Size of the Community

Usually the sizes of rural communities in Nigeria as common across Africa are smaller and dispersed than those of urban communities. But through the influences of globalization Nigeria adopted the Local Government system in 1976. With the establishment of Local Government systems in Nigeria many smaller village settlements have migrated to where the local government headquarters are located such that by 2016, that is forty years after the Local Government Edict, the sizes of the local government headquarters have expanded to urban like sizes. There are 774 local government headquarters in Nigeria of which about 80% is located in the rural communities. The local government system is not indigenous to Nigeria but adopted from other nations in connection to the processes of globalization. Therefore, globalization has changed the sizes of many rural communities across the breadth and width of the country.

Population Density

In Nigeria, the nature of the small size rural environment can be seen as a direct consequence of the relatively large urban communities. Thus, should the community's territory be shared equally among its population, fewer people will be found per unit area of land in the rural than urban areas. This, of course, is not denying the existence of some densely populated rural areas of Nigeria surrounding larger towns, such as Kano, Ibadan, Enugu to mention a few. The population densities of urban areas are often many times higher than those of the surrounding rural communities. This is so because of the over concentration of people surrounding some very limited infrastructure and social amenities which are beyond reasonable doubt provided in connection with globalization. In any developing country, effects of globalization are much realized in the urban centers than in the rural areas. That why there is a high rural-urban migration in Nigeria. Nonetheless, some local government areas



like Zaria in Kaduna State, Potiskum in Yobe State, Mubi in Adamawa State have some modern infrastructure and social amenities hence high population densities, and so many others high density rural settlements down the southwest and southeast of the country.

Natural Rural Environment

The idea of natural environment in this context carries two perspectives, namely the inorganic and the organic perspective; The inorganic environment refer to factors as land, rocks, soil and climate, while the inorganic refers to organisms, plants and animals. The utilization of both the inorganic and the organic elements has been very less in the rural areas. Until with the extension of science and technology into the rural areas either in form of purposive rural development strategy or diffused into the rural communities through globalization. The relationship between the purposive rural development efforts and the spread of globalization phenomena are interwoven. However, globalization plays the greatest effects because almost all the policies, techniques and equipment used as rural development machineries are transferred from other nations through the process of globalization. With the influence of globalization the methods and levels of inorganic and organic utilization have created some problems such over population, land degradation, extinction of some wild animals, pollution and insecurity. Rural communities have also started battling with artificial environment as of the urban areas. On the other hand there is also high level of improvement in breeding domestic animals such that the population of the domestic animals as cattle, camels, sheep, goats etc has increased to providing ample means of livelihood in the rural areas. The applications of the new methods has also created shortages of graze land, and hence scramble for the scares land which consequently generates conflicts of varying degree between farmers and the beasts rear or manifest in form of land use competition along the rural-urban fringes. Due to globalization rare domestic animal such as peacocks and turkey fowls which used to be found only in the houses of very rich men and chiefs in urban areas are now found common in the houses of the rural people. Similarly, genetically modified crops have engulfed rural agriculture and consequently forced the rural people to adopt the methods with high artificial inputs to support the

genetically modified species instead of relying on the natural environment.

Social Differentiation

The influence of globalization on social differentiation in the rural areas is determined by the degree of cultural complexities of the rural community. One essential social feature of rural communities is the high degree of homogeneity. Thus the bulk of the community members may share the same ancestral past, same religion, same language, similar occupation and social traits. But with the influence of globalization rural areas in Nigeria have to some extent experienced heterogeneity. Through migration, people are coming from different backgrounds, involved in different occupations, have different religious beliefs and a wide diversity of social traits. The majority of the population is found to have migrated from the neighboring rural areas to form the heterogeneity. Another very important influence of globalization on the rural social stratification is the dichotomization of the two religions- Christianity and Islam. The two have phased out most of the former traditional religions. The majority of the rural people have either embraced Christianity or Islam. Another recent development is the degree of occupational specialization which emerged in the rural areas owing to migrants from far and near due to the influence of globalization.

Social Stratification

Rural population is normally arranged into classes or status, as may be determined by the social and economic considerations. Social scientists have pointed out several condition of social stratification in rural communities. The range between the highest and lowest class, is normally smaller among rural communities. This is to say that social classes are much less pronounced in rural areas because of the much higher degree of homogeneity. As globalization engulfed the rural communities, it is observed in the recent years that the strength of social segregation has been eroded. The classification has turned to represent different levels of power either based on traditional, political and social-importance or wealth. For instance a retired military officer belonging to the lowest class in his community but on returning from the military service may claim the highest status in the community. Another instance



is where one from the lowest class joins politics and though may not gain popularity to contest for a political post, but the winning governor may, appoint him as a commissioner irrespective of his low status in his community but because of the person's contribution during their campaign. Equally, the winning president may similarly appoint a low status person as a minister regardless of his belonging to the low status in his community. Influence of globalization has affected the traditional political system in the rural communities.

Social Interaction

As common with developing countries in Africa, rural communities in Nigeria can also be distinguished from the urban communities through the system of social interaction. Primarily, rural people have much fewer social contacts than the urban people. Usually, rural dwellers have limited daily contacts with a small circle of family members and friends hence seldom mingle with a large crowd except on special occasions. Members of the rural community rarely meet strange faces on a daily basis. But with globalization rural dwellers are now heavily surrounded by a large variety of secondary channels of contacts similar to urban areas. Rural contacts are getting increasingly impersonal, superficial, business-like, and with little permanent effect on the individual involved. With globalization, rural communities are connected worldwide through internet, television, videos and GSM phones. The contribution of Internet Banking interconnections in the rural areas of Nigeria cannot be over emphasized as it has facilitated financial transactions globally, speedy, accurate and 24hours daily. The members of the rural community can contact strangers internationally on no face to face basis but on minutes or hourly basis. Such inter-connections may be or may not be personal, intimate and permanent in nature. Whichever, way these international media contacts are viewed, to the advantages there are also high levels crime associated with these efficient communication in the rural areas of Nigeria.

Basis for Group Unity

The forces for cohesion in rural community are both socially and economically. Rural unity is based on similarities among the members. The bases of the similarities are: common ancestral origin, culture,

occupation, religious beliefs, proximity and others. With globalization some communities tend to be more rural than others, depending on the criteria which are in use for evaluating them. For example, there are different degrees of occupational homogeneity, levels of population size, density and stratification; while heterogeneity may arise from division of labour, specialization and mutual interdependence. The basis for group unity has also been affected by globalization through changes in attitudes, behavior pattern, aspiration, economic endeavours and a general outlook. For example the two globalized religions- Christianity and Islam, have majorly dichotomized Nigerians into two groups as according to Pew (2018) Christians numbered to 97, 508,579 (49.3%), Muslims 96,519,649 (48.8%) while other religions make up 3757937.1 (1.9%) of the population in Nigeria. Here globalization has promoted some strong basis for group unity in Nigeria.

SUMMARY

In summary, globalization is conceptualized as a process of interdependence of communities across the globe through increasing cross boarder interactions. It involves an increasing flow of services, capital, goods and more rapid diffusion of technology across the globe. Globalization has made some positive impact in rural areas of Nigeria through the activities of some International Development Organizations (IDO). To mention few among the IDO are: Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO). There are also some handful of Non-Governmental Aid Organizations in the North Eastern States of Nigeria rendering their relief packages to the victims of Boko Haram. Each of these organizations has a separate commitment to the displaced rural people in the northeastern states of Nigeria. Globalization has also made life easier for a greater rural populace in Nigeria through easy access to different culture and lifestyle. Globalization has opened a gateway to global market for Nigerian rural primary products such as cassava, groundnuts, cocoa and donkeys which are exported to china. Foreign products such as foods, clothes and machineries, new or fairly used from America, Asia and Europe have



deeply reached the rural Nigerians. Almost all the spheres of the rural Nigeria have been socially, economically, politically and environmentally modified by globalization.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be seen otherwise that globalization creates global consciousness and socio-political impulse resulting to various reactions in form of human right abuses and crimes ranging from cultism, corruption, robbery, abduction through human trafficking to terrorism. Globalization has deeply infiltrated its negative influences into the rural communities of Nigeria. Globalization is not subject to the control of the less developed countries, hence does not serve the interest of the rural populace. Globalization has polarized the world economy, perpetuated inequality and promoted exploitation such as inherent in capitalism. Globalization has largely crushed manufacturing industries in the developing including Nigerian and with the collapse of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria the rural labour migrants no longer find industrial jobs in the urban centers and hence youth restiveness across all the communities in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made for other researches to be done to assess other variables of the rural areas to enable make generalization about the effects of globalization on Nigeria's rural development. The areas recommended for such researches include Nigerian rural population in globalization, Nigerian rural production in globalization, Nigerian rural migration in globalization, Nigerian quality of rural life in globalization and as a synoptic view of the researches present Nigerian rural development in globalization.

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