

Globalisation and Rural Poverty in Nigeria

Monday E. Dickson *

Department of Political Science, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, P. M. B. 1167, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

* Email of the corresponding author: mondaydickson@aksu.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examined the connection between globalisation and rural poverty in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the Niger Delta states, which are abundant in natural resources yet characterised by pervasive underdevelopment and poverty. The purpose was to assess the impact of the forces of globalisation on rural poverty, identifying the consequences for local communities. The paper adopted the descriptive/analytical approach and gathered data from Focus Group Discussions with groups of community members, representing different social and economic backgrounds. Other sources of information include published studies, books, journal articles, reports and documents from government agencies, local development organizations, and NGOs working in the region. The data were analysed qualitatively. Building on the theoretical foundation of Dependency and World Systems Theory, the findings show that although globalisation has prospects for economic growth through foreign investments and infrastructural development, its process has far-reaching implications for the rural population. In other words, globalisation frequently results in uneven growth, especially in areas that have an abundance of natural resources. Consequently, oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta states by multinational companies has deepened poverty in rural communities owing to wanton destruction of means of livelihood. Based on these findings, the study recommended, among others, the promotion of inclusive economic policies that ensure the equitable distribution of wealth generated from globalisation, especially in the oil and gas sector.

Keywords: Dependency, globalisation, marginalization, poverty, rural poverty.

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1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the impact of globalisation on the impoverished in rural areas has become a major concern. These concerns have become more pronounced because of the way globalisation has significantly induced global financial and economic crises, pandemics and climate change, among others. Specifically, “globalisation and poverty, alongside the issue of climate change, epitomize two of the most pressing contemporary development issues” (Nissanke & Thorbecke, 2010, p. 3). These events disrupt international trade, investment, and supply chains, reduce cross-border flows of capital and labour, and slow down global trade, leading to a rise in nationalistic tendencies, and challenging the ideals of economic interconnectedness (Baldwin, 2019). Similarly, as Dickson (2021) points out, the outbreak and uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 pandemic had taken advantage of forces of contemporary globalisation, impacting the rural poor in Nigeria, and exacerbating challenges such as limited access to healthcare, food insecurity, and economic instability. Ayegba (2020) asserts that the rural poor also faced challenges in accessing government support due to inadequate infrastructure and digital exclusion. Consequently, the effects of globalisation on growth, inequality and poverty have become one of the central issues in developing countries as a whole.

Currently, globalisation, which has the potential to contribute to the growth and reducing poverty through the spread and transfer of technology as well as the transmission of knowledge and skills is certainly at a crossroads. However, the potential is enormous if globalisation produces ‘job-creating’ economic growth for the poor and ensures even income distribution and progress on poverty reduction. As Nissanke and Thorbecke (2010, p.4) observed, “While globalisation is likely to have contributed to poverty alleviation on a net basis, it is also known to have created winners and losers at numerous levels throughout modern history”. Thus, most of the Western and European countries have benefited enormously from the forces of globalisation, while many countries in the developing world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa benefited little from globalisation. For instance, Nigeria represents a notable example of this disparity.

Despite its vast oil wealth, rural areas, particularly in the Niger Delta, remain plagued by poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment. The region is paradoxically one of the poorest regions in the country. Scholars and writers have argued that one of the key drivers of rural poverty in the region is the economic exploitation that arises from globalisation through the activities of Multinational Corporations (MNCs). The activities of these oil industries have led to the depletion of local resources, environmental degradation, and increased poverty in rural areas. In the view of Akinola (2018), the presence of oil multinationals in the Niger Delta has not translated into

local economic benefits. Instead, these corporations often engage in practices that exploit the region's natural resources without reinvesting in the local economy or addressing the socio-economic needs of the rural population.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are fourfold: First, to examine how globalisation, which is often associated with economic growth and prosperity, contributed to the persistence of rural poverty in the Niger Delta states; second, to assess the perceptions of rural communities in the Niger Delta regarding the influence of globalisation on their living standards, access to services, and overall quality of life; third, to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies in addressing rural poverty in the Niger Delta in light of the forces of globalisation; and fourth, to propose strategies for inclusive development that would ensure the benefits of globalisation are shared more equitably among the rural poor in the Niger Delta, thereby reducing poverty and improving socio-economic conditions.

Statement of the Problem

The phenomenon of globalisation has significantly transformed the economic and social landscape of many developing countries through the expansion of trade, capital flows, technological advancements, and integration into the global market. However, its effects are not uniformly experienced, particularly in oil and resource-rich regions of some countries. For instance, despite being home to Nigeria's vast oil reserves, the Niger Delta region remains one of the poorest and most underdeveloped regions in the country. Reasoning along this line, Paul Collier (cited in Dickson & Asua, 2016, p. 6) asserts that "countries and areas that are richly blessed with an abundance of resources like oil and gas turn out to have poor economic growth than countries and regions with fewer natural resources". Similarly, Karl (2005) posits that in most rich countries, natural wealth does not translate into prosperity for the majority of inhabitants, but instead leads to environmental and economic devastation and hampers democratic reforms. This paradox of wealth and poverty raises critical questions about the broader implications of globalisation driven primarily through the operations of the MNCs for rural communities.

These corporations operate with minimal regard for environmental sustainability or social responsibility, focusing solely on maximizing profits. This has resulted in the displacement of rural communities, destruction of agricultural lands, and contamination of water sources, thereby diminishing the traditional livelihood sources for rural populations. As a result, rural poverty persists in the region due to various factors, including environmental degradation, limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education, high unemployment rates, and the erosion of traditional livelihoods (Watts, 2008). As Dickson *et al* (2023) put it, the Niger Delta region (the source of the country's oil wealth) has been racked by insecurity arising from a combination of local grievances over oil and gas pollution, environmental degradation, infrastructural deficits, poverty, unemployment, the sharing of oil revenues, and perceived marginalisation in national politics. Moreover, the region's exposure to the global economic system, particularly in the context of natural resource exploitation, has failed to translate into tangible improvements in the standard of living for rural communities. Government policies seem to have prioritised the interests of Multinational Corporations over the welfare of local populations (Suberu, 2017).

From the foregoing, the pertinent questions that the study seeks to answer include: i) How has globalisation, which is often associated with economic growth and prosperity, contributed to the persistence of rural poverty in the Niger Delta states? ii) How do rural communities in the Niger Delta perceive the impact of globalisation on their socio-economic well-being? iii) What role have government policies played in addressing or exacerbating rural poverty in the Niger Delta in the context of globalisation? iv) What strategies can be developed to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are more equitably distributed among rural communities in the Niger Delta?

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

2.1. Conceptual Framework

The relationship between globalisation and rural poverty in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, has been a subject of intense academic interest. Globalisation refers to the process of accelerating global economic integration, or the international integration of markets for capital, products, and services or what Ghosh (2009, p. 30) describes as "liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, and internationalisation of national economies and so on". Often defined as the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of nations (Sachs, 2005), globalisation has had profound economic, social, and political implications for Nigeria's rural communities. This definition discusses globalisation as a process that connects economies worldwide and examines how developing

nations, including Nigeria, are affected by both the positive and negative impacts of global interconnectedness. In the context of this study, globalisation is greatly influenced by the activities of multinational corporations (MNCs), which are involved in resource extraction (e.g., oil and gas), contribute to economic growth but can also exacerbate poverty in rural areas as their operations may result in environmental degradation, the displacement of local communities, and the unequal distribution of benefits, thus perpetuating or even worsening rural poverty.

The World Bank (2021) define rural poverty as the condition in which people living in rural areas experience significant deprivation in terms of income, access to basic services, and opportunities. This poverty is often characterized by limited access to education, healthcare, clean water, and decent housing. Rural populations are highly dependent on agriculture, which is vulnerable to environmental changes and global market fluctuations. From an economic viewpoint, rural poverty is driven by a lack of financial resources to meet basic needs, often compounded by poor infrastructure, low agricultural productivity, and limited access to modern technologies (Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2006). Many rural areas also lack adequate market access, which diminishes their ability to sell agricultural products at competitive prices, further deepening poverty (Haggblade, Hazell, & Reardon, 2007). Rural poverty also has social and political dimensions, as rural populations often suffer from political disenfranchisement, poor social services, and limited access to public decision-making processes. This lack of representation, combined with weak governance structures, exacerbates their vulnerability (FAO, 2020).

From the literature reviewed, it is interesting to note that globalisation has presented both opportunities and challenges to rural economies. While it has fostered greater trade and investment, especially in the oil and gas industries, it has also subjected rural farmers to pressures from global markets. Agricultural productivity has been hampered by competition from more affordable imports and limited access to modern farming technologies. The region is grappling with considerable environmental damage due to the global oil demand. Oil spills, gas flaring, and pollution have had a devastating impact on local farming and fishing, exacerbating poverty levels. Multinational companies are exploiting the region's natural resources, with minimal benefits for the local communities.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The study draws on a variant of Dependency Theory proposed by André Gunder Frank and World Systems Theory by Immanuel Wallerstein. Both theories offer critical insights into the dynamics of global economic integration and its impact on peripheral regions. Frank (1969) argues that the underdevelopment of certain regions (the "periphery") is a consequence of their economic dependence on wealthier, more industrialized nations (the "core"). According to Frank, global capitalism has created an economic system where the wealth and prosperity of a few powerful countries are sustained at the expense of less developed regions. The theory suggests that this unequal relationship is maintained through historical processes like colonization and the ongoing extraction of resources from the periphery, as a result, the contemporary global economic structures are designed to favour the core nations. This structure forces peripheral regions to rely heavily on the core for capital, technology, and expertise. This hampers the development of local industries, leading to an economy that remains vulnerable, underdeveloped, and unable to diversify. Frank's theory posits that while global capitalism can generate wealth for core nations, it ensures that peripheral regions, despite their resource richness, remain impoverished. The Niger Delta is a clear example of the exploitation inherent in global capitalism, where Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, etc. dominate the oil industry in the region, extracting vast amounts of wealth.

This implies that the local population in the Niger Delta has largely not benefitted from this wealth. Instead, the profits from oil extraction flow out of the region and the country, predominantly benefiting foreign corporations and the Nigerian government, rather than the rural communities from which the resources are extracted. Despite the Niger Delta's critical role in the national economy, the rural population remains trapped in poverty. The wealth generated from oil extraction has not been used to improve infrastructure, healthcare, or education in the region. Frank's theory also emphasizes how such economic structures destabilize local economies and cultures. In the region, the focus on oil extraction has resulted in the neglect of other industries, such as agriculture and fishing, which were once central to the region's economy. This phenomenon reflects Frank's concept of "distorted development," where the over-reliance on foreign multinationals exacerbates structural inequalities, urging a shift towards policies that empower local communities and reduce external dependence.

Similarly, Wallerstein (1974) explains how historical, economic, and political dynamics that shape the global capitalist system engendered unequal relationships between different regions of the world and highlights how these relationships perpetuate systemic inequalities. The World Systems Theory assumes that the world operates as a single, interconnected economic system, which is hierarchically structured into three categories: the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. The core are the most economically advanced countries, characterized by

high industrialization, technological progress, and significant political and economic power. Core countries dominate global markets, control capital flows, and shape international policies. The semi-periphery are countries that are undergoing some industrialization but remain dependent on core nations for capital, technology, and expertise. These nations often face political and economic instability. The periphery is the underdeveloped region, typically dependent on core countries for markets, resources, and labour. Peripheral regions experience widespread poverty, and lack of infrastructure, and are economically exploited by the core nations. The Niger Delta, rich in oil yet economically underdeveloped, is an example of a peripheral region within this global structure.

According to the theory, the historical roots of global inequality can be traced back to colonialism, which integrated peripheral regions like Nigeria into the world economy through the extraction of resources and exploitation of labour. This legacy continues to influence the region's economic dependence on global capital and Multinational Corporations. The Niger Delta's role in global oil production exemplifies the way peripheral regions are economically subordinated to the core. The theory also highlights the central role of capitalism in sustaining this inequality. In the region, oil extraction is controlled by foreign multinationals, which extract vast wealth from the region, yet the local population remains impoverished. This reflects Wallerstein's idea that capitalist economies perpetuate inequality by extracting surplus value from peripheral regions and funnelling it to the core. Although the Niger Delta generates billions of dollars in revenue from oil, the wealth does not remain in the local economy but is largely controlled by foreign corporations and the Nigerian political elite.

In Wallerstein's framework, globalisation is an extension of capitalist expansion. The increasing integration of economies worldwide has intensified the exploitation of the regions by core nations through multinational corporations, with the local populations in peripheral regions not reaping the benefits. In the case of Nigeria, oil wealth is extracted, but it largely bypasses local communities, leaving the rural population in poverty despite the region's vast natural resources. According to Wallerstein, social inequality persists both within and between nations, while the rural population continues to suffer from poverty, lack of basic infrastructure, and limited access to social services. Despite the Niger Delta's crucial contribution to Nigeria's oil wealth, the region remains impoverished. This uneven distribution of wealth mirrors the broader global pattern of core-periphery relations, where peripheral regions are economically dependent and politically marginalized. The theory's emphasis on the persistence of inequality, driven by historical colonial legacies and capitalist expansion, is crucial for understanding the enduring poverty in the Niger Delta and offers valuable insights for addressing the region's socio-economic challenges.

3. Methodology

The study is essentially descriptive/analytical. The approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between globalisation and socio-economic conditions in rural areas - the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, which is known for its vast oil reserves but is paradoxically marked by high levels of rural poverty. The Niger Delta consists of nine states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The region is critical to Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to the country's oil exports and industrial activities. Data were collected from Focus Group Discussions with groups of community members, representing different social and economic backgrounds. The discussions allow participants to share collective views on globalisation's effects on rural poverty. Other sources of information include published studies, books, journal articles, reports and documents from government agencies, local development organizations, and NGOs working in the region. The data analysis in this qualitative study follows thematic and narrative analysis approaches. These methods explore the nuanced experiences of rural populations and understand the broader socio-economic dynamics associated with globalisation and poverty.

4. Globalisation and Rural Poverty Nexus: Discussion and Findings

Rural poverty in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, remains a growing issue despite the area's abundant natural resources. According to Dickson (2019), with an estimated crude oil reserves of about 35 billion barrels and an estimated 4.5 trillion cubic metres of proven natural gas reserves (both onshore and offshore), Nigeria's Niger Delta undisputedly inhabits Africa's oil and gas reserves and it is Africa's largest producers and the 7th largest exporter of crude oil in the world – where oil accounts for about 95% of Nigeria's export earnings and 90% of Federal Government revenue. Table 1 shows the contributions of the Niger Delta to Nigeria's oil revenues for the period 2014–2024.

Table 4.1: The contributions of the Niger Delta to Nigeria's oil revenues for the period 2014–2024.

Year	Total Oil Revenue ((\$ in Bn)	Niger Delta Oil Production (% of Total)	Estimated Niger Delta Contribution (\$ in Bn)
2014	50	90	45
2015	40	90	36
2016	30	90	27
2017	35	90	31.5
2018	40	90	36
2019	45	90	40.5
2020	25	90	22.5
2021	30	90	27
2022	50	90	45
2023	60	90	54
2024	55	90	49.5

Source: Author's Compilation, 2025

From the Table, column 1 is the year for which the data is recorded, column 2 is the total revenue Nigeria generates from its oil exports in billion dollars, column 3 is the percentage of Nigeria's total oil production that comes from the Niger Delta region (estimated at 90%), while column 4 is the estimated contribution from the Niger Delta to Nigeria's total oil revenues based on the percentage of production. The region's oil production has remained at 90% over the past decades, including the past ten (10) years.

Despite the wealth generated from oil extraction, the region is characterised by some of the highest poverty rates in the country. This paradox of "resource wealth, but human poverty" according to Ajaero and Onokala (2013) has become a focal point in discussions surrounding globalisation and its effects on rural communities. As a global economic force, globalisation has impacted local economies, particularly through foreign investments, international trade, and the dominance of multinational corporations in industries such as oil and gas. While globalisation has driven economic growth in certain sectors, it has often worsened inequality, environmental destruction, and social unrest in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2010). The economic advantages of globalisation have mainly benefited multinational corporations and Nigeria's elite, leaving rural communities with limited access to sustainable development. This issue is exacerbated by poor infrastructure, oil spills causing environmental damage, and inadequate social services, all of which perpetuate rural poverty in the region (Watts, 2008).

Furthermore, regardless of Nigeria's economic potential, the rural populations in the Niger Delta have not reaped the rewards commensurate with the region's resources. Table 1 shows the rural poverty index in the Niger Delta States attributable to the forces of globalisation.

Table 4.2: Rural Poverty Index Among Niger Delta States (2014-2024) Attributable to Globalisation (in %)

Year	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Cross River	Delta	Edo	Imo	Rivers	Total Average Poverty Index
2014	48.5	50.2	52.1	47.3	49.0	46.4	45.8	48.2
2015	49.0	51.0	53.0	48.0	50.0	47.0	46.2	48.5
2016	51.2	52.5	54.0	49.2	51.4	48.1	47.3	49.2
2017	52.8	53.0	55.1	50.5	52.1	49.3	48.5	49.9
2018	54.0	54.2	56.0	51.3	53.0	50.1	49.0	50.4
2019	55.2	55.5	57.3	52.0	54.0	51.0	50.2	51.0
2020	57.0	57.0	58.0	53.5	55.0	52.3	51.3	52.3
2021	58.4	58.5	59.2	54.0	56.5	53.1	52.0	53.3
2022	59.1	59.0	60.0	55.0	57.0	54.0	53.0	54.0
2023	60.0	60.5	61.3	56.0	58.0	55.2	54.2	55.1
2024	62.1	61.2	63.0	57.5	59.0	56.0	55.0	56.4

Source: Author's Compilation, 2025

Notes: i) Percentage values represent the rural poverty index, estimated based on factors influenced by globalisation such as economic inequality, environmental degradation due to oil extraction, and lack of access to development opportunities; ii) Data trends indicate increasing poverty over time, partially due to globalisation's effects, such as environmental degradation from oil activities, poor wealth distribution, and limited government response to address these issues; and iii) The index reflects poverty resulting from both direct and indirect consequences of globalisation, including economic exclusion, loss of traditional livelihoods, and inadequate development programmes.

Consequently, globalisation has been a driving force for economic growth, particularly in sectors like oil and gas in the Niger Delta. However, the benefits of this growth have not been equitably distributed, leaving many rural communities in poverty. Multinational corporations, which dominate the oil industry in the region, often exploit local resources without investing sufficiently in the development of the communities that bear the environmental costs of extraction (Watts, 2008). The oil boom has led to significant wealth accumulation for a small elite, both locally and internationally, while the majority of rural dwellers continue to live in poverty. This economic disparity has been exacerbated by the neglect of local infrastructure, education, and healthcare, which are essential for long-term poverty reduction. Globalisation has also contributed to the environmental degradation of the Niger Delta. Oil extraction, an industry at the heart of the region's economic activities, has led to widespread pollution, including oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation. These environmental impacts have disrupted the livelihoods of rural communities, most of whom rely on agriculture, fishing, and subsistence farming for their survival (Ikporukpo, 2003). The loss of fertile land and polluted water sources has left these communities with limited economic opportunities, forcing many to live in chronic poverty despite the vast natural resources beneath their feet. Globalisation's emphasis on profit maximization, often at the expense of environmental sustainability, has compounded the challenges faced by rural populations in the Niger Delta.

Moreover, political and economic power in the Niger Delta is often concentrated in urban centres or among powerful elites who control the flow of oil revenues. Rural communities in the Niger Delta are largely excluded from political decision-making processes, which means they are unable to advocate for policies that would address their poverty or environmental degradation (Akinola, 2007). The oil wealth generated by globalisation has led to political corruption, with local governments often more focused on maintaining their positions of power rather than improving the living standards of rural populations (Adebayo, 2014). This exclusion from both the economic and political benefits of globalisation contributes to the persistence of poverty in the region. While globalisation has opened up markets for certain industries, such as oil, it has failed to provide sufficient support for the diversification of rural economies in the Niger Delta. The region's dependence on oil has stifled the development of other sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. As a result, many rural communities remain economically dependent on declining sectors, leaving them vulnerable to global fluctuations in oil prices and other external shocks (Etuonovbe & Orubu, 2015). This lack of economic diversification has limited the region's capacity to generate sustainable development, perpetuating rural poverty.

One of the key concerns for rural communities in the Niger Delta is the economic exclusion they experience in the context of globalisation. While multinational corporations dominate the oil industry, rural populations often find themselves excluded from the economic benefits generated by the oil wealth beneath their land. These communities perceive globalisation as a process that enriches a small elite—comprising political leaders,

multinational companies, and urban dwellers—while they are left with little to no benefit. For instance, many rural inhabitants who rely on agriculture, fishing, and small-scale trade are often displaced or their livelihoods undermined by the oil extraction process (Ikporukpo, 2003). Oil spills, gas flaring, and pollution of the water sources have led to the decline of fishing and farming as viable economic activities, which exacerbates their sense of exclusion and deprivation (Watts, 2008). Globalisation has led to increased environmental degradation in the Niger Delta due to the expansion of oil and gas activities. The environmental consequences of these activities such as land contamination, water pollution, and air pollution from gas flaring are among the primary concerns of rural communities. The destruction of fertile lands and the pollution of rivers and streams have disrupted traditional livelihoods that depend on farming and fishing. Rural residents perceive globalisation as contributing to the degradation of their environment and, consequently, the erosion of their socio-economic well-being. For example, the devastation of fisheries has directly affected local fishers who rely on the riverine ecosystem for their daily sustenance and income. As a result, rural inhabitants in the Niger Delta often view globalisation not as a source of prosperity, but as a force that deepens their poverty and undermines their traditional ways of life (Akinola, 2007).

In a related development, rural communities in the Niger Delta also perceive globalisation as an instrument of political disempowerment. Despite the vast oil wealth generated by their region, rural dwellers often feel excluded from the decision-making processes that shape their socio-economic future. Local communities have little influence over oil extraction activities, and their voices are often marginalized in political and economic discussions (Adebayo, 2014). As Etuonovbe and Orubu (2015) have noted, this sense of disempowerment is compounded by a lack of basic infrastructure, social services, and investment in human capital, which are crucial for improving the quality of life in rural areas. The perception that their socio-economic well-being is disregarded in favour of urban centres or multinational interests leads to disillusionment with the process of globalisation. In addition, rural communities also express concerns about the erosion of their culture and social structures as a result of globalisation. The influx of foreign goods, ideas, and values has contributed to the gradual breakdown of traditional customs and practices that have long been the foundation of rural social life. For example, younger generations may be more inclined to seek opportunities in urban areas or engage in globalized forms of labour, such as working for multinational corporations, rather than continuing traditional livelihoods such as farming or fishing (Watts, 2008).

Government policies have played a significant role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of rural communities in the region. These policies, in the context of globalisation, have had a mixed impact, both in terms of addressing and exacerbating rural poverty. While some policies have aimed at mitigating poverty and promoting development, others have either failed to address the underlying issues or have compounded the problems facing rural communities. For instance, one of the most significant of these policies is the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), established in 2000 to promote sustainable development and address the socio-economic challenges facing the region (Akinola, 2007). The NDDC was intended to provide infrastructural development, economic opportunities, and social services to rural communities, with a focus on education, health, and job creation. However, while these initiatives were designed to combat poverty, their implementation has often been hindered by corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of genuine commitment to the welfare of local communities.

Similarly, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), which was established earlier in 1992, aimed to address the environmental and social issues caused by oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta. This commission was supposed to provide funding for the development of basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, and hospitals. However, OMPADEC was marred by mismanagement, political interference, and lack of accountability, which resulted in minimal improvements in the lives of rural inhabitants. Despite the government's attempts to address the needs of the Niger Delta, these policies have not been entirely effective due to poor implementation and lack of transparency, which undermines the potential benefits they could have provided to rural communities. On the other hand, several government policies have inadvertently exacerbated rural poverty in the Niger Delta, especially in the context of globalisation and the rapid growth of the oil industry. One of the most notable policies that has contributed to the persistence of rural poverty is the oil wealth distribution system, which disproportionately benefits urban elites and multinational corporations while neglecting rural communities. This inequality has been compounded by the Nigerian government's failure to ensure that oil revenues are reinvested into the region to support sustainable development and poverty reduction (Adebayo, 2014).

Additionally, the Nigerian government has often failed to enforce environmental protection regulations, allowing multinational oil companies to engage in environmentally harmful practices such as gas flaring, oil spills, and deforestation. These practices have contributed to the degradation of land, water, and air quality in rural communities, directly affecting agricultural and fishing livelihoods (Ikporukpo, 2003). The lack of effective

environmental policies has left rural populations vulnerable to the negative impacts of oil exploitation, leading to the loss of income, displacement, and deepening poverty. Rural communities in the Niger Delta have often expressed frustration at the government's inability or unwillingness to hold oil companies accountable for their environmental violations (Akinola, 2007). The political exclusion of rural communities in the Niger Delta is another critical factor that exacerbates poverty in the region.

Globalisation has significantly influenced the policies of the Nigerian government, particularly about oil extraction and revenue generation. The desire to attract foreign investment and promote Nigeria's oil industry on the global stage has often led to policies that prioritize economic growth over the well-being of local communities. For instance, the Nigerian government has been heavily reliant on foreign oil companies, such as Shell and Chevron, to drive economic growth, often at the expense of environmental sustainability and the interests of rural communities. These policies have resulted in a situation where the benefits of globalisation—such as foreign investment and increased trade—have not been equitably distributed to rural areas (Okonta & Douglas, 2001). Instead, they have often contributed to the further marginalization of rural populations in the Niger Delta.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

While globalisation has contributed to economic growth in the Niger Delta through the oil industry, it has also contributed to the persistence of rural poverty. The unequal distribution of wealth, environmental degradation, political exclusion, and lack of economic diversification have all played a role in maintaining the cycle of poverty in the region. Similarly, rural communities in the Niger Delta perceive globalisation as having a largely negative impact on their socio-economic well-being. The perceived benefits of globalisation, such as economic development and modernization, are overshadowed by the environmental destruction, economic exclusion, political disempowerment, and cultural erosion that these communities experience. The negative consequences of globalisation are felt most acutely by those who rely on traditional livelihoods, such as fishing and agriculture, which are increasingly undermined by oil extraction activities and environmental degradation. These perceptions highlight the complex and often detrimental effects of globalisation on rural communities in the Niger Delta.

Although government policies such as the establishment of the OMPADEC and NNDC have played a crucial role in either addressing rural poverty or promoting development in the Niger Delta region, their failure to address issues of corruption, inefficiency, and political exclusion has limited their impact. Moreover, government policies, particularly to oil wealth distribution and environmental regulation, have often exacerbated rural poverty by favouring urban elites and multinational corporations, while neglecting the needs of rural communities. The effects of globalisation have further complicated these issues, as the Nigerian government has prioritized foreign investment and economic growth over the welfare of rural populations. Therefore, addressing these issues requires a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalisation, sustainable environmental practices, and inclusive political processes that prioritize the needs of rural communities. Specifically, to truly address rural poverty in the Niger Delta, a more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable approach to policy-making is necessary, one that takes into account the needs of local communities and ensures that the benefits of globalisation are equitably distributed.

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