

# **THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN NIGERIA: A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

By Oyeniyi O. Abe

## **ABSTRACT**

*Environmental justice continues to be a concept that seemingly eludes our human capability, yet the economic benefits derivable from the exploration and utilization of the environment is unquantifiable. This expression has found support in the fact that indigenes resident in resource extraction environments, suffer tremendously from exposure to environmental hazards caused by the exploration of natural resources in their environment. This work is an exposition of the age-long battle between the effects of transnational corporations' activities in developing countries such as Nigeria and the infringement of rights of the inhabitants of the extraction areas. The work analyses the principles of international environmental law and creates an exception under international human rights law which demands that companies can now be held culpable for acts committed in violation of norms of customary international law. The efficacy of international instruments in achieving these rights is highlighted, considering the fact that the Constitution has failed in realizing the importance of environmental justice in the development of the country. The work juxtaposes the rights which inure to individuals by virtue of being human with the demand for extraction of natural resources vis-à-vis the responsibility of transnational corporations in the exploitation of such resources. The work recommends that Nigeria must recognize the right to a clean and healthy environment as a justiciable right. Not only must there be the means to implement these rights, there must also be adequate and responsible enforcement mechanisms in place. Government must not only be serious but be manifestly seen to be so.*