

# PDF - INCIDENCE OF DEFORESTATION AMONG THE POPULACE AND ENVIRONMENT OF ODIGHI COMMUNITY - researchcub.info

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Today forest occupy approximately one –third of earth land area, account for two – third of the leaf area of plants on land and contain 70 percent of carbon present in living things .Thus, the food and agricultural organization (FAO) of the united nations estimates that in 2000, 38.7 million square kilometer of land on earth is forested. Forest is essential to all human life because people who live within the forest zone depend on them for survival in many ways. These include food, medicine, fuel wood, shelter, clothing, timber, construction materials e.t.c. The forest also clean the air, water, ameliorate the climate, check water and wind erosion (Azeke, 2003). Forest contains roughly 90 percent of the world’s terrestrial biodiversity.

However, forest is a major causality of civilization as human population have increased over the past several thousand years (with the world population today estimated to number 7.001 billion by united state census Bureau) bringing deforestation, pollution and industrial usages problems to this important biome (forest).The contributions of forests to human well-being can only be sustained if the forests are themselves sustained.(Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO 1994).But Nigeria has lost most of her natural forest cover which is a serious problem, with forest loss occurring at a rate of 3.5 percent per year, which translate to a loss of 350,000 to 400,000 hectares per year (Adedoyin 2001, Aruofor 2000).Since 1990, the country has lost over 6 million ha or 36 percent of its forests cover. Nigeria has been losing an average 11 percent of its primary forest each year. This figure gives Nigeria the highest deforestation rate of natural forest in the world.

Deforestation is the removal of forest stand where the land is put to a non – forests use (SAFnet Dictionary). Deforestation results from subsistence farming, commercial farming, road construction projects, logging, mining and dam construction. However, Hazel and Lutz (1998) attributed resources degradation in extensive rain fed farming (characteristic of tropical forest environment) areas to poverty and population growth. Scherr and Hazell (1994) also identified conversion of primary forest to agriculture, with attendant loss of biodiversity, climate change and expose of fragile soil as part of environmental problems emanating from rain fed farming (which cause deforestation).Deforestation could be caused by plantations and commodities and settlements.

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