

# Environmental Protection: Need to Comply with Environmental Impact Assessment Act to Curb Indiscriminate Telecommunication Mast Installation in Nigeria

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*Environmental protection is non-negotiable in any part of the world, governments and relevant stakeholders should ensure that the lives of citizens are not put at unnecessary risk because of a lack of adequate environmental protection, thus, people should live in a safe and healthy environment. The author focuses on the environmental protection of residents in Nigeria since it especially affects telecommunication installation in the country. The telecommunication industry in Nigeria is fast growing over time and it has been discovered that as the industry grows, the aspect of environmental protection as it affects Environmental Impact Assessment of such installation has been neglected, thus, affecting the public health of residents in Nigeria as will be revealed in this paper. The author brings out the need to properly regulate the telecommunication sector to guarantee environmental protection for Nigerian residents.*

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## 1. Introduction

Governments all over the world have made several efforts to take advantage of information communication technology ICT to improve every aspect of their operations and communication with citizens, Nigeria with no exception. Adoption of computer-based operations in education, government, and other industries has increased in most countries but the rate of successful operation varies from country to country. It presents general trends by examining interactions and mutual shaping processes between ICT evolution and several inter-related institutional changes including educational administration and learning, government operations, public service delivery, citizen participation, policy

and decision making, and governance reform. All these cannot be achieved without the installation of telecommunication mast across the country. However, the manner of installation of these telecommunication masts in Nigeria poses a lot of challenges and difficulties on the citizens and residents of Nigeria at large especially when an environmental impact assessment of the same is not carried out before installation.

One, therefore, wonders why people allow the installation of telecommunication mast within or around their residential premises considering the negative impacts it has on their health and environment at large. This paper, therefore, examined reasons why people permit the installation of telecommunication mast within and around their residential premises, the prevalence of health challenges, frequency of medical check-ups, and death suspected to have been caused by electro-radiation from the telecommunication mast. The paper also examined people's knowledge about possible environmental pollution and destruction of properties by telecommunication mast installation in residential premises.

## **2. Materials**

In his work, D.A Ariyoosu<sup>1</sup> states that the installation of telecommunication masts is very essential for the telecommunication industries. For telecommunication services to be effective and meet minimum global standards in each economy, telecommunications installations need to be technically specified and regulated as it is to guarantee efficient control and management of the environment where they are being installed. It is a well-known fact that the world has become a global room and not even a global village anymore and a necessary tool for this is the communication of which telecommunication is a key player; the development is now at crossroads with the impact of the telecommunications on the environment. It is now a matter of the right to quality of telecommunication services versus the right to a healthy environment.

He stated further that the telecommunication sector in Nigeria is the fastest growing sector of the economy in Africa from about 450,000 telephone lines in 2001 to over 78,000,000 in 2010.<sup>2</sup> He then concludes by saying that the growth has resulted in the establishment of more telecommunications infrastructure such as the installation of masts and base stations which has raised serious environmental concerns, especially in the area of Environmental

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1 Dauda Adeyemi Ariyoosu, „An Examination of Legal Regulation and Environmental Impacts of Telecommunication Installations in Nigeria” *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalisation*, Vol. 30 (2014).

2 He referred to the excellent work of Emeka Ezekiel, *NESREA VS NCC: Raging Battle over Regulation of Telecoms Masts*. <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/generaltopic/?=1#comment.55623>. [accessed: [20.10.2010].

Impact Assessment as NESREA has clamped down on telecommunication operators and has even decommissioned some telecommunication masts for failure to comply with Environmental Impact Assessment. The work considered the provisions of the Nigerian Communication Commission's regulations and guidelines for the installation of telecommunication masts and is silent on the provisions of the guidelines put in place by NESREA which is the principal body saddled with the responsibility of environmental protection in Nigeria. Furthermore, the work did not examine the health hazards associated with the installation of telecommunication masts and this research intends to fill these vacuums.

Whenever there is an environmental problem in any part of the world, it becomes a global issue and Convention will be held in that regard to tackle such a problem. Phillippe Sands<sup>3</sup> in his book spelt out various Protocols and Conventions that had been held in respect of environmental law worldwide. He talks about the Montreal Protocol and so on. All these Protocols and Conventions are held in different parts of the world to respond to any suspected environmental hazard. In her book, Blake Levitte<sup>4</sup> addressed the importance of cell towers as a powerful tool in the telecommunication industry as it is impossible to enjoy communication without their installation. She was able to address the issues of hazards associated with such installation. According to her, she stated that telecommunication masts do have negative effects on people's lives if they are erected close to their premises. She confirms the position that telecommunication masts have health effects on people who are living close to them.

Cell towers seem to be popping up everywhere like intergalactic mushrooms. We see them inappropriately placed in residential neighborhoods, on school grounds along the roads and highways, usually over the vehement objections of neighbours, parents, and environmentalists. No community is unaffected by cell towers today. It is also agreed that Electromagnetic Frequency generated from powerlines, substations, and mobile phone masts do have effects on human health and even gave tips for reducing one's exposure to EMFs from these sources.

B. Blake Levitt<sup>5</sup> gives an insight into the effect the electromagnetic Frequencies generated from telecommunication masts have on people's lives. Based on superficial media reports, many people think that the issue of safety

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3 Phillippe Sands, *Principles of International Environmental Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23.

4 Levitte Blake, *Cell Towers – Wireless Convenience? Or Environmental Hazard?* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), 32.

5 Levitte Blake, *Electromagnetic Fields: A Consumer's Guide to the Issues and How to Protect Ourselves* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2007), 89-103.

regarding exposures to electromagnetic fields has been settled in favour of EMFs and that they have nothing to worry about; but nothing could be farther than the truth. Researchers in Bioelectromagnetics and biophysics have continued to observe alarming studies across a range of frequency exposures that are common in our everyday lives, especially with our wireless products such as cell phones, cell towers, and wireless laptop computers. A guideline was also given on ways we can be protected.

### **3. Laws Relevant to Environmental Protection and Telecommunication Installation**

#### **3.1. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)<sup>6</sup> is the principal legislation in Nigeria that is supreme and has binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the country<sup>7</sup>. It further provides that if any law is inconsistent with any of its provisions, the Constitution shall prevail and such other laws shall to the extent of its inconsistency be null and void from these provisions, the Constitution is a very powerful instrument/tool in the administration of government in Nigeria as it is the supreme law of the land.

The Constitution recognizes the need for environmental protection as it provides that „the state shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria”. It is obvious from this provision that the government realizes that there is a need to protect the environment to make it worth living for the Nigerian people.

It is worthy of note that as beautiful as this provision is, it falls within the rights under Chapter II of the Constitution which are non-justiciable rights<sup>8</sup>. It will be recommended at the end of the research that this right should be one of the rights under Chapter IV of the Constitution to enable it to have the kind of weight it ought to have in the country. As far as this right is concerned, it is just a toothless bulldog. The Constitution as the principal legislation in the country should ensure that this right is justiciable. At the end of the work, the proper recommendation will be made in this regard.

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6 The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria LFN 2004 Cap C 23.

7 Section 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).

8 Section 6 (6) (c) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).

### 3.2. The National Environmental Standard and Regulations Enforcement Agency Act

The National Environmental Standard and Regulations Enforcement Agency Act<sup>9</sup> is a set of laws that regulates the National Environmental Standard and Regulations Enforcement Agency. The Agency was established to be responsible for the protection and development of the environment, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development of Nigerian natural resources in general and environmental technology, including coordination and liaison with relevant stakeholders within and outside Nigeria on matters of enforcement of environmental standards, regulations, rules, laws, policies, and guidelines.

This body can be referred to going by its objective stated above as the overall or the umbrella law in respect of environmental protection in Nigeria. The law did not state categorically the procedure for which a person affected by the installation of masts could follow in seeking redress in the court of law. It is observed also that the law did not establish a special court for victims of environmental oppression. There should be a separate court established for this purpose to enable those affected by environmental challenges to have access to court and speedy dispensation of justice as it is a matter that affects their wellbeing and could even lead to loss of lives if not speedily dealt with. Another major challenge is the issue of implementation. Most of the laws we have in Nigeria are suffering from lack, of implementation and the same goes with this law also.

### 3.3. Nigerian Communications Act<sup>10</sup>

This law was promulgated in the year 2013. The primary object of this Act is to create and provide a regulatory framework for the Nigerian communications industry and all matters related thereto and for that purpose and without detracting from the generality of the foregoing, specifically to:

- (a) promote the implementation of the national communications or, telecommunications policy as may from time to time be modified and amended;
- (b) establish a regulatory framework for the Nigerian communications industry and for this purpose to create an effective, impartial, and independent regulatory authority;
- (c) promote the provision of modern, universal, efficient, reliable, affordable, and easily accessible communications services and the widest range thereof throughout Nigeria;

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9 The National Environmental Standard And Regulations Enforcement Agency Act Cap 301 LFN 2010.

10 Nigerian Communications Act 2003.

- (d) encourage local and foreign investments in the Nigerian communications industry and the introduction of innovative services and practices in the industry by international best practices and trends;
- (e) ensure fair competition in all sectors of the Nigerian communications industry and also encourage the participation of Nigerians in the ownership, control, and management of communications companies and organisations;
- (f) encourage the development of a communications manufacturing and supply sector within the Nigerian economy and also encourage effective research and development efforts by all communications industry practitioners;
- (g) protect the rights and interests of service providers and consumers within Nigeria;
- (h) ensure that the needs of the disabled and elderly persons are taken into consideration in the provision of communications services; and
- (i) ensure efficient management including planning, coordination, allocation, assignment, registration, monitoring, and use of scarce national resources in the communications sub-sector, including but not limited to the frequency spectrum.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act<sup>11</sup>:** This was promulgated to assess the impact of any kind of project on the environment and it further makes it mandatory for an EIA report to be issued from the Federal Ministry of Environment. Environmental Impact Assessment is the process of identification of any contrary effect that may arise from sitting certain projects in a particular area as well as the mechanisms put in place to contain, curtail, mitigate such contrary effects and as well ensure that parties who are adversely affected get restitution.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Environmental Impact Assessment should ensure that before approval is granted in respect of any project, the appropriate government authorities have fully identified and considered the environmental effects of the proposed activities under their jurisdiction and control, and affected citizens had an opportunity to understand the proposed project and expressed their views to the decision-makers. As it is in Nigeria to telecommunication mast installation, it has been observed that the Environmental Impact Assessment of telecommunication mast installation is not

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11 Environmental Impact Assessment Cap E12, LFN 2004.

12 P. C. William, „The Environmental Impact Assessment Act and the process as an Environmental and Livelihood Advocacy Tool in Defending the Environment” *Environmental Defense Newsletter*, 31 (2009): 3.

carried out before approval is granted to telecommunication operators by the concerned agencies and this has indeed affected public health<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4. Theoretical perspective

To understand and appreciate the impact of telecommunication installation on the lives of people living near the telecommunication mast, it will be pertinent to examine certain underlying theories which include the theory of quality of life. The term quality of life is a complex construct to define and measure, thus, different approaches and measurements have been adopted by various scholars to access it. Arising from these various approaches and measurements, many scales of measurement have been developed, most of which tend to describe the quality of life of a selected group or population regarding medical conditions and or procedures<sup>14</sup>.

Quality of life defines how good an individual's life is perceived by himself/herself. Popoola and Kehinde<sup>15</sup> describe the quality of life as related to feeling good about one's life and one's self. She argued further that, happiness, respect, and joy are aspects of quality of life that could be easily recognized. However, a critical look at this reveals that one person's life differs from another and so the way one experiences quality of life may differ from the other. Consequently, quality of life's measurement and conceptualization recognize different aspects of living that may contribute to the quality, and in the context of this paper suggests that people living around the telecommunication mast may share the same experiences traceable to the telecommunication mast as people living far away from it.

Some scholars especially the Neo-Darwinism viewed the quality of life as a unidimensional construct when they described it as „survival” however, Popoola and Kehinde in 2019<sup>16</sup> argued that quality of life is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with a set of values unique to each organism, person, and the context in which it is examined. Consequently, the more developed the person, the more numerous the values or criteria for determining quality. This position, therefore, contradicts the medical model of quality of life which simply describes it as the absence of health-threatening hazards from the environment or as the absence of disease or medical problems.

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13 Adeola Olufunke Kehinde, *Legal Issues In Environmental Protection As It Affects Telecommunication Mast Installation In Nigeria* (Igbinedion University, 2017 (PhD thesis).

14 O.D Popoola and Adeola Olufunke Kehinde „Balancing the gains of Information Technology with Environmental Protection of residents in Nigeria” (2019): <http://www.cljlaw.com/bulletin/?CLJBulletin>.

15 Ibidem.

16 Ibidem.

Concerning this paper, cross-examination of the environment where telecommunication masts are usually installed revealed that apart from the physical feature of the place, residents of the place are commonly people of low or middle socio-economic class. The assertion of the medical model of quality of life may still hold for people living within and around telecommunication installations. This is predicated on the shared set of values and physical environment including the possible adverse consequences of the telecommunication mast installed around them. Thus, while telecommunication installation is expanding rapidly because of its social and economic benefits to the large society, government and necessary stakeholders in the telecommunication industry should pay attention to it and precautions should be taken to address the adverse consequences, especially regarding the quality of life of those living around such installed mast.

## 5. Effects of indiscriminate telecommunication mast installation in Nigeria<sup>17</sup>

(1) **Destruction of lives and properties:** The way and manner telecommunication masts are being installed in Nigeria nowadays are so alarming. Although there are laws put in place to regulate their installations, so many telecommunication industries have failed to comply with these established laws.

It must however be pointed out that there are discrepancies as regards these laws and the Agencies responsible for this have been into various forms of battles over the citing of these masts. NESREA in its 2011 Regulations stipulates that a mast should be erected at least 10 meters away from the fence of a dwelling/residential building, schools, etc. while NCC has only made its setback to be just 5 meters away. This has posed a lot of problems between the two bodies which have adverse effects on the environment at large.

It has been observed in this study that in Nigeria, Telecommunication industries have failed woefully in complying with these laws as Telecommunication masts are being installed/erected indiscriminately as rightly observed by the House of Representatives of Nigeria on the floor of the House during one of its sessions recently<sup>18</sup>.

There are cases where Telecommunication operators make use of substandard materials during the installation of their masts and whenever there is rainfall or heavy wind, such fall on the nearby premises, destroying buildings, and other properties while killing those who are unlucky to be close by at that moment and leaving numerous people injured. There have been a series of such occurrences in cities like Lagos where Telecommunication masts

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17 Kehinde, *Legal Issues In Environmental Protection As It Affects Telecommunication Mast Installation In Nigeria*.

18 Ibidem.



fall on people thereby causing their untimely death. Not only that, so many hard-earned properties have been lost to this menace. Houses close to these masts also experience daily cracks due to vibration from the generating plants that power the system.

(2) **Economic effects:** Another area of concern is the economic effect of citing telecommunication masts close to a residential property. It has been observed that the proximity of telecommunication masts to a residential property adversely affects the market value of such property to the detriment of the owner<sup>19</sup>. There are cases where people intend to buy properties and once they are taken to the site and notice a telecommunication mast close to the property, such property would not appeal to them again no matter how ridiculous the price may be. This is a major problem associated with telecommunication mast installation.

(3) **Pollution:** Pollution can be defined as the introduction of contaminants into the natural environment which eventually causes adverse change, instability, disorder, harm, or discomfort to the ecosystem<sup>20</sup>. Pollution occurs when pollutants contaminate the natural surroundings, which brings about changes that affect normal lifestyles adversely. Those things that cause pollution are referred to as pollutants and they are the key elements or components of pollution which are usually waste materials of various types. Telecommunication installations can be addressed as a major pollutant of this time as it forms part of any form of pollution one may think, and they are as follows:

- Air Pollution
- Electropollution
- Water Pollution
- Soil Pollution
- Noise Pollution

**Air pollution:** This results from the release of harmful substances into the earth's atmosphere. The major air pollutants are carbon monoxide, chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), nitrogen oxides, and sulfur oxides. Air pollution comes to play when the air contains gases, dust, fumes, or odor in harmful quantity; that is, an amount that is harmful to the health of and comfort of humans and animals or which could lead to damage to plants and materials. Concerning telecommunication masts installation in Nigeria, most of these masts are being powered by generating sets and this is a result of the poor electricity supply in the country. The smoke from these generating sets to contributes to the higher level of pollution being experienced in the

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19 Community Petitions NCC Over Telecom Mast." *Vanguard Newspaper*, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

20 Ibidem.

country. If one observes Nigeria closely, the erections of these telecommunication masts are so massive. Each telecommunication operator has their masts even so close to each other in some places; this condition is a very terrible one as it affects those who live close by greatly and even affects the whole area, community, town, state, and the entire country at large. This analysis shows how the installation of the telecommunication mast has contributed to the level of air pollution being experienced. As far as the effect of air pollution is concerned, respiratory diseases top the chart of health problems. The second one is heart disease; it is caused due to increased levels of carbon monoxide in the air. In addition to that, you can't avoid the risk of Asthma, Eye Irritation, and a range of bronchial diseases due to air pollution<sup>21</sup>.

**Electropollution:** the whole world is in the midst of a massive global experiment with a new energetic form of air pollution called electrosmog or electropollution. Electrosmog has been found capable of affecting the DNA of every living thing and it may even be having adverse effect/impact on the earth's atmosphere. Electropollution introduces biologically toxic electrical frequencies into our environment<sup>22</sup>. Radiations from these telecommunication masts constitutes electropollution as the distance to be maintained is not maintained as provided for in the laws.

**Water pollution:** This arises when wastes are released into the water and contaminate it. Thus, water pollution is the contamination of natural water bodies by chemical, physical, radioactive, or pathogenic microbial substances. Water is typically referred to as polluted when it is impaired by anthropogenic contaminants and either does not support human use, such as drinking water or undergoes a marked shift in its ability to support its constituent biotic communities such as fish<sup>23</sup>.

It is pertinent to state also that installation of telecommunication mast has also contributed to this form of pollution this is because most of the generating sets being used to power the masts do emit oils or diesel which eventually strays to the nearby water and thus pollute same. There are several instances where such has happened and those affected had to lock up their wells and find an alternative source of water. I believe actions in Nuisance can be taken against such telecommunication operators to caution them in the way their generating sets are being managed.

**Soil pollution:** This has been defined as the build-up in soils of persistent toxic compounds, chemicals, salts, radioactive materials, or disease-causing agents, which have adverse effects on plant growth and animal health<sup>24</sup>. Soil pollution is caused by the presence of manmade chemicals or

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21 Ibidem.

22 Blake, *Cell Towers- Wireless Convenience? Or Environmental Hazard?*, iv.

23 <http://www.eoearth.org>. [accessed: 3.06.2015].

24 Ibidem.

other alterations in the natural soil environment. It is typically caused by industrial activities, agricultural chemicals, or improper waste management. It is important to state also that the installation of telecommunication mast has also contributed to soil pollution; this is because most of the generating sets being used to power the masts do emit oils or diesel which eventually strays to the nearby farmland and thus pollute the land<sup>25</sup>.

**Noise pollution:** This occurs when the noise level crosses the normal decibel level. Sound is essential to our daily lives, but noise is not. Noise is generally referred to as an unwanted sound, or sound which produces unpleasantness and discomfort on the ears<sup>26</sup>. Sound becomes unwanted when it either interferes with normal activities such as sleeping and conversation or disrupts or diminishes the quality of life. It must be noted that not all noise amounts to pollution<sup>27</sup>. Concerning the telecommunication industries in Nigeria, because of epileptic power supply, telecommunication masts are powered by generating sets, thus, the noise from the generating plants used to power telecommunication masts is a big source of noise pollution. Anyone living close to where a telecommunication mast is erected is a subject of noise pollution and even those who are not so close<sup>28</sup>.

## 6. Why people allow telecommunication mast installation within their premises in Nigeria

It must be pointed out here that a lot of people in Nigeria have „gone through hell” in one way or the other because of the telecommunication mast that was erected very close to their premises. Some people ignorantly allowed these masts to be erected without being aware of the negative impact on their health and environment while some people were persuaded to believe that same would never have any adverse effect on them. The knowledge they say is power; the level of illiteracy in Nigeria is high, thus, people are not even aware that the telecommunication mast allowed within their premises is injurious to their health. They are not aware of the provision of the laws that specifies the distance telecommunication mast installed by telecommunication operators must be from the premises and thus, they are not aware of any compliance with such provisions. Furthermore, some people are aware of the hazards but they were enticed into allowing the same due to the huge amount

25 Kehinde, *Legal Issues In Environmental Protection As It Affects Telecommunication Mast Installation In Nigeria*.

26 <http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effect-of-soil-pollution.php>. [accessed: 8.06.2015].

27 <http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effect-of-soil-pollution.php>. [accessed: 8.06.2015].

28 Kehinde, *Legal Issues In Environmental Protection As It Affects Telecommunication Mast Installation In Nigeria*.

of money they were offered by telecommunication operators because the level of poverty in Nigeria is very high.

### **7. Need to regulate telecommunication industry in Nigeria and comply with Environmental Impact Assessment Act**

In Nigeria, telecommunication industries do make use of substandard materials while installing telecommunication masts and fail to comply with the specifications put in place by the regulatory body and they do away with it and that is why we have many cases of fallen masts. In other words, the telecommunication industries fail to comply with specifications put in place by National Environmental Standards and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) and install the masts in the way and manner they seem good. This shows a great lapse on the part of the regulatory bodies as it could be deemed that they are only concerned with the profit they will make rather than the safety of the environment at large, especially NCC.

Thus, there is a need to comply with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Act if sanity is to be maintained in the telecommunication sector as observed in Nigeria. As earlier mentioned, Environmental Impact Assessment Act makes provision for the need to examine the impact of a particular project on the environment if such is to be allowed to be established in a particular environment.

The objectives of an Environmental Impact Assessment as provided in the Act are to:

- (a) Establish, before a decision is taken by any person, authority, corporate body, or unincorporated body, including the government of the federation, state, or local government intending to undertake or authorise the undertaking of any activity, those matters that may likely or to a significant extent affect the environment or have an environmental effect on those activities and which shall first be taken into account<sup>29</sup>;
- (b) Promote the implementation of appropriate policy in all federal lands, states, and local government areas, consistent with all laws and decision-making processes through which the goal and objective in paragraph (a) of this section may be realised<sup>30</sup>;
- (c) Encourage the development of procedures for information exchange, notification, and consultation between organs and persons when proposed activities are likely to have significant environmental effects on

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29 Section 1 (a) Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12, LFN 2004.

30 Section 1 (b) Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12, LFN 2004.

boundary or trans-state or on the environment bothering towns and villages<sup>31</sup>.

The Act went further to provide to the effect that the public or private sector shall not undertake or embark on any project or authorize projects or activities without previous consideration at early stage of their environmental effects<sup>32</sup>. It went further to provide that where the location chosen or picked for a particular project or its nature will likely affect the environment adversely, its environmental impact assessment shall be undertaken by the provisions of the Act<sup>33</sup>. The Act also provides that in identifying the environmental impact assessment process under the Act, the relevant environmental issues shall be identified and studied before commencing or embarking on any project or activity convened by the provisions of this Act.

It has been noted by some authors that Environmental Impact assessment is *sin qua non* to citing a project that will last and that will hardly hurt the environment and citizens because that hazards associated with citing such projects would have been considered during the assessment. Thus, the law requires that environmental impact assessment be carried out whenever a project is to be embarked upon. In an article published in 2020, it was noted that environmental impact assessment is a requirement for attaining sustainable development<sup>34</sup>. It has also been described as a prior appraisal of a project which predicts, evaluates, and justifies the ecological, social, and other related effects of a proposed project on the environment and other living organisms.<sup>35</sup> The words he noted that environmental impact assessment is necessary to ensure that the proposed project is environmentally sound to ascertain that it will not harm the environment at large and that the environmental impact assessment process is guided by specific environmental values<sup>36</sup>. The need for environmental impact assessment cannot be overemphasized and the

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31 Section 1 (c) Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12, LFN 2004.

32 Section 2 (1) Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12, LFN 2004.

33 Section 2 (2) Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12, LFN 2004.

34 Abdullateef Abdullahi Ibrahim et al., „Environmental Impact Assessment in Nigeria- A Review” *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, No. 3(8) (2020).

35 Ibidem.

36 David Lawrence, *Environmental Impact Assessment, Practical solutions to recurrent problems* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 8

Nigerian government should ensure that there is no compromise whenever any project is to be cited anywhere across the country<sup>37</sup>.

It has also been noted that for Nigeria to enjoy sustainable development, how hazardous projects are cited in the country must be curtailed while environmental impact assessment must be duly carried out before any project is commenced<sup>38</sup>.

## 8. Recommendation and Conclusion

The author examined the importance of telecommunication installation in Nigeria and the need for telecommunication operators to install telecommunication masts to meet up with their mandate of providing uninterrupted power supply to the citizens. The author examined the issue of environmental protection of residents in Nigeria especially as it affects telecommunication installation in the country and the issue of not carrying out an environmental impact assessment before the license is issued to telecommunication operators by the concerned agencies. It was explained the effects of unguarded telecommunication mast installation in Nigeria, especially how telecommunication operators fail to comply with the existing guidelines as stipulated by the bodies responsible for its control. Given this government and relevant stakeholders in the telecommunication industry need to combat this life-threatening challenge to ensure the environmental safety of citizens and guarantee public health. Nigerian Government should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is done before any project is cited and whoever fails to comply with the law before citing a project should be adequately sanctioned by the provisions of the law.

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