
**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND UTILIZATION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

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Abstract

Over the years, economists, environmentalist and political leaders handled the well being of the people of their nations as the main reason for development and growth. There is no particular nation that has gained proper development without sustaining her environmental resources. Environmental resource development is an resource-centered strategy of development environmental education which helps broaden peoples horizon on ways of harness utilization, of resources in the environment as well as management and conservation of the environment towards future use. Several studies have been carried out to analyze the channels which environmental resources can affect development. Using endogenous growth/development model which sees environmental resource as a major factor in national development, this paper examined environmental education and utilization of environmental resources for developmental goals and also the constraints to environmental resource development goals.

From human history, people used resources from the environment comfortable. In addition to gathering wild plants and hunting wild animals for sustenance, they domesticated plants and animals to provide a more dependable supply of food and other resource. People also utilize all the resources from domesticated animals for transportation, farming and other tasks. For example, Wood provided a source of fuel for heating and cooking.

The Environment

The physical environment refers to man's immediate surroundings. It contains both natural things and man-made materials and resources.

Uzu (2010) opines that the environment is the resource base of man. This is so because all natural resources like water , minerals, soils, climate, vegetation, human resources human and the landscape make up the environment.

The environment can also be described as all external conditions that favour the existence of any organism, if the environment is conducive the more favourable it become for human and other living things. The environment if compulsory for the existence of man therefore it has to be protected from activities that are likely to degrade or make it unsuitable.

Emaviwe (2016) in her 12th inaugural lecture stated categorically that the last quarter of 20th century man has awoken to the realization of the importance of the environment to organic and inorganic matter, living and non-living things and particularly to his very survival. Indeed, the nexus between the environment and the survival of man as its prime user has become a matter of global concern. The environment is the complex of physical, chemical and biological factors and processes which sustain life. Man is part of the network of natural components which make up the planetary ecosystem. Science, religion and history agree that before the advent of man, the environment already existed, thus the environment preceded man, and by deduction also preceded human technological and scientific developmental activities. In fact, in the book of Genesis, God's omniscience and omnipotence was exemplified before and after creation. God put in place, a befitting, worthy and ideal environment for the happiness, improvement and enjoyment of man. The story of creation shows that everything God created was good. The stage was set for a healthy, luscious and invigorating environment to sustain all aspects of life on earth.

Environmental Education is a broad concept, focusing principally on the physical environment, environmental hazards, effects of environmental degradation on man, environmental quality, environmental abuse or misuse, environmental management, laws and policies, environmental protection strategies and environmental sanitation.

Environmental education also focus on the environment and how man can improve the environmental quality through proper and painstaking planning and management.

Environmental education focuses on environmental management through laws and policies to enhance environmental quality. Quality of life is enhanced in an environment that is devoid of abuse and degradation. This can be achieved through proper management of the environment and environmental sanitation exercise as currently being practiced in most parts of Nigeria.

Environmental education is concerned with developing a citizenry that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems. The objectives of environmental education anchor on the development of awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, evaluation ability and participation of the citizenry on environmental issues. These objectives according to Adara (1997) can only be realized by the government agencies and the promulgation of decrees or enactment of the enabling laws together with the inclusion of environmental studies in all Teacher's Preparation Programmes. He notes that the casual factors of inadequate environmental ethics, ignorance or inadequate environmental awareness, knowledge and skills can only be improved through education. In this sense, it is believed that if teachers in training are adequately oriented, they will develop an early awareness of environmental problems and will ultimately impact it to their students when they become practicing teachers.

Environmental education stands also as a response to the alarming threat to the environment to human survival. This threat to the environment calls for global attention. As the environmental resources are underutilized.

Project Gaia (2005) reports that about two third of the estimated 84 million rural dwellers, mostly women and children, live in a community experiencing severe energy crisis due to deforestation. Forest is a very major natural resource.

The developed countries of the world succeeded at different levels to provide sustainable and accessible sources through knowledge, skills and constructions, bringing about increased level of human comfort. Resource utilization embodies the idea of balancing human comfort with reasonable resource consumption level, by researching and implementing effective and sustainable resource harvesting and utilization measure.

Nigeria with her vast resources and population depend on crude oil (petroleum) – a fossil fuel – for foreign exchange and domestic use, neglecting the fact that crude oil is not an inexhaustible resource. But as I speak, Nigerians fear that the country may wake up one day and discover that the oil has disappeared due to over dependence on oil.

Utilization is concerned with maximum and beneficial use of resources in the environment. It has to do with satisfaction derive from well planned resource development. Utilization of resources whether environmental or human help in achieving developmental goals through generation of revenue.

Nigeria and African at large is blessed with abundant resources, this include both human and environmental resources.

Statement of Problem

The planning of many countries economic development is mostly centered on the accumulation of capital for speedy growth and developed without paying attention to the important role of environmental resources and how they affect development goals.

Theoretical Framework

Using endogenous growth/development model, a resources was seen as a major factor in national development. Another theory that this paper rests on is the Chinese five elements theory. This theory explains the five energy fields which are wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

However, the elements are not static, they are constantly moving and changing, once these five elements are identified, they set about categorizing all phenomena movement and within the five categories.

Everything from a river to land, to sound, to organs in our bodies can be described in terms of the five elements. How things are characterized depends on their individual qualities, the earth is associated with growth and development, keeping all five elements in balance and harmony both in use in our surrounding.

These five elements act upon two other; either giving birth to it or controlling it. For example, wood gives birth to fire and fire controls or suppresses earth. Similarly, fire gives birth to earth and controls metal. All five elements are constantly interacting with each other element – none stands alone.

Giving example from nature, a plant (wood) grows when it is given water; when burnt; wood gives birth to fire and the burnt ashes subsequently return to the earth (the five elements interacts).

The five elements theory in this study of environmental education and utilization of environment depends on the available resources for national development helps to explain how a resource can be utilized to give birth to another when properly utilized to achieve development goals. These five key resources are solar (sun), water, wind, plant and animal. From these, all other forms of energy source like geothermal, nuclear, etc are gotten. This paper rest on the strength of these theories to focus on resource development and utilization towards national development.

Environmental Resources Classified

According to the Dictionary of Environmental Science, resource is any source of economic wealth, for example, land, mineral, fossil fuels, labour etc. One important factor which determines the utility of a resources is the technological attainment of a society for example. In most cases, what is regarded as a resource in a particular society or time may be thought as useless elsewhere or at a different time. The issue of crude oil deposits which became valuable resources when suitable technology existed to produce the automobile engine oil/fuel provides one good example.

Environmental resources are very vital to the development of society. Their importance is underscored by the basic resource theory which stipulates that economic growth depends on the presence, quality and magnitude of basic natural resources within particular areas or economic regions. The theory argues that the development of these resources attracts investment capital to these areas and increases income and employment, (Essang in Olisa and Obiukwu, 1992). Some states in Nigeria – Edo, Delta and Rivers are presently experiencing rapid economic growth based on the production of highly valuable resource, petroleum.

Resources have been classified under two categories -- renewable and non-renewable. Jones (1990) defined renewable resources as any commodity which theoretically cannot be totally consumed due to its ability to reproduce (biologically) or regenerate (physically) in number. He argues that renewable resources originate either as inexhaustible sources (such as solar energy), as a major physical cycle (such as the hydrological cycle) or as a biological system (such as all plants and animals which replicate themselves). Conversely, non-renewable resources are those naturally occurring finite resources which in terms of the human time scale, cannot be renewed once they have been consumed.

Most non-renewable resources can only be renewed over a geological time span. All fossil fuels and the mineral resources fall into this category.

These three basic necessities are very essential to human survival. There are air, food and water. They have to be there, otherwise life will cease to exist. To avoid the depletion of air, water, and food, there must be some mechanisms for their renewal. Thus, air, water, and food are said to be renewable resources. That is, natural cycle replace them when they are consumed. Apart from air, water and food, there are other important renewable resources such as agricultural, forest and grassland resources wildlife, fish farming, land and some energy resources.

Some Factors that Negate Utilization of Resource

A number of factors negate the utilization of environmental resources towards achieving developmental goals. Among the factors are:

1. Tradition and Custom these have effect on extraction of resources as some tradition forbids people and industries from tapping some of the vital resources which was meant to generate revenue to meet up with developmental goals. If a society values conservative and supportive innovation and change, development will come speedily
2. Periodicity is an important factor that hinders development goals especially when processes are not in place at the right time. To achieve development goals through environmental education and utilization of resources there must be good timing and readiness to face the challenges of growth and development.

3. Crisis: Development crisis are expected everywhere especially when new situation are about to come up, but this crisis have to be subdued by prime mover of development.

Strategy for Resource Utilization

1. Attitude reorientation of the people: There must be a change in the attitude of the people for development to work out. Negative values, behaviours, habit and vices should be avoided therefore the reorientation effort help to imbibe in them new ways of life that are geared towards development.
2. By developing awareness, knowledge, skills on environmental resource issue: It can be realized when government promulgate decrees and enactment of enabling laws together with inclusion of environmental education in all teachers preparatory programme.
3. If we learn to avoid wastage of resources.
4. When experts are trained to enable them to handle the harnessing, processing, conservation and utilization of valuable resources.
5. By considering diverse resources, not focusing on only one.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion environmental education is a genuine effort gear towards utilization of environmental resources and development goals. There is no particular nation that has gained proper development without sustaining her environmental resources. Environmental resources development is a resource-centered strategy of development environmental education which will help broaden peoples horizon on ways of harnessing and utilization, of resources in the environment as well as management and conserving the environment toward future use. Several studies have been carried out to analysis the channels which environmental resources can affect development. Using endogenous growth/development model which sees environmental resource as a major factor in national development, this paper examined environmental education and utilization of environmental resources for developmental goals and also the constraints to environment resources development goals.

It is recommended that attention and effort should be geared toward solving problems of harnessing and utilization of environmental resources.

It depends on what we do from now on. If we take immediate action in line with some of the issues and negative factors identified then we may be able to refocus on our environmental resources for high level development.

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