

**ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS EDUCATION A PANACEA FOR
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA****DANG, Emmanuel Istifanus**

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Abstract

Environmental Education can be termed as an organized effort aimed at teaching the way the environment functions naturally. Environmental Education emphasizes the way humans manage their behaviour in the ecosystem so as to maintain it. Environmental Education cut across many integrated fields like Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Ecology, Earth science, Atmospheric Science, Mathematics, Geography and Economics. Saving the environment through education is a practical way of improving the standard of living of the people, thereby enhancing sustainable economic development. The environment is the platform upon which almost all economic activities are carried out, yet many, especially in this part of the world, have little or no knowledge of the environment and how it can be effectively managed for optimum productivity. People are susceptible to dangerously abusing the environment, making it a curse instead of a blessing. The environment is key to our existence hence the need for us to protect it. This paper established the importance of Environmental Economics Education in terms of ensuring that the environment is developed, protected and made conducive for

human existence. This will go a long way in improving the standard of living of the people that is when the environment is properly managed and its resources properly and effectively utilized. The study established that safe environmental activities can lead to the overall development of the economy. The study identified among others the benefits of Environmental Economics Education as being a hands-on, interactive learning that can spark our thinking and unlock our creativity; it will also establish the relationship between issues that cut across social, ecological, economic, cultural, and political sphere of our lives; Environmental Economics Education also encourages research into varying sides of issues so as to have a glimpse of the full picture.

Keywords: Environmental Economics Education, Sustainable, Economic Development, Productivity.

Introduction

The environment provides natural surroundings where organisms including human beings exist. There are two segments of the environment, which comprises of the non-biotic segment of the environment which comprises of the atmosphere, the water, the minerals, the energy etc and the biotic segment of the environment which are the organisms (simple to complex) (Chandana, 2012). In a nutshell, environment comprises of all elements which surround us.

Ecologically, the environment comprises of a group of all factors upon which a living subject interacts within its surroundings, that encompasses it. In the context of this study, we are looking at the living environment in term of the human environment, Jackson (2013) posited that protecting the environment depends on answers provided on relevant knowledge, creative techniques and friendly activities. He further buttressed that with the increased elaborateness of environmental matters, hence Nigeria's' educational focus should be centred on bringing to fore environmental responsibility and accountability by all Nigerians through the educational levels in the country, from primary, secondary to the tertiary level.

Environmental education in a single term is the process of creating consciousness on the need for ecological balance that the natural environment need not be degraded because of development. This explains the fact that environmental education believes in the possibility of sustainable development but warns against widespread development that pays no attention to ecological balance. International Council for Science and Environment (ICSE) (2000) emphasized that the aim of environmental education is to create a society where people will understand their community responsibilities and are willing to carry out useful roles as producers and people who are aware of protecting the environment from degrading.

The field of Environmental Economics Education (EEE), in the traditional field of Economics, centres on modern environmental matters, it also involves making efforts to balance people's needs for products and services bearing in mind need for

protecting the environment its natural resources (Pavel, 2010). The focal point of Environmental Economics Education is the creation of awareness among individuals on the value of the environment to human existence and how certain negative human practices enhances the degradation of the environment and the need to take safety measures in dealing with the environment. This is to validate the saying that “where the value of something is not known, its abuse is inevitable”. Many people are engaged in some harmful activities to the environment ignorantly and when the consequences of such activities begin to manifest, lives and properties valued in millions of naira are lost. Some of these activities are traditional practices that we inherited from our forefathers, while some are activities that man feels are aimed at making life more comfortable, but the consequences are always very fatal.

There are many ways in which the environment impact on man. Examples are bizarre interactions between people; environment affects peoples’ behavior and urge to act; the environment influences our mood; food production depends on the viability of the environment; healthy environment promotes good health. When the environment is frustrated due to human and non-human activities or non-activities, the effects bounce back drastically on man, which results to hunger poor food production, floods which affects lives and properties, global warming or ozone layer depletion, pollution both water and air, drought and desertification, erosion among others.

Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

There are many environmental challenges that Nigeria, as well as other nations of the world, are battling with. They are:

Flood: this is an environmental challenge currently facing the globe. It is on this that Nkwunonwo, Whitworth, Baily and Ikpen (2015) asserted that the rate of flood incidences in recent times is unprecedented. This was a follow up to the research by Peduzzi, Dao, Herold, and Mouton (2009) noted that about 70 million individuals worldwide are endangered to flood annually, with over 800 million people residing in flood exposed areas. Factors of concern responsible for this disaster within the global sphere were pointed out by Raaijmakers, Krywkow, and Van Der Veen (2008) which include climate change which results into consistent and stringent rainfall, rise in sea level, expeditious population increase and expansion, increase in advancement around alluvial plains, poor awareness of risk associated to flood and unworkable measures put in place towards tackling flood. Guha-Sapir, Hoyois, and Below (2013) reported that the economic consequences of flooding reported between the 1990s and early 2000s amount to billions of US dollars.

The consequences of flooding are too numerous to mention but in summary, people are affected mostly through lack of shelter, the profusion of diseases, physical harm, mortality and psychological conditions mostly depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress. Obeta (2014) noted that flooding and means of addressing its challenges are serious issues in Nigeria. Nigerian Emergency Management Agency

(NEMA) (2013) reported that Nigeria has its own share of devastating flood experience which has caused immeasurable economic losses amounting to millions of people. Obeta(2014), Adeloye, and Rustum(2011) and Cline (2007) were able to link these hazards to poor development and climate change that results to increase in the frequency of rainfall.

Ogunbodede and Sunmola (2014), Ologunorisa, and Adeyemo (2005) and Fadairo, and Ganiyu (2010) were able to highlight some of the consequences of flooding in Nigeria which include rise in deaths, physical harm to victims, wide profusion of infectious and water-borne diseases, social disorders, loss of homes, exposure to food insecurity, exposure to economic losses as a result of destruction of agricultural lands, social and urban infrastructures and disruption of economic activities mostly in oil exploration areas in the south-south, increase in traffic in many cities in Nigeria, destruction of telecommunication and power supply installations. According to Nkwunonwo, Whitworth, Baily and Ikpen (2015) noted that the worst flooding experienced in Nigeria in more than 40 years of its existence was in 2012, this occurred as a result of high and intensive rainfall that lasted for many days. NEMA (2013) reported that 32 states were affected by 24 considered as badly affected. It was reported that the floods occurred between July and October 2012 and it affected over 7 million people with over 2 million people termed as internally displaced people (IDPs). More than 5000 people had physical injuries with over 5900 houses destroyed. A look at this statistic shows that this incidence has dragged the economy backwards, due to the economic loses.

Drought and Desertification: Drought can be described as a long period when there is little or no rain, or when there is a period of abnormally low rainfall, that results in a shortage of water. Desertification, on the other hand, refers to a relatively dry area of land which becomes increasingly arid and losing its water bodies as well as vegetation and wildlife. Olagunju (2015) noted that drought and desertification environmental challenges that affect countries of the world both developed and developing countries especially in most regions of the world, where the required causal relationship between climatic change and anthropogenic inputs exist. According to Abahussain, Abdu, Al-Zubari, El-Deen, and Abdul-Raheem (2002), drought and desertification carry with it, decrease in the natural potency of agricultural land specifically, the washing away of surface and groundwater and do have negative consequences on the living conditions of the people, and the general economic development. Olagunju (2015) further explained that drought and desertification bring together climatic elements through human activities that change productive land, to an ecological impoverish area that is generally referred to as a desert. Desert degrades a formally fertile land when there is a long term change in the soil, climate and biota.

Among the sub-Saharan countries, Nigeria is among those countries that are facing the challenge of desert encroachment, especially in the north. According to

Olagunju (2015), desertification phenomenon was first reported in northern Nigeria in the 1920s, but it was in the famine of 1971 to 1973 that the impact became more glaring. According to Jaiyeoba, (2002) desertification has affected fifteen northernmost states of the country. While Olagunju (2015) added that almost one out of five of Nigeria's total land area that is becoming desert.

In the same vein, Tercula (2015) reported that almost 350,000 hectares of Nigeria land are lost to desertification every year with the attendant impacts of this negative development, manifested on the environment and the general living standard of the people. We also need to note that these are states that produce a lot of agricultural products, with the desert encroachment, agricultural productivity, especially in affected states, is in danger. Most of the activities that are facilitating this negative trend are sustainable negative human activities. These activities include cutting down of trees for industrial purpose and fuelwood, development of towns, burning of the bush, agricultural activities on limited lands and other consistent agricultural activities.

The impact is severe because the agricultural economy of Nigeria depends largely on rain; this is adversely affected by inconsistent climate. As reported by Okoli and Ifeakor, (2014), on 30 October 1994 Nigeria signed a convention of the United Nation to fight Desertification, yet desert encroachment is assuming an alarming proportion and it is a serious challenge to the nation's economy. The impact of desertification was highlighted by Olagunju (2015) to include loss of biological diversity, contributing to disease burden, altering the geochemical composition of the soil, contributing to the shortage of water, reducing agricultural yield leading to food shortage, reducing economic development among other impacts.

Soil erosion: this is another environmental challenge facing Nigeria. Soil erosion refers to the gradual removal of soil, which include nutrients for plants, from the land surface by agents of denudation occurring in many parts of Nigeria as a result of different conditions being geographical, climatic or soil. This removal as stated above is a gradual activity that is facilitated by either flow of water or blowing away of topmost soil by wind. The incidence of soil erosion in Nigeria has been a subject of debate since the early 2000s. Yet up till now, many communities are experiencing high-level erosion, leading to loss of land and properties. Many economic activities are hampered by erosion. These include damaged roads and bridges, meant to link communities washed away cutting off communities. Attempts have been made to see to the end of this menace by a government official, legislators and even spirited individuals yet it appears that despite these well-meaning attempts, our management strategy to curb erosion challenge in the country still remains faulty.

Factors that cause soil erosion in Nigeria are divided into two segments: physical causes which comprise of "geologic or "natural" factors and anthropogenic causes which comprises of human or "accelerated" factors. Studies revealed that human factors of soil erosion are often hyperbolized while the effects of the physical

factors are usually neglected (Ofomata, 2015). The physical factors are also subdivided into four, which include climate, relief or slope, surface materials and vegetation. The human segment of soil erosion is mostly related to agricultural activities. Agricultural activities in the humid tropics generally involve the cutting down of vegetation as a way of clearing the land for cultivation or by the use of forest fires. These practices facilitate soil erosion, and their devastating effect becomes unbearable. When erosion eats deeper, to fix it, cost a lot of money, considering this, for a lasting solution people always looks up to the government to fix it.

Pollution: This is another environmental problem in Nigeria. Pollution can either be water or air pollution. The role of water to humans and other organisms for survival cannot be overemphasized. Garba, Gimba, Hamza, and Galadima, (2008) and Garba, Hamza, and Galadima, (2010), noted that numerous scientific and economic facts have it that, shortage of water or its pollution causes a serious reduction in productivity and deaths of living organisms. Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), (2007) reported that in African countries, particularly Nigeria, human development has been greatly been interfered with by water-related diseases. Galadima, Garba, Leke, Almustapha, and Adam, (2011), reported that the number of human factors fasts severing the common sources of water available to local communities in Nigeria is increasing, of which pollution still remains the most visible problem, they further explained that when unwanted materials and other natural systems find their way into main sources of water in homes and industries is what is termed as water pollution. Water is said to be unsafe for consumption when pollutants (pathogens, silt, suspended solid particles like soils, sewage materials, disposed foods, cosmetics, automobiles emissions, construction debris etc) find their way into water sources.

Umeh, Amali, and Umeh, (2004) in their study discovered that over 45% of the people in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue state are affected by urinary schistosomiasis, this is as a result of water pollution. Previous investigations revealed that over 15% of Nigeria's population is affected, with some communities having about 50% incidence, (Galadima, Garba, Leke, Almustapha, and Adam, 2011). This is an issue of serious concern; hence the need for all and sundry to be proactive in ensuring that this situation is nipped in the bud.

Increase of factories that ooze out smoke that pollutes the air in Nigeria is increasing. In an ideal society, factories are not supposed to be sited in residential areas, especially areas where a lot of people interact freely without any form of protection. Activities of the factories end up endangering the lives of the people. One of the causes of this is urbanization. Factories that were before now sited outside the town today are in the middle of the town because of expansion. Regulations put in place to control such expansion are not strengthened, and people are just doing what they like. At the end of the day when people are exposed to this danger they end up contracting strange diseases that consume the family income, and in many cases, the person affected ends

up dying putting the family into serious hardship. Furthermore, we can clearly see that Nigeria is not insulated from environmental problems and looking at the role the environment plays in our existence there is an urgent need to stand up to protect the environment by making it convenient for all humans to live in.

How Environmental Challenges Affect Economic Activities

In view of the identified environmental challenges above, their effect on Economic activities cannot be ignored since it is one of the most sensitive aspects of man's existence. Flooding has proven over time to have an unprecedented rate of occurrence in most parts of the globe including Nigeria, its economic effect both in estimated cash and economic activities are alarming. Ogundode and Sunmola (2014), highlighted some impacts of flood in Nigeria which include death, physical harm, wide profusion infection and water-borne diseases, social disorders, lack of shelter, shortage of food, economic losses through destruction of agricultural lands, social developments and economic distortion especially in oil exploration area in the south, mass movement of people in many cities in Nigeria, destruction of telecommunication and power supply installation. This is supported by Guha-Sapir, Hoyols and Below (2013), who posited that the economic losses as a result of flooding reported over 20 years ago amount to Billions of US dollars. Also, Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) in its database submitted that over 32% of total natural disasters in the US in 2012 were water prone with floods making up for the most part, with more than 9 million people affected and resulting to dollar worth of damages.

Guha-Sapir, Hoyols and Below (2013), further submitted that in 2012 over US\$4.7 billion worth of damage was recorded in Europe, with about US\$0.83 recorded for Africa while US\$19.3 billion was recorded for Asia. These amounts when channelled towards infrastructure and developmental projects would better the lives of citizens. However, they are rather lost through flooding notwithstanding the amount and efforts required to rebuild the affected areas. This can result to slowing down the rate of economic development in any country or region of the world. With particular reference to Nigeria, damages caused by flooding, as reported by Action Aid (2006), flood drifted thousands of people by displacing them from their homes and destruction of tangible properties.

National Emergency Management Agency (2013) has reported that devastating flood incidence has been experienced in Nigeria in 2012 this affected millions of people, leading to great economic losses amounting to billions of US dollars. This results in having more displaced persons including the productive portion of the population who should have been engaged in productive activities in a stable environment contributing to the GDP of the. Hence the rate of the economic prosperity of the country is slowed down leading to stunted economic growth and development. The worst incidence of flood in Nigeria was the one recorded in Kaduna in 2006 where thousands of lives were claimed and an accompanying economic loss valued in millions

of US dollars (Adebayo and Oruonye, 2013; Obeta, 2009 and Adelekan, 2010). These have a negative multiplier effect on economic activities since it results in the disruption of the natural environment where economic activities can take place.

Drought and Desertification have serious adverse consequences on the economic activities of the affected region. As discussed above, drought and desertification majorly affect farmlands thereby reducing its products due to poor soil nutrients. In Nigeria, drought and desertification affect majorly the northern part of the country but particularly as posited by Jaiyeoba (2002) that fifteen northernmost states of the country are currently being affected by desertification, with over one out of five of Nigeria's total land area is becoming desert. Most of Nigeria's agricultural produce like soya beans, beans, melon, tomato, cattle, pepper, onion, ram, among others are produced in these states and distributed to various parts of the country in commercial quantities.

However, knowing the implication of drought and desertification on farmlands the quantities of these agricultural products fall thereby causing scarcity in the market. In economic analysis particularly considering the role of market forces in determining prices of goods and services, the more the availability of a commodity in the market, the lower its price while scarcity can result in price hike of goods and services. Toye (2002) submitted that no fewer than 50,000 agriculturalist in about 100 towns in Yobe State is in danger of leaving farming due to decreased agricultural yield as a result of sand dunes which is taking over a large chunk of their agricultural lands. Whenever there is low productivity, it results in shortfalls of government revenue generation through taxes thereby weakening its capacity to provide the necessary national socio-economic programs that would set the country on the part of economic growth and development.

The persistence of these environmental challenges can further lead to overdependence on foreign imported goods which would perpetually plunge Nigeria into more foreign debts and reducing its foreign exchange earnings. The government also channels a huge amount of resources which could have been used in developing other sectors of the economy into checking and ameliorating these environmental challenges. According to Vanguard Newspaper of May 3, 2010, Nigeria loses an estimated over \$5 billion annually due to drought and desert encroachment in the northern region of Nigeria. This is a huge loss to the country despite its dire need of resources to be channelled towards growth and development.

Soil erosion affects economic activities in various ways especially agricultural produce from farmlands. Soil erosion in most cases negatively affects farmlands, crops, properties including houses. This makes particularly the poor vulnerable to harsh socio-economic activities where life becomes extremely difficult for them. It is important to know that soil is a very important part of a natural resource on earth which determines and serves as a means of livelihood and human sustainability through the various uses it

can be subjected to. However, disruption of the soil occurs especially in the form of soil erosion, this affects the productivity level of the soil. Okin, (2002) asserted that more than 65% of soil on the earth surface is said to have shown degradation tendencies as a result of soil erosion, desertification and salinity. To further buttress this assertion, Ananda and Herath, (2003) stated that currently, soil erosion is a serious environmental degradation challenge in most developing countries. This is due to its potential of affecting every aspect of man's livelihood especially the economic activities of man. Soil erosion is noted as the main cause of environmental degradation leading to poverty in many regions of the world (Beijing Time, May 28, 2002). It continued that the 95million and 500million tons of lands are seriously affected by soil erosion in North America as well as Africa.

In Nigeria, according to World Bank (1990), soil degradation affects almost 50 million people leading to great loss in Gross National Product which is put at US\$3000 million yearly as compared to other environmental challenges. The report further stated that there has been a sum productivity loss over the past 45 years as a result of the degradation of soil. They further noted that yield decrease as a result of soil erosion was up to 40%, with an average of over 6% for Sub Saharan Africa. With the various submissions above, it is glaring that soil is the most important source of man's socio-economic livelihood thus; it must not be toyed with but should be adequately protected.

Pollution as an environmental challenge also affects man's ability to engage in economic activities in a conducive environment. This could be in the form of aquatic pollution, atmospheric pollution, and land area pollution. Some areas may experience one, two or all the three forms of pollution depending on the environmental peculiarities. However, in any case, the major similarity with all the three forms of environmental pollution is that they affect economic activities in an environment.

Man's quest for development through industrialization and urbanization has resulted in activities which are also harmful to him as well as the environment which is supposed to be man's source of sustenance if harnessed properly. This is against the backdrop that man needs a healthy environment to engage in various economic activities that would be beneficial to him. Releases from these industries contaminate the atmosphere with carbon monoxide whose excess can cause a man to suffocate, hence hindering his involvement in economic activities. This assertion is supported by Obajimi (1998), who observed that many rural areas that were in the past enjoyed dry and fresh air are presently experiencing air pollution challenge as a due to industrialization process and increase in human activities. As a result of water pollution, disease such as typhoid and malaria becomes rampant, particularly in Nigeria.

Jimoh, Sofola, Petu, and Okorosobo (2007) noted the burden caused by malaria as enormous and devastating capable to destroy the economic development of the country. This is not far from the enormous resources needed to check the spread of malaria. To eradicate this health challenge, it requires a lot of commitment of resources

to that effect. Furthermore, the resources that could have been used to improve the well being of local inhabitants by international organizations and nongovernmental organization are being diverted to finance water-borne diseases eradication programs. This translates to inadequate resources available for various economic activities which would boost the economy's GDP towards rapid economic growth and development. Land when polluted also affects economic activities in any economy particularly hindering economic growth and development.

Protecting the Environment Through Environmental-Economic Education

Environmental Economics as sub-unit of Economics deals with efficient and effective allocation of environmental or natural resources. The mutual connectivity of economics' and the environment can be determined by the direct value provided by the environment through the raw materials it makes available for economic activities. That is why, the way in which the economy is run has an impact on the environment, which, in the long run, affects both the welfare of the people and the performance of the economy.

Environmental Economics Education (EEE) study issues that cut across pollution control the maintenance and valuation of natural resources, proper management and recycling of waste, and the efficient creation of standard emission, as well as the analysis of cost and benefit of human action and inaction on the environment, aimed at developing a conducive environment for human existence (Lipton, Wellman, Isobel, & Rodney, 1995). Benefits of Environmental Economics Education are as follows:

- it is hands-on interactive learning, that will ignite our thinking and unlock our creativity;
- it establishes the mutual relationship between economic, social, cultural, ecological, and political issues;
- It helps in creating awareness to the populace on the need to analyze any action to be carried out whether is safe for the environment or not (Smith, 2019).

With all these environmental challenges identified, and seeing how they affect activities generally, and economic activities, in particular, it is necessary to look for a soft landing, since as far as man is alive he is expected to engage in one activity or the other. The crux of this paper is to find a way of enlightening individuals and communities to make use of best practices that can reduce the danger the environment to man and to also avoid the losses that are incurred as a result of these environmental disasters, especially those activities that are within man's ability to control.

There is a common saying that "When the value of a thing is not known, its abuse is inevitable". It is imperative to note that the need for individuals to have an understanding that will enable them to appreciate the role of the environment in their survival cannot be overemphasized. In Nigerian rural communities, many locals are

used to certain activities that are detrimental to the protection of the environment. Some of these activities are cultural practices that people are used to them. As we have seen above, these activities have played a serious and dominant role in exposing the environment to so many environmental disasters experienced in recent times. UNESCO, (2009) in its assessment of the regional synthesis reports on the regional Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategies and concluded that the interconnectedness between Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) depends on “the historic role EE has played in a country (prominent or marginal) and the way EE itself is interpreted (broad or narrow). It is based on this premise that this paper put forward an approach to the implementation of Environmental-Economic Education (EEE) as highlighted below.

The following are the approaches to the implementation of EEE these are:

- A. **School-Based Approach:** this approach is through the various educational levels in the system which cut across the elementary/Basic education, Post Basic/Secondary education and the Tertiary educational levels.
 - i. **Basic Education level approach:** character moulding begins at the tender age, in order to avoid the challenge of re-activeness to negative attitude to environmental protection, it is better to be proactive by making adequate adjustment at this level of education so that as the children grow they already have an idea of what it means to save the environment since it is the base upon which human survival is defined. Environmental Economics Education at this level should be focused on developing environmentally friendly habits in the pupils. Pupils should be able to understand that dangerous activities like throwing waste in drainages are an environmental error, cutting down of trees without adequately replacing them with new once is a dangerous activity to the environment, defecating indiscriminately is an unacceptable behaviour with environmental consequences.
 - ii. **Post Basic/Senior Secondary School Level Approach:** this is the educational level where career development begins. Approach at this level should be more intense since after this level the student is expected to be more mature than at the basic educational level. Secondary school subjects like Economics and Geography curriculum should be broadened to include the aspects of environmental education. By these students can see clearly the need to correct dangerous activities that have become a norm in our homes, to more environmentally friendly activities.
 - iii. **Tertiary Educational Level Approach:** the approach at this level should be Interdisciplinary. Environmental Economics Education is connected to many disciplines and focuses on solving problems. It is delivered at the boundaries between the physical sciences, education and the social sciences. This approach is based on the fundamental discipline

differences which can provide different and interesting insights and approaches to solve core environmental problems such as ecological and habitat management. Using this approach will enhance the understanding and reduction of critical environmental challenges, such as water, air, and soil pollution that impact on human and environmental health negatively.

- B. Community Approach: this is an approach where awareness is created to communities through mass action mobilization of people on the need to keep the environment safe. Though because of poverty and ineffectiveness of systems in the society, people are pushed to resort to the available alternative that is their own wisdom is the best but detrimental to the environment. There is a need for the creation of this awareness on the impact the society has suffered or is exposed to as a result of these activities.

This approach supports the organization of workshops' and seminars for people at the grass-root in churches, mosques and city centres. Production of jingles that depicts the need to act right plays a significant role in this regard. Production and erection of billboards in strategic locations in the cities and villages are also an essential approach towards creating awareness and education on how well to protect the environment. Printing of posters and handbills in various indigenous languages is another important approach. Organization of clubs whose mandate is encouraging environmental friendly activities is another approach that will bring together individuals that will be willing to fight for the protection of the environment.

Nexus Between Environmental Economics Education and Sustainable Development

Abdul (2013) noted the link between environment and sustainable development. When studied from a broader perspective, the environment affects the general development of humans without discrimination. World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) define sustainable development as the form of development that meets the current need, without affecting the need of the future generations. Mohammed (2014) states that the struggle for sustainable development has metamorphosed as a key concern of developing regions of the world, to ensure that this efforts relating to the ecosystem's capacity to withstand and respond to increasing demand for resources from the environment, human propelled activities needs to be addressed squarely, because these are issues of concern for a sustainable management of environmental resources. Several other related studies discovered the existence of a normally distributed relation between the levels of environmental quality

in terms of concentration of the emission of sulphur dioxide, and per capita income (Azomahou, Laisney, and Nguyen, 2006; Stern, 2004; Yi, Tun & Juzhong 2008).

From the foregoing, we can clearly see that the quality of the environment contributes immensely in enhancing the human standard of living. The implication of exerting a negative influence on the environment especially as a result of avoidable human activity is a disservice to nature, whose response to such activities is communicated through natural disasters that in the long-run has a negative effect on humans.

As correctly pointed out by Abdul (2013), if countries will join efforts to balance improvement of life and at the same time protecting the environment for the future generations, a new awareness will materialize. He went further to state the relationship between the social and economic welfare of people and their environment. This is because a change in the socio-economic fields does have a corresponding impact on the earth's environment and vice versa, this can be positive or negative, it can also be immediate or eventual.

Most of these harmful human activities that are impairing the environment are the consequences of an individual's lack of economic knowledge of the environment. This ignorance leads to negative activities meted on the environment. Environmental Economics Education is aimed at creating the needed awareness to the populace. Collaborating with this submission, Mohammed (2014) emphasized the need for all hands to be on deck for the achievement of the goal of having a quality and friendly environment. This implies engaging developmental activities that can meet present needs, without undermining future generations needs..

Conclusion

Considering the amount of money that is spent every year by the government and other foreign donors in combating environmental challenges, and supporting victims of environmental disaster, it becomes necessary that individuals in the society begin to think twice regarding some of the activities we do that exposes us to these disasters. It is quite painful when people are suffering from something that ordinarily would have been avoided if the right attitude was in place. The economy is experiencing a lot of economic challenges that the amount spent on these activities would have gone a long way in ensuring that some of these challenges are reduced minimally, but such monies are spent on environmental disasters that ordinarily would have been avoided if individuals had exhibited the right attitude.\

Suggestions

From the study, the researchers made the following suggestions:

1. People should understand that the task of protecting the environment is a collective responsibility, hence the need for all and sundry to imbibe the right

attitude towards protecting the environment, through our daily actions and inaction.

2. Environmental Economics Education should be taken very seriously as a way out in ensuring that we mitigate the effect of current environmental disasters we are experiencing in the nation today.
3. There should be deliberate efforts put in place by all and sundry towards creating the necessary awareness on the need for humans to ensure healthy environmental practices that would help, maximize the benefits accruing from the environment rather than inviting harmful consequences. This would ensure that any behaviour that is dangerous to the environment, as well as humans, are completely avoided leading to a healthy environment as well as a healthy and productive population.
4. Legislation should be enacted and implemented towards checking human behaviour in relation to how these behaviours affect the environment. Any behavior that would lead to the disruption of the natural environment should be clearly spelt out and the consequences that follow. These legislations should clearly state all activities such as stocking gutters with dirt, bush burning, indiscriminate felling down of trees and unhealthy farming practices that would make the environment prone to any form of a disaster such as a flood, desertification, soil erosion and pollution
5. School curriculum across all disciplines and educational levels, should be developed to ensure that individuals in the society possess basic knowledge of the environment, particularly how they can explore the environment to their benefit without necessarily disrupting its nature. This is to ensure that humans understand the value of every natural resource around them. When they understand the value, ignorance is driven out and every activity that would be alien to the environment would be met with stiff resistance.
6. Since part of the problems causing environmental challenges is due to humans' quest for development through industrialization, it would be wise for every society to adopt or develop environment-friendly technologies based on its peculiarities. This would discourage borrowing technologies that can be harmful to the environment

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