Community environmental consciousness in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of community consciousness of environmental problems in Nigeria is at best incoherent, and incomplete. Two views, however, seem to predominate. First, there are those who speculatively believe that the vast majority of people are unaware of the magnitude of environmental problems confronting them and that only the better – educated and high income groups seem to be able to make a connection between the health of their family and environment in which they live. Second, there are those who through direct research surveys have come to some form of conclusion that ordinary people possess a substantial knowledge of the complexities of environmental problems besetting them and indeed make efforts to articulate and adjust favorably to them. In order to investigate this problem, one hundred copies of questionnaires were distributed to selected Government ministries, departments and agencies(MDAs), non-governmental organizations(NGOs) and community-based associations(CBAs) in two geo-political zones of south-south and south- east Nigeria. Respondents unanimously selected four of the six policy alternatives suggested for a solution to the environmental problems. These included: institutional policy and legal framework, capacity building and institutional strengthening, private initiatives and collaboration with international organizations. Whatever conclusion may be reached from these opposing views, one thing is certain and that is consciousness of environmental issues, especially pollution, is low and least understood in Nigeria.

Key words: Environmental consciousness, Problems, Participation, Public Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Environmental consciousness is one thing; a practice is another. Man is not a product of consciousness but rather obtains consciousness through practice. A number of contemporary observes have pointed to the power of community in people's lives. Among them is M. Scott Peck, author of the ROAD LESS TRAVELS, and Sam Keen, best-selling author of the DEVELOPMENT ANF SPIRTITUALLY. Both authors find that in the modern world, it is through community with other people that individuals find their highest personal growth. A true community is not the same as "group" which can be any collection of people, no matter how loose.

Communities with higher rates of citizen participation were more likely to have citizen control of their governing boards, more diverse board membership, greater adoption of the "empowerment" approach, and as a result higher levels of success in attracting the resources needed to implement development programs, use natural resources more sustainably and dispose and keep the wastes generated to a minimum. This has become an increasing priority over the last few decades. The unbridled industrial growth of the last century has created impacts, mostly negative, on the environment that is only now being realized. The increasing focus on the environment globally, through multilateral norms, agreements and conventions, has shifted the responsibility from the governments (particularly the national governments) as a 'provider' to a more consensus-based approach, where all stakeholders have a role to play, bringing to the table different resources during the different processes of environmental management. Of particular significance has been the role of the ubiquitous 'community' as the primary stakeholder in these processes. Participation of the community and its partnership with other stakeholders has become an important component of all environmental programs and projects, both in terms of subsidiary of decision-making processes, and of creating an enabling environment for the community to have a say over aspects that affect their lives.

Consciousness itself is awareness. Public awareness can thus act as an effective counterforce to elite or industrialists' interests who tend to dominate public policy in market societies and serve as a vehicle for articulate community education and consciousness of rights.

It is this intersection between community consciousness and environmental management, the focus of this paper that provides significant

opportunities and challenges for sustainable development at the local level. At the local level, how does community consciousness, which is their participation, help environmental management goals? And vice-versa, how do environmental management principles facilitate greater community participation?

THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

Nigeria is faced with many environmental problems. Nigeria has a total land area of 923,773 square kilometers and is richly endowed with abundant and diverse resources, both renewable and non-renewable. The country is blessed with mineral, physical, biological energy resources, therefore the mineral wealth of the country is vast and should enable it to establish a firm industrial base for rapid economic development from the mangrove and rainforests of the south, through the various savannahs, semi-arid ecosystems of the north, the nation is richly endowed with fishery resources, wildlife, timber, medicinal plants, mineral resources, water ornamental and food crops.

In general, the environment provides all life support systems in the air, on water and on land as well as the materials for fulfilling all developmental aspirations. However, the Nigerian environment today presents a grim of litany of woes across the length and breadth of the country. [1][2]

Environmental problems manifest in the following forms;

- Sheet Erosion
- Gully Erosion
- Coastal/Marine Erosion and Land subsidence
- Flooding occurs through Nigeria in 3 main forms, coastal, river and urban
- Drought/Desertification remains very serious ecological and environmental problems affecting about 15 states in the most Northern-part of the country
- Oil pollution from spills, oil well-blow-outs, oil ballast discharge and improper disposal of drilling mud from petroleum prospecting companies
- Urban decay and squatter settlements
- Industrial pollution and waste
- Municipal solid waste heaps dot several parts of Nigeria's major cities, blocking motorways and making passages along alleys and pavements difficult.
- Sewerage problems
- Various non-biodegradable household and petrochemicals products-polybags, plastic containers, Styrofoam packages and tires which liter Nigerian cities

- There are almost about 80 liters of crankcase oil disposed from mechanic workshop discharge carelessly intro drains
- Concrete jungles align many cities. Plants are no longer used for home landscaping. High rise buildings and other commercial centers have displaced areas earlier earmarked as less densely residential areas in IKOYI-VICTORIA ISLAND and similar neighborhoods in other cities.
- Loss of fauna and flora. Nigeria wildlife is rapidly disappearing due to various environmental mal-practices. Animals that have disappeared from Nigerian forests in recent times include the cheetah, the pygmy-hippopotamus, the giraffe, the black rhinoceros and the giant eland. An approximately 484 plants species including many medicinal fruit trees, are also threatened with extinction because of habitat destruction and deforestation.
- Climate change/Ozone layer depletion. Nigeria also has had to contend with global warning which is due to the increasing concentration of atmospheric warming or greenhouse gases (GHG), especially CO_2 where concentrations have increased from 280 parts per million (ppm) in the 1980s to about 380 parts per million (ppm) now.
- Water pollution: The water environment, usually the first to be seriously affected by pollution has received a lot of attention especially because water is a vital resource satisfying at least, six different categories of uses or need.

Viz:

- Public water supply
- Fresh water fisheries
- Agricultural water supply
- Marine Fisheries
- Industrial water supply
- Recreation and aesthetic enjoyment.
- Water Hyacinth: These are wild seaweeds, which grow in floating masses on seas, rivers lakes, canals, etc. Poses a threat serious threat to the nation's waterways as they have the effect of impeding navigation.
- On the whole, Nigeria has witnessed tremendous environmental degradation in the last existence and finding solution to it still remains a challenge not only to the government and regulatory bodies but to all Nigerians, male and female, young and old [3]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Using a stratified and systematic sampling procedure, one hundred respondents were selected from government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Community based associations

(CBAs) in two geo-political zones of south-south and south-east Nigeria. The MDAs included those concerned with environment and community development. A total of 10 MDAs, 5 NGOs and 5 CBAs were chosen in the two geo-political zones. Five respondents were interviewed in each of these establishments. The Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) include:

- Ministry of Environment, Akwa Ibom State
- Ministry of Environment, Cross River State
- Ministry of Environment, Rivers State
- Ministry of Environment, Bayelsa State
- Ministry of Environment, Edo State
- Ministry of Environment, Delta State
- Ministry of Environment, Imo State
- Ministry of Environment, Abia State
- Ministry of Environment, Ebonyi State
- Ministry of Environment, Enugu State

The Non-Governmental Organizations include:
- Friends of the Needy Organization, Okobo
- Operation Save the Needy Foundation, Ikot Ekpene
- Pillars of Community Development, Eket
- Human Progeny Limited, Uyo
- Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS)

The Community Based Associations included:
- Akwa Mfon Sustainable Community
- Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio
- Itam Timber Market Association
- Market women Association, Uyo

Opinions were from these agencies and associations on six policy issues on the environment. The responses were ranked as presented in table 1. The first four were chosen for further analysis.

Table 1: Respondents Views on Solutions to Environmental Problems

Policy Alternatives	Total Score	Ranking
Institutional Policy and Legal Framework	45	1st
Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening	40	2nd
Private Initiatives	35	3rd
Collaboration with International Organizations	34	4th
Information Policies	28	5th
Governmental Structure	20	6th

Source: Authors Field Survey (September, 2014)

RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

The Governments efforts/responses to these problems may be classified into four (4) main categories, namely:
(I) Institutional policy and legal framework
(ii) Capacity building and institutional strengthening
(iii) Private initiatives
(iv) Collaboration with International Organizations.

Over the past 15 years, there has been a welcome determination of several other local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) active in environmental and ecological conservation to promote awareness in environmental issues. They include the Nigeria Conservation Fund (NCF), which is affiliated to World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Friend of the Environment (FOE). These organs have been able to attract considerable inflow of counterpart funds to support environmental projects in Nigeria.

In recognition of the co-operation with other nations of the world for the effective protection of the global environmental, the government has over the year's ensured collaboration with the international community in the area of the environment.

As Onibokun and Faniran [4] pointed out, governance has two faces. First the *Leadership*, which has responsibilities derived from the principles of effective governmental organization; second, the *governed*, that is the citizens, who are responsible for making relevant inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of their society. A successful policy on effective environmental control therefore hinges on exigencies of policies, and demands effective articulation of public opinion and support. Furthermore, the degree of support of the public for environmental programs depends also on the extent of individual, and group awareness of environmental problems. Such an awareness may be through everyday life experiences and learning; socialization; environmental campaigns; the presence of informed and dedicated people in programs of action.

Recently, the Nigerian government adopted the community driven investments. The emphasis being placed on this administration in bottom up approaches to resolving environmental issues takes full cognizance of empowering rural communities to tackle the problems of environmental degradation. In this wise, 2 important programs focused on community-driven investments in environmental management are being pursued.

The first is the **Micro-watershed and Environmental Programmed (MEMP)** being planned and to be rooted in directly financing rural community dwellers in carrying out environmental amelioration activities through existing local mechanism.

Another important community driven initiative being pursued by the Ministry is the **"Integrated Management of Natural Resources** in the Trans-Boundary Areas of Nigeria and Nigeria-Republic". The preparation of this UNEP/GEF IBRD/UNCCD assisted project has commenced. This project aims at enhancing biodiversity and protection of shared natural resources in the cross-border area, with a high level of community participation in

programmer activities. A team of consultants were commissioned to study and compile a report on the state of the environment of the trans-boundary area for the implementation of the project

The Nigerian government through the Ministry of Environment and other relevant agencies has undertaken programs to enlighten educate and raise awareness of the Nigeria population through media (both print and electronic campaigns on environmental issues. Identification, education and training of officials that would form the cores of the Environment engaged in social activities aimed at raising the level of public environmental consciousness. For instance, the Ministry has consistently joined the world in the commemoration of World Environment Day (WED) during which the attention of the public, children, rural communities and youths are drawn to the importance of a sage an healthy environment to live in therefore, a holistic perspective must be adopted in addressing environmental issues in order to be able to plan effectively for monitoring and management.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUNESS

On the whole, man surely needs to be educated and well equipped if a healthy environment has to be restored and sustained. This brings us to the outlined objectives of community environmental conscious as follows:

- To help individual and social groups acquire an awareness of a sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.
- To help individual and social groups acquire basic understanding of the total environment, its associated problems and humanity's virtually responsible presence and role in it;
- To help individuals and the grassroots acquire social values, strong feelings of concern of the environment and the motivation for actively participating in its protection and improvement;
- To aid the community members evaluate environmental measure and education 'programs in terms of ecological, political, economic, social aesthetics and education factors;; and
- To help these community members develop a sense of responsibility and most importantly invigorate their conscience whenever they attempt to pollute their environment.
- Third, is the issue of enforcing the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures whenever a proponent wants to carry out a project that will affect the environment either adversely or beneficially. This is in accordance to Part II, section 16 (a) (b) and (c) of the EIA decree No. 86 of 1992.

- Fourth, is lack of decentralization of power. It is common knowledge that the Federal Government owns the authority to enforce any law. The impact of this is not felt by the people at the community level. Power has to be decentralized. Making sure that people are mandated at all levels of government to oversee the affairs of the people up to the grassroots.
- Lack of adequate and competent number of staff to disseminate this environmental information. There is need for a complete revolutionizing of the range of skill of persons working in areas of environmental information. Unless such persons are variously available, even if an environmental information system has been successfully, set up, it will be very difficult to effect easy access. We can only hope that this situation will not be allowed to remain for long.
- Furthermore, the dearth of "mouth-watering" rewards to environmental friendly projects to proponents. Sometimes people are not motivated to do any good thing unless a "mouth-watering" offer is being dangled in front of them.
- *Insufficient Funding*

It is widely believed that any sustainable project moves on the wheel of money. Money is the vehicle on which proper enforcement of environmental consciousness projects must move. Enough finances have to be allocated to the information dissemination sector. Also the staff involved in this environmental protection campaign must be adequately paid.

Most times, revenue accrued from taxing individuals, public and corporate bodies should be used to maintain or expand capacity for continued supply of information.

The role of community environment conciousness

Community environmental consciousness is a synthesis of peoples' conception; interpretation is that such conceptions of environmental issues. A major assumption is that such conceptions and the like would affect their behavior, and the quality of responses and reactions to environmental problems. It's utility to shaping desirable environmental management practices and effecting control can therefore not be overemphasized.

There are many ways/several areas in which environmental consciousness may be considered important to an effective environmental policy and pollution control.

TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Much of traditional management practices such as economic evaluation, ecological ideas, and government regulations often arouse conflict and

sometimes apathy or alienation. Community awareness and debate of issues can promote a forum for dialogue and conflict resolution in environmental management and such a system is also democratic and participatory as it involved the people.

STIMULATE PUBLIC DEBATES
A second major role of environmental awareness is that it can create public pressure by stimulating public debates especially over controversial issues, and promote public commitment and responsibility to policies.

ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE
Thirdly, although much of the information of environmental pollution is technically and sometimes inaccessible to the lay public, a vigorous programmer of public awareness can nevertheless enlighten the people on the dangers of some environmental problems and promote appropriate attitude to them and thereby minimize the impact on environment health. [5]
Not many Nigerians, for example, know the effects of solid, liquid and gaseous wastes (indiscriminately discharged into our environments by industries) on farmlands and rivers, or the toxic effects of pesticides and lead, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide emitted from car exhausts on people. Greater awareness of such issues can raise public/community consciousness and redirect efforts in tackling them. Indeed, the cyclic or circulatory nature of waters from industries in land, to the sea and to household levels, etc.; call for concerted community awareness beyond mere technical expositions.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLLUTION CHANGES
Fourthly and very importantly, community consciousness of pollution can, in long run be administratively expedient, effective and cost-saving as expected attitude change following awareness of risks or hazards of pollution would not only minimize extent of pollution but reduce the need for control. Natural resources such as farm land would also in the process be preserved.

ACTS AS EFFECTIVE COUNTERFORCE TO ELITE INTEREST
Fifthly, community consciousness can promote environmental pressure group and spirited public participation in pollution control. Such a force would give birth to a more healthy debate on the environment; indeed, many radical legislative regulations over numerous sources of pollution in the United States of America and Europe owe much to the flourishing of public environmental movements following heightened public awareness spurred by scholars and students. Public awareness

can thus act as an effective counterforce to elite or industrialist interests which tend to dominate public policy in many societies and serve as beehives for articulate community education and consciousness or rights. Existing edicts and laws on pollution control can be dormant without public awareness but with is such regulations are brought in to force, modified and used for control. Public/community awareness would also enable policy – makers to identify problem of most concern to people and their actual significance from a scientific point of view.

• Finally, and even more significantly, environmental awareness is most important in a developing economy like Nigeria where outdated environmental laws, low resources allocation for control laws, technology and poor monitoring facilities together with scarcity of skilled personnel enable industries and multinational companies to dump wastes haphazardly whilst making huge profits.

• The benefit of a community that is aware of such issues would be to invigorate debates, and promote greater environment of regulation while helping to evolve new rules in tackling the numerous environmental population problem.

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR LOW PUBLIC/COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS
• There is a dearth of environmental pressure groups in the country and only in riverine areas adversely affected by oil pollution; resources depletion and the consequent onset of hunger have community groups arisen to oppose excesses of private, public and multinational exploitation. Environmental pressure groups are also lacking to foster and argue a strong public case for greater environmental pollution control. Added to this is the clear alienation of people through some public policies, as reflected in the poor rate of public response to environmental issues in Benin City. A case study carried out by B. A. Chokor [6] showed that rather than be stimulated to have a say in environmental matters, people are conscious of being found wanting, fined or persecuted. Under the circumstances, the environment and public feeling over its control becomes an issue of terror and fight for the people.

• A second major factor accounting for low community environmental consciousness stems from our national educational system which places a low priority on environmental education. [7] Beyond scholars of the physical/biological sciences in higher institutions, few people have access to technical information on environmental problems. Poor environmental monitoring and research even hamper the quality of information available to these select few. Given these constraints to public environmental awareness, the media represent

alternative and important avenues for the public to gain some access to environmental information.

• Third, is the issue of enforcing the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures whenever a proponent wants to carry out a project that will affect the environment either adversely or beneficially. This is in accordance to Part II, section 16 (a) (b) and (c) of the EIA degree No. 86 of 1992.

• Fourth, is lack of decentralization of power. It is common knowledge that the Federal Government owns the authority to enforce any law. The impact of this is not felt by the people at the community level. Power has to be decentralized. Making sure that people are mandated at all levels of government to oversee the affairs of the people up to the grass root.

• Lack of adequate and competent number of staff to disseminate this environmental information. There is need for a complete revolutionizing of the range of skill of persons working in areas of environmental information. Unless such persons are variously available, even if an environmental information system has been successfully set up, it will be very difficult to effect easy access. We can only hope that this situation will not be allowed to remain for long.

• Furthermore, the dearth of "mouth-watering" rewards to environmental friendly projects to proponents. Sometimes people are not motivated to do any good thing unless a "mouth-watering" offer is being dangled in front of them.

• Insufficient Funding: It is widely believed that any sustainable project moves on the wheel of money. Money is the vehicle on which proper enforcement of environmental consciousness projects must move. Enough finances have to be allocated to the information dissemination sector. Also the staff involved in this environmental protection campaign must be adequately paid. Most times, revenue accrued from taxing individuals, public and corporate bodies should be used to maintain or expand capacity for continued supply of information.

FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

There is no gainsaying in the fact that society ought to strive towards sustainable development. Thus, all environmental action should be direct at improving all ecological relationships including the relationship of humanity with nature and people owes partly to man's ignorance of cause and effect and partly because of poverty and lack of knowledge about alternative options.

Consequent upon the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 and the United Nations Conference on environmental and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It was unanimously agreed that man ought to develop a new ethical perspective towards his environment if they must strive towards sustainable development.

To do this, in this section a coherent framework for an effective articulation of public opinion and programs to provide relevant information to raise their consciousness is developed.

The first major attempt to make the community, environmental conscious is to bring the MEDIA in Nigeria into environmental management through workshop on Environmental Awareness for Media Practitioners sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Environment which will not the urgent need for "creating an awareness of the problems of our environment, and a need for public co-operation in finding solutions to these problems". It is also observed that the mass media could serve as effective avenues for communicating environmental problems to people.

As Moemeka [5] argued, the "media have the capacity to inform, to educate, to arouse, and to create awareness, and when they are imaginatively used, they do serve as effective channels of communication". These media includes; the radio, newspaper, television, magazines, journals to mention but a few. The newspapers have no mean measures to enlighten the people on the dangers of environmental pollution. On the 20th of March, 2006, a radio announcement was made at about 6.45am on an impending project construction in Akwa Ibom State.

It stated that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the **TILAPIA FISH POND PROJECT** was being displayed at the Ministry of Environment and Mineral resources, Federal Ministry of Environment for the general public to scrutinize.

This agrees with the Environmental Assessment Law; Decree No.86 of 1992.

On the other hand, lay language has to be used to describe various aspects and the nature of pollution because of technical complexities and sometimes the imperceptible environmental ramifications of pollution itself by films/documentaries at the community and neighborhood levels. Therefore, the mass media should strive to erode those attitudes harmful to sound environmental management and conservation, and try to elicit attitudes that will enable the ecosystem to function beneficially.

In fact the "town criers" can help in the disseminating of this environmental information.

Supporting Community based Organizations.

It means that the value of each group's contribution is seen, appreciated and used. Community participation helps environmental management goals as it calls for people to participate in planning, implementing and managing their local environment. Community participation means a

readiness on the part of both local governments and the citizens to accept equal responsibilities and activities in managing their surroundings. It also means a commitment to bring to the table resources, skills and knowledge for this purpose, and a respect for the capabilities and of all partners. *What is a "community"?* A community may be defined as a group of people coming together on the basis of a geographical area, a workplace, even an idea or a theme/issue, or on the basis of gender/age. Shape and size of a community varies, and hence definitions of communities have also varied.

The hones inclusion of a community's representatives as "partners" in decision-making makes for successful community participation. By so doing, a whole lot of the people in the community will be environmental conscious.

Why Community Participation?
There are five key issues that illustrate the importance of community participation and involvement.

CHOICES AND PREFERENCES ON QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIFESTYLE

These key starting points of the process of impacting on the environment, are made daily at the community, household and individual levels. These have both short-term direct and long-term indirect impacts, sometimes far beyond the physical boundaries of the community.

MAINTAINING SUBSIDIARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

It is important to maintain subsidiary of environmental decision-making. Local daily decisions need to be taken at the local and community levels. Effective community participation creates forums where such issues can be discussed and effective action planned. Daily decisions at the individual and community levels help in maintaining the scale of decisions, and ensure that commitment is built at the appropriate level. Such community dynamics of awareness-building and decision-making needs to be built into the core of an environmental management plan.

CLEAR COMMITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT OF ALL MEMBERS OF A COMMUNITY

Community participation calls for clear commitment and involvement of all members of a community in various joint activities. Bringing the community together to work on an issue that affects their life, particularly in relation to the environment, is the first step in a continuous process of awareness building and behavioral change. [8]

POOLS RESOURCES, DIVERSE SKILLS AND WORKING STRATEGIES FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Within the homogeneity of a "community" lies a broad diversity of resources that are prerequisites for the implementation of any plan or programmer. It enables creative brainstorming that identifies problems behind problems ensures solutions for solutions maximizing the benefits derived by a small resources base generated, and to external processes and outputs that affect it (for example, pollution from a local factory).

- The task of implementation should be seen as a challenge to all Nigerians while technicalities of enforcement are handled by a relevant national commission for Environmental Protection and Preservation, whose activities are publicized; and monitored through research, and legislative checks. By all these means, the disposition and commitment of people towards environmental matters would be heightened; unpatriotic Nigerians who act as stooges to profit reaping multinational companies or industrialists in disposing of waste without appropriate control measures (in order not to incur extra cost) would be less daring and even brought to book in a more environmentally conscious society. In fact, the establishment of monitoring and control units in major industries and the taxation of the profit of multinational companies for environmental quality improvement is a sine qua none of an effective environmental policy in Nigeria. Government industries can also be expected to set the pace.

- Making the community members stakeholders in waste management organizations. By so doing, each member of the community will know and be on the alert dividends. The stakeholders should be part and parcel of the law enforcement council, providing local and traditional knowledge and experience in waste management practices.

Local communities as stakeholders are supposed to be vanguards of their environmental resources. This step is in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Decree No 86 of 1992, section 11, subsection 1 a, b and c.

- Finally, involving the community in local environmental management has been prescribed as a panacea for a whole lot of environmental ills- in some cases, to also avoid responsibilities and accountabilities of the concerned entities. Real positive impacts can be ensured through partnerships that respect the stakeholders involved, and the resources that they bring to the table, and to enable actions that each stakeholder is the best suited to perform.

As a proposal for the improvement and control of local environment, an investigation in Benin City,

Edo State, Nigeria, revealed the following in table 2.

According to the table 2 above, it is obvious that an awareness programmer is paramount as it is ranked the second with 20%. This was gotten from a case of Benin City to elicit information of public awareness of environmental problems pollution.

Table 2: Issues central to control of environmental pollution in Benin city

What should be done	Percent
Maintain clean environment, dispose refuse and provide refuse facilities	29
Public enlightenment and Education	20
Proper industrial location from populated area	19
Immediate government action	12
Adequate drainage and provision of drinkable water	11
Proper planning laws and control	10
Proper disposal of industrial wastes	7
Control car fumes	6
Burning control	5

Source: Environmental Issues and Management in Nigeria Development [9]

CONCLUSION

Finally, ignorance has been identified as a responsible factor for the unhealthy relationship within the ecosystem including the relationship of humanity with nature and between people. Be that as it may, a system of education (Environmental Education) that could create sufficient awareness of a concern for the environment and its associated problems is required so as to restore a healthy environment for sustainable development.

This paper has identified the benefits of an environmental programmer for environmental policy and pollution control in Nigeria.

The paper also suggests an information framework and an environmental program for public awareness as follows in Fig. 1.
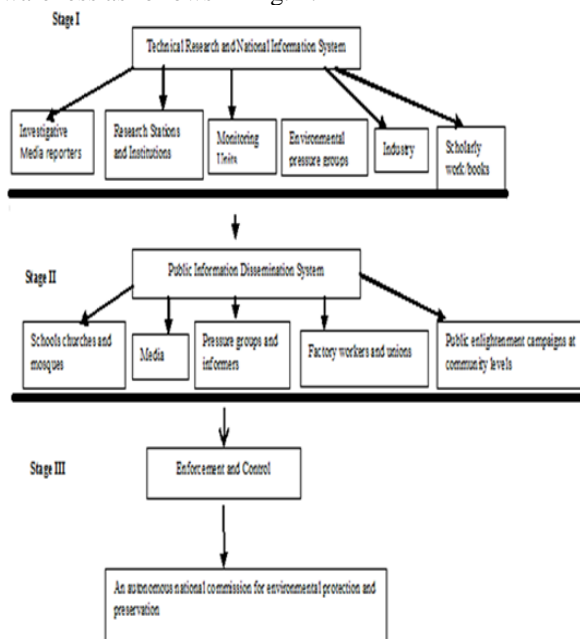

Fig. 1: A framework for public environmental awareness and pollution control

Adequate beginnings are yet to be made in evolving a coherent system of laws and institutions for environmental management in Nigeria. A public environmental awareness program represents a significant avenue to save cost, transform public ignorance of issues into an active opportunity for deeper awareness of harmful habits, create less environmental degradation through attitude change while vigorously involving the people in all facets of environmental planning and management. In fact, without adequate public environmental awareness policies can ever succeed.

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