

Issues in Environmental Pollution in Ekiti State

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Abstract: This study examines various issues on environmental pollution in Ekiti state, Nigeria. Data on air, water and environmental pollution were obtained from relevant Government Agencies and Parastatals and other stockholders in charge of public health. The study delves into the review of the utilization of various water dams, industrial wastes and waste from household consumables. Various environmental pollution issues on various dumping sites were re-visited towards examining the effectiveness or other wise of agencies charged with refuse disposal. Relevant data show that environment pollution issues increase with urbanization most especially in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, posing possible health hazards to the residents. The need to engage modern technology that can recycle waste into usable products and more effective waste disposal mechanism were recommended among others towards ensuring an environmentally friend Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Key words: Environmental pollution, issues, water, disposal mechanism, technology, Ekiti State

INTRODUCTION

Pollution is an undesirable change in the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of air, land and water that may or will harmfully affect human life or that of desirable species, our industrial process, living conditions and cultural assets, or that may or will waste or deteriorate our raw material sources, still apply to any academic discourse on pollution. Pollution involves all spheres of life i.e., water bodies, lithosphere (earth crust) as well as the biosphere. It has considerable effects on the human and economic infrastructures.

In the past few decades, environment and public health issues have received much attention from the stakeholders in population health, with much concern on environmental pollution in the urban locations. This, in turn, results from the attending problems of technological development and structural changes. Mabogunje (1968) indicated that the environmental problems arising from the process of urbanization emanated from the technologies and institutional changes necessary for a successful transformation from a rural to urban life in Nigeria where about 45% of the population lives in the urban areas (Olawepo, 2000). This is lower than than what obtained in other countries of the sub-Sahara Africa. The data further estimated that in the year 20, 30, about 64% of the population would have moved to the urban centres. Ekiti state is one of the 36 States in Nigeria that has witnessed rapid urbanization. Many pull factors are believed to be responsible for the increasing rate of urbanization in Ekiti. (Tinuola, 2002) found that social infrastructural facilities

characterizing urbanity, are found in major communities in Ekiti and that most rural areas could not meet the challenges expose by unemployment of young school leavers. Consequently the incessant pressure on the environment. The externalities of development undoubtedly posed threats to sustainable development of the people and the economy.

Makanjuola (2002) pointed out that man's diverse activities dirty the air with smoke and gases, poison the water with chemicals and substances and damage the soil with too many fertilizers and pesticides. All forms of pollution are direct or indirect results of man's activities to survive and meet the basic necessities of life.

Generally, there are three main kinds of pollution are obvious, air pollution, water pollution and land pollution. It is interesting to note that because all part of the environment including the biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere are closely related a kind of pollution that occur in one part of the environment may also affect others (Ajibade, 2002).

The shift from agricultural economy to a white-collar job, orientation of school leavers has accounted partly for the rush to the urban cities in Ekiti State. Most government establishments that could absorb young Polytechnics and Universities graduates are located in the urban centers and that most researches have recognized high literacy level in Ekiti State (Tinuola, 2002, 2005). The increase in the agitation for the establishment of more schools in Ekiti has increased urbanization, for example in Iworoko, a State university was established at its border with Ado Ekiti. This has considerably increased socio-

economic activities in the surrounding rural areas, which have been urbanized in terms of demographic and socio-economic infrastructures. This has considerably increased environmental pollution in the community. This study examines issues in environmental pollution in Ekiti State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ekiti State lies entirely within the typical region. It lies between longitudes 4° 45' to 5° 45' East of Greenwich Meridian and latitudes 7° to 15' to 8° 5' North of the equator. It is bounded in the North by Kwara State and in the South by Ondo State, lies at the Eastern part of Osun State and in the South Western part of Kogi State. Ekiti was carved out of the former Ondo State and assumed the status of a State on October 1st, 1966. Though the State took off with twelve local government areas in 1996. Four new local government areas were created two years later making a total of sixteen local government areas.

The State has population of about 1.4 million people based on 1991 Population Enumeration. It had a projected population of 1.75 million residents during its creation. Since 1996, when the State became a separate entity, there has been influx of people from different parts of the country especially, civil servants, artisans, industrialists and unemployed among others. Hence, the increase in the population led to higher pressure on the social infrastructure such as residential accommodation, water supply, road network, electricity and health care delivery systems. The existing infrastructure could not cope with the high influx because the level of commitment to infrastructural development from government and private developers is very low. The increasing population leads to increasing human activities resulting in activities of pollution at almost all levels in the State.

Environmental pollution can be grouped into three, on the basis of site. These are air or atmospheric pollution, water or aquatic pollution and land pollution. However, irrespective of the technique of classification, pollution is an unpleasant situation arising from man's activities.

Air pollution: The World Health Organization described air pollution as limited to situation in which the outer ambient atmosphere contains materials in concentrations which are harmful to man and his environment. It is the imbalance in the quality of air capable of causing adverse effects on living organisms. Air pollution refers to a situation where man or his agent in the process of man-environment interaction emits various gaseous substances into the atmosphere.

The major industries releasing waste into the air in Ekiti State are sawmill industries which are located in the almost all parts of the State. The location of wood processing industries cut across all local government areas in the State. This is because the State is located in the thick forest zone where timber resources abound in large quantity. However, the continuing deforestation without replacement led to desertification of the northern axis. Desert from the nearby Kogi State has encroached into the territory of Ekiti East, Oye, Ikole and Moba local government areas of the State. Aside, each local government area has at least five wood processing industries. In Ekiti State, the number of wood processing industries can be estimated at one hundred. Gas from the industrial machines pollute the air at intervals most especially when applying diesel powered electricity generating set. Most of these industries have suffered from lack of constant power supply from the electricity board. Sawdust, the industrial waste of wood processing is burnt. The industrialist lack appropriate machineries and technology to recycle into card bud, a useable product. This has further worsened the extent of air pollution in the area. The textile industry owned by Oodua conglomerate, Ire Burnt Bricks company, Road Materials Company at Igbemo, are all moribund. These companies suffered from government neglects, lack of raw materials, embezzlement of funds and outdated equipment. Generally the extent of air pollution from industrial waste in Ekiti State is low.

Water pollution: Water pollution is the discharge of unwanted biological, chemical and physical, materials into water bodies from the man's environment (Julius, 1987). As the population increases and more towns and rural areas tends urbanized, there is subsequent increase in the demand on infrastructure such as water supply. There is the need to protect the existing water bodies from contamination which are common to the urban centers. In Ekiti, there are three major water dams that supply portables water to the inhabitants, Ero, Itapaji, Ureje dams. Data obtained on these water dams indicate that Ero and Itapaji dams are under utilized due to regular electricity supply, of recent, the contract for the renovation of Itapaji dam has been awarded by the Federal government, but that considerable work is yet to be witnessed at the site of the project. Water can disposal mechanism can threaten the extent of purity of water. The health of the environment is further threatened, when rain falls and wastes are washed down by run-off into the sorrowing water bodies making them unhealthy for human health, fishes and other aquatic animals.

Land pollution: Land pollution is the occurrence of unwanted materials or wastes on land. The commonest pollutants on land are the waste products that are often scattered on the land areas in the cities. Most environmental problems arise due to the production or consumption of goods whose waste products translate easily into pollutants. Landscape pollution may at times take the form of solid waste, mining activities and excavation of land materials, foxtic wastes and deforestation actions.

Solid waste constitutes an important aspect of land pollution in Ekiti State. The rapid urbanization has compounded the problems. Ado-Ekiti, the state capital is a traditional city. Most inhabitants do not have modern facilities for waste disposal and recycle. Most wastes are dumped indiscriminately close to households thereby posing health hazards to the inhabitants. Various efforts have been made by the government at the State level to handle the problem of pollution in the State capital. The establishment of Ekiti State waste management Board, a parastatal under the ministry of environment. But, to what extent has the Board been able to manage an effective waste disposal in the city capital? Various waste containers are strategically positioned at high profile areas where people dump their domestic wastes. These areas include Okesa, Dallimore, Old Motor-parks, Okeyinmi and Ojumose streets. These containers are driven away periodically and wastes are dumped in the bush. Meanwhile, the operations of the Board have been hampered by inadequate funds from government, to repair driven machines that break down most often. Wastes are left in the containers for longer days before disposing them. Another problem with the waste disposal mechanism of the Board is the dumping site. In the early months of the year 2006, the Igbira community at Ilokun, Ado-Ekiti cried out through their community leaders that the wastes dumped very close to their residence by the State Waste Management Board have caused cholera and Typhoid fever for the people in the area. Data from a nearby hospital indicated that at least five people died of cholera and typhoid, diseases caused by contaminated food and water. The relocation of the dumping sites may have been done by the government of ease the polluted environmental conditions of the inhabitants of the area. Noticeable is the fact that the activities of the Waste Board are limited to Ado-Ekiti, the state capital. Other cities in the local council areas may suffer from the adverse consequences of pollution from domestic wastes.

URBANIZATION AND POLLUTION

Urbanisation is the growth of cities rapid urbanization in the study area has its inherent problem.

For instance, it has brought with it a greater demand for housing transport, water, sanitation and electricity. The effect of urbanization on human health is illustrated in the United Nation report indicating that in 1993, more than 60 million people lacked even the most rudimentary sanitation services in Africa and 48 million did not have access to potable water supply. The control of rapid urbanization in our cities is therefore a strong challenge for urban management. This is serious in Ekiti State where there is the lack of adequate facilities to cope with the teeming population.

Due to congestions in the cities caused by high traffic transport operations are major contributors to noise pollution in the modern environment. Noise is defined as unwanted or undesirable sound. It is produce by the source causing vibration in the medium surrounding it. Urban expansion coupled with increasing urban population result in greater demand for transport provision and there are limit to the volume of traffic a town can accommodate. Within these limits, the city exhibits serene environment comparatively free from undue noise and air pollution but as soon as these limits are exceeded, which is always a case, the city's traffic is thrown into chaos. Traffics noise also constitutes environmental nuisances although to a lesser extent. Ikya (1993) pointed out that highway traffic account for 50% of unwanted sound in the city are creates irritations, dissatisfactions and disturbance to urban residents. Noise pollution also leads to loss of hearing headaches, interference with communication, sleeplessness and impairment of efficiency and reduction in property value, which is common to buildings, that are located in a noising environment where people will ordinarily not want to reside.

The menace of solid waste disposal has been a very serious problem facing most urban centers in the developing countries today. Rapid urbanization has in no small measure contributed to waste generation and sanitation problems in our cities.

Rapid urbanization along sides the rising rates of industrialization have created greater concentration of waste them the cities system can absorb. This leads to pollution and eye sore in the urban centers as the solid waste disposal methods are not well-defined and grossly inadequate management of such wastes. Solid waste management in Nigerian cities had not been taken with uttermost seriousness it deserves. In most cities, indiscriminate dumping of refuse has almost become normal routine (Ogunleye and Owolabi, 2004). These heaps of wastes are sources of air, land and water pollution.

Generally, the quality of affluent discharge into the environment is related to population size and per capital income. All other things being equal as population and income increases, so do the production and consumption of goods and services and more affluent are discharged into the environment. The rate of solid waste generation in the cities is so high that it constitutes a threat to societal peace.

CONCLUSION

There are lot of problems that are associated with the increase of population or the changing status of a community to urban centers and such myriad of problems range from lack of an inadequate road infrastructure which manifest problem of air and noise pollution and to with its attendant problem of water pollution both surface (structure and river) and underground water. The urban environment should be jealously guided against all sorts of pollution so that we will be able to live in a healthy environment both now and in the nearest future. Ekiti State, with about two million people are currently witnessing rapid influx of people intending of meeting the socio-economic challenges of seeking jobs, contracts, admission into tertiary institutions and residential permit. The disposal facilities available may not cope with challenges of wastes dumped. There is the need to encourage private participation in the waste disposal process to ensure effectiveness. Also the government showed, as a matter of urgency increase the locations of waste sites in the city and provide more wasters tank, aside, the Waste Management Board should be strengthened with appropriate legal and financial resource

commitment towards ensuring not only effective waste disposal but management of the existing wastes.

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