

# **Environmental Degradation and its Impact on Human Health in Tertiary Education in Nigeria. Delta State and Ambrose Alli Universities as a case study (TETFund Sponsored)**

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## **Abstract**

*One of the greatest challenges faced with most communities and people in Nigeria is the spate of environmental degradation which has drastically exposed learning environment and humans to great danger. Members of the academic community in Tertiary institutions are not left out of this whole situation as they are often faced with strong environmental challenge that generates conflicts, and health risks to the people in the area. A key feature of these concerns has been the paucity of the risk factor and the impact this has caused on the people living in the area and education in Nigeria. The study among others identified the impact of the development and effect on tertiary education in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study adopted the secondary method. The paper argued that the health of the people within the academic communities in the area is being impaired by risk incidences relating to environmental resource exploration and other human illegal activities. Findings showed that the lives of people living in the area including the academic environment are usually confronted with serious health problems and in most cases resulting death and destruction of lives and valuable properties. At the end, the study recommends a multi-dimensional framework or health policies, capable of addressing the deadly uncontrolled environmental degradation that has continued to ravage the area. Lastly, the need for proper monitoring and control of oil explorers was equally canvassed.*

**Keyword:** *Environmental degradation, Health environment and Tertiary education*

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## **I. Introduction**

The environment plays a central role in the life of human beings. The environment directly affects the health status and well-being of human citizenry whether in the urban cities or in hinterlands and in all facet of life. It has been established that “The potential adverse effects of climate change have been characterized as changes in the physical environment or biota which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural or managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio- economic systems or on human health and welfare”(Alicia, (2005). Furthermore, it has also been established that a contaminated environment due to human activities could cause malnutrition and diseases, morbidity and shortening of life span. The enjoyment of human rights and the relationship it has with the environment in which people live was for the first time addressed in 1972 at the UN Conference on the Human Environment. The Declaration of the Conference otherwise known as the (Stockholm Declaration) makes recognition of the fact that ‘man’s environment {is} essential to his well being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights’, such as the right to life. It goes without saying that ‘The harm caused to individuals and communities by degraded environments- from unsafe drinking water to disappearing wild life- is increasingly seen by many people as a question of rights’ being violated Protection of the environment can no longer be seen as simply a policy choice. Thus this article examines the factors that cause environmental degradation and the attendant consequences on human health. It highlights steps that need to be taken by governments as well as individuals and private companies with a view to protecting the environment from degradation in order to protect the health and the right to health of the people. The United Nations through the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change officially stated and also cautioned that environmental degradation is one of the ten threats to human existence. Thus the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2014) defines environmental degradation as “the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives, and needs. Degradation of the environment, by which we mean the deterioration in environmental quality from ambivalent concentrations of pollutants and other activities and processes, such as improper land use and natural disasters<sup>10</sup> can cause violations of human rights. For example as far back as 2009, the Office of the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights investigated the varied effects of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights. It made a report in 2009 to the Human Rights Council, on the impact of climate change on several human rights, including the rights to life, adequate food, water, adequate housing, health and self-determination (Mohammed, 2013). “The report notes that the effects of climate change, including heat waves, floods, and other natural phenomena, will pose direct and indirect threats to the right to life and the closely related rights to food, water, health, and housing. Therefore, it could safely be inferred that climate change poses a very serious challenge to the right to life and health. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also took note of the threat caused by environmental degradation on the enjoyment of human rights. In its General Comment, “ the Committee observed that the steps that should be taken to realize the right to health, and in particular the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene include preventive measures in respect of occupational accidents and diseases; the requirement to ensure an adequate supply of safe and potable water and basic sanitation; the prevention and reduction of the population’s exposure to harmful substances such as radiation and harmful chemicals or other detrimental environmental conditions that directly or indirectly impact upon human health”.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The environment plays a pivotal role in all human endeavours. The activities of human beings students inclusive have continued to threaten the success and achievements of societal goals and educational objectives. To this end, the study will be focusing on the study is to evaluate, analyze and examined the degree of human activities on the environment and the extent to which it has impacted on human health and the education sector. The study has exposed the meaning of environmental degradation and its impact on human life the causes of environmental degradation, its consequences and possible way out of the menace. It has been established that there is a negative link between environmental degradation and the enjoyment of human rights (Malgosia, (2010). It is widely acknowledged that the effect of dumping of toxic waste has link with the enjoyment of human rights. The study provide an in-depth understanding of the causes and effect of human activities of the environment resulting to global warming, damage to coastal investments, regional changes in agricultural productivity as well as disruption of students academic activities is Delta State University and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. The Study also provides the right to health under international law and the many developments in international law with regard to the normative definition of the right to health. It could be viewed as both health care and healthy conditions. The right to health has evolved with rapid development under international law. Under international law, there is a right to health as a broader concept and it also extends to health care. Generally speaking, rights are inherently embedded within the social sphere and therefore determinants of health and ill health are not purely biological or ‘natural’ but also are consequences of societal relations. Therefore, the study will create a balance between human rights and the danger it poses to the environment if not properly checked. It has been established that “a rights perspective is entirely compatible with work in epidemiology that has established social determinants as fundamental causes of disease. The notion of a right to health was for the first time found in international law in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (hereinafter called Declaration). This was unanimously adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as a common standard for humanity. Most importantly, the study will provide a temperate that can be used to remedy the ugly trend

### **Objective of the Study**

The study amongst others examined:

- the meaning of environment degradation and its impact on human life
- the extent to which it has impacted on the development of tertiary education in Nigeria
- the causes of environmental degradation in-line with human right
- the possible ways of regulating human activities on the environment

## **II. Literature Review**

All these human activities have combined to deplete the earth’s resources, degrade the environment and cause loss of biodiversity (Uchegbu, 2009). According to encyclopedia Britannica, the environment is the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors that act upon organisms or an ecological community and ultimately determines its form and survival. Canter, (2011) categorized the environment into air, water, noise, biological, cultural and socio-economic environment. These views are all embracing. However, in a physical sense, Holderness and Lambert (2009) claim that the physical environment is made up of air, water, and land. From all indications, human activities impinge on the environment, which as noted earlier, may have either positive or negative effects on man. However, the positive effects would be well taken by man but what are of concern to man are the negative effects especially as the concern degradation. The environment in which these

human activities take place is the outer physical and biological systems of the earth in which man and other organisms live. Although complicated, there are many interacting components.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (2015) defines the environment as the natural world in which people, animals and plants live<sup>4</sup>. Again it has been defined as "conditions, circumstances etc affecting people's lives. It is the complex of physical, chemical and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determines its form and survival. In any way when the environment becomes less valuable or damaged, environmental degradation is said to occur.

### **What Environment Degradation Represents**

A lot of literature has been developed by many scholars on the concept and issues of Environmental degradation. Some of these literatures were reviewed for the purpose of this paper. Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water, soil; the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wild life. It is defined as any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable. Environmental degradation is a process by which the resource base (air, water, soil/land) become depleted, thereby reducing their originality and quality. This affects the general health of the biological environment. Air, water, and soil/land are the major resources which are vulnerable to depletion or being degraded through overuse and unfriendly human activities. Aji in Dangyil (2009) points out that every move by man against nature for his benefit, welfare or for the generation unborn amounts to a degradation of the environment. There are numbers of ways in which environmental degradation occurs. The process can be entirely natural in origin, or it can be accelerated by human activities. This paper focuses more on human related degradation. For instance, indiscriminate or unplanned felling of trees without planting of new ones, release of untreated industrial wastes, and mining of minerals resources, oil spill, etc. in areas like Enugu, Jos Plateau and Niger Delta regions have left those areas devastated and polluted. In Nigeria, "trees are being cut down thirty times as fast as they are being replaced". In the same vein, Dangyil (2009) in his study observed that a journey from Mangu to Jos especially from Dorowa Babuje, shows an undoubted scars, mine ponds and mass land becomes polluted, it means, toxic substances have rendered it unhealthy. It is the release of substances into the environment in quantities that are harmful to living organisms. These substances may be in solid, liquid or gaseous form. Na'iyah, (2019) sees pollution as alteration or addition of substances of impurities that lead to the reduction of quality of normal/natural state of the environment. These impurities or substances are referred to as pollutants. The sources of these pollutants can be industrial, domestic and other human wastes. More so, degradation can occur as a result of ecological factors such as habitat pressures. That is a situation where by animals are forced into a small area. This can also contribute to resource depletion as large number of animals consumes high volume of resources (e.g. grassland) within a small area. It is important to note that in some cases, environmental pollution may be reversible, remediated or controlled through treatment, filtration and screening in the case of water. It could be by reducing emissions, neutralizing and gradual phasing out of pollutants in the case of air/atmospheric pollution and controlling illegal dumping of refuse, monitoring, litigation and public enlightenment on the causes and effects of pollution to socio-economic environment degradation due to tin mining both at the left and right sides of the road into the interior of Jos. Vast land which would have been used for agriculture has been devastated and rendered useless. Similarly, Admin (2010) lamented that over the past four decades, the Niger Delta terrain has been overrun through deliberate over-exploitation carried out in total disregard for the basic principles of sustainable development management. On the extent of damages caused by the exploration and exploitation of oil by the multinational oil firms, he reported that close to 4000 oil wells have so far been drilled in the Niger Delta and other offshore areas since 1957. These sites constitute potentially polluted site at which drilling wastes, drill cuttings, oil sludge and various toxic (hazardous) chemicals have been disposed. Consequently, the Niger Delta area is exposed to a large proportion of environmental degradation and health hazards. The frequency of oil spill in the area resulted in contamination of water and consequent death to the aquatic and terrestrial lives. The mining of sand and dredging of rivers are also aggravating coastal erosion and river siltation. These and many other environmental issues as well as lack of environmental concern have turned the Niger Delta to one of the "world most endangered ecosystem. Available information also reveals that the region could experience a loss of 40% of its inhabitable terrain in the next thirty years as a result of extensive dam construction in the Niger Delta region (Wikipedia, 2013). The process of coal mining, the hills of refuse dump occasionally catch fire and burn for a long time thereby releasing smoke and toxic fumes in the air. This according to him does occur in Enugu areas where coal is usually processed for domestic and industrial uses to generate power or energy. He further maintained that noise pollution and its associated effects can be experienced in Ilesha and Enugu areas where heavy machines are used for blasting coal and gold. In addition, the solid waste minerals may undergo some process of chemical reaction and consequently become poisonous to the ecosystem. Poverty is seen as a major cause and effect of environmental degradation. For instance the rural poor in their quest for food security among

staff of students in tertiary schools have sometimes little choice but to overuse the limited resources available to them. The resulting environmental degradation imposes further constraints on their livelihood in what has been referred to as a vicious circle. Admin noted further that attempt to modernize the rural environment through the provision of infrastructural facilities, or to earn income through extraction of mineral resources, results in environmental degradation. They further assert that the exploration of forestry, agricultural and mineral resources for urban and industrial development have led to several rural environmental problems. Another human activity that aggravates degradation of natural environment is pollution. He noted that solid waste of minerals may undergo chemical reaction and become toxic. When these wastes dissolve within the surface or underground and surface as a result of their solubility, they devalue the water quality and consequently become hazardous for both human and animal consumption. Water pollution can also lead to water borne diseases (Na'lya, 2009). Atanu and Olorundare (2007) agree with Eze (2005) who posits that environmental degradation hits very hard at the rural people who depend so much on natural resources for livelihood, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. It is one of the major causes of political and economic instability. The civil unrest in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region is significantly linked to the degradation of the source of their livelihood. It would amount to a waste of time and resource to keep pointing accusing finger at someone else at this critical point in time. Instead, efforts should be directed towards providing workable solutions to environmental problems. It is on this premise that the writers see the need for a change in attitude and behavior toward the natural and built environments. This is made possible by raising people's level of awareness about the environment, its associated challenges and ways of ameliorating environmental degradation. This is possible through sound environmental education

### **Effects and Consequences of Environmental Degradation on Human Health and the Education System**

When it comes to unsustainable use of resources, the effect is daunting. It affects everyone in the world because natural environment is very essential for the survival of humans and animals especially for comfort and relaxation. For example, vegetation (plants) and animals are good source of food, building materials, fuel and medicine. In fact, to get clean air (oxygen) plants are indispensable for cleaning the atmosphere of carbon IV oxide by releasing oxygen as waste in the process of manufacturing their food. This process is called photosynthesis. Hence, indiscriminate or unplanned felling of trees without planting new ones will definitely reverse these atmospheric cleansing functions. Temperature will rise as a result of excessive carbon IV oxide in the atmosphere producing a glass house effect. Deforestation can cause increase reflect ability from the bare surface which will result to increase in dust particles blown into the atmosphere, thereby increasing air pollution (Arongol & Dachomo, 2007). Degradation of resource base generally translates into decrease in production, income and availability of food. As the world's vegetative shrubs, cover trees and grassland are cleared, it's already fragile soil loses the capacity to nourish crops and retain moisture. Declining soil fertility leads to lower crop yields, resulting into hunger, famine and ultimately aggravates poverty (IFAD, 2010). In addition, any deterioration in water quality adversely affects the fish catch. It normally causes chronic toxicity problems to living organism, both terrestrial and aquatic lives. He argued that the methods adopted in the the 1980's. The World Commission for Environment and Development report (WCED, 2011) defined Sustainable Development as that which "...meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs". This may not happen without a sustainable environment. Sustainable environment is sine qua non to sustainable development. It involves making decisions and taking actions that are in the interest of protecting the natural world with particular emphasis on preserving the capability of the environment to support human lives at the moment without jeopardizing the future. This warrants conscious change in human attitudes and lifestyles. It also implies making responsible decisions and taking actions that will reduce human's negative impact on the environment. These ranges from reducing the amount of waste produce, using less energy, reasonable exploitation of the mineral resources and reducing indiscriminate felling of trees. This ultimately requires concerted effort to empower the public with essential knowledge and information about the environment and education is the key towards making this herculean task happen.

### **Possible Ways of Preventing Environmental Degradation through the Promotion Environmental Education**

The pursuit of sustainable livelihoods regards the general public to be sufficiently sensitized on issues concerning the environment. Such awareness and understanding will help in educating the citizenry, the basis and rationale for commitment and meaningful action on matters relating to the environment. One way by which this sensitization can be carried out is through environmental communication. Environmental communication can be defined as the sharing of information, insights and opinions on issues relating to trends, condition and solutions to environmental problems using different means of communication ranging from interpersonal methods to means of mass communication using either modern or traditional media. This technique is an informal method of education and a strong complementary practice to environmental education.

Amongst some of the ways by which environmental communication can be carried out especially in Nigeria for the purpose of managing natural resources and sustaining livelihoods includes;

- **Awareness Raising Campaigns:** This can be done using postal, slide presentations, and exhibitions especially in urban areas, during sporting events, social engagement and religious activities to educate the citizenry for example, on ways to treat their wastes and revitalize nature in degraded areas so as to sustain livelihoods. Such campaign may come in form of protest and agitation against policies and practices that are considered to be harmful to the environment. The awareness raising campaign can also be carried out using the methods adopted by the UNDP- Funded Asia Pacific 2000 Initiative in South Asia where NGOs and other citizen’s group used letter writing, rallies and sit-in protests to lodge their complaints on issues relating to unsustainable use of environment.
- **Interactive Activities by Government Ministries and Agencies:** Government Ministry and Agencies such as Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, National Environmental Standards Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA), Nigerian Conservation Fund (NCF), Forest Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN), National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) National Oil Spill Detention and Response Agency (NOSDRA) etc. can also make use of campaigns to rally support from the citizenry on issues concerning the environment. Such campaigns as frequently used in developed nations can be tagged “Clean and Green Week”, “Stop Drain Blockage” “Save Energy”, “Save Water” etc. Such campaigns can even be directed at educating the people on the ways to managing their wastes as it is being done in Japan where the month of October each year is set aside as Recycling Promotion Month during which all government ministries and agencies concerned with the environment campaign to support recycling.
- **Voluntary Community Work:** Residents, both old and young within a locality can be mobilized to take up voluntary community work. Participants in such activities will have the opportunity to learn, observe and develop solutions to different environmental problems. Voluntary work can be considered an informal way of education because the events which take place in such activities are usually unpredictable. Citizenry who took part in voluntary community work will after the event, reflect on their experiences and develop awareness on the vital link between environment and livelihoods.
- **Information Communication Technology:** The use of ICT has grown rapidly in the last two decades. Digital technology, particularly the internet service can be of good assistance in providing environmental education informally. This fact has long being recognized by developed nations where it is being used to exchange information and carry out advocacy and public awareness. Examples of social platforms where environmental communication can be carried out include Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Google, LinkedIn, Tumblr etc. Government and government agencies concerned on issues of environment, non-governmental organization and private individuals can promote environmental education in Nigeria using these platforms. Information put on social platform will not only serve as reinforcement of knowledge to someone seeking information on environment and livelihoods, but will also allow other people coming across such information under their own stream to leave their comments and opinion on discussion boards for other people to read.
- **Folk Media:** This represents the traditional ways of carrying messages, thoughts and feelings to the people. The technique is as old as man. Folk media has over the years been used to carry information in Nigeria through songs, riddles, dance, folktales, theater performance, festivals, town criers, talking drums amongst others. This technique which has played significant roles in promotion of new ideas in different parts of the globe is highly valued in developed nations despite the advances in modern means of communications in those countries. Norris, (2016) and Abubakar, (2016)

### III. Results

The table below shows the results presented and interpreted in the tables below.

Research Question 1: What is the meaning and causes of environmental degradation?

Table One: Mean Responses of Respondents on the meaning on the causes of environmental degradation

S/N	STATEMENT	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	×	DECISION
1	Illegal and indiscriminate forest encroachment by people causes environmental problems to students and staff of higher institutions	400 (1600)	150 (450)	67 (67)	65 (65)	682 (2249)	3.29	Agree
2	Disruption of government position and policies on the use of environment leads to environmental problems	300 (1200)	220 (660)	100 (200)	62 (62)	682 (2122)	3.11	Agree

3	Human activities responsible for health crisis among students	296 (1184)	189 (567)	110 (220)	87 (87)	682 (2058)	3.02	Agree
4	Poor implementation of government policies of the use of environment causes environment degradation	240 (960)	260 (780)	123 (246)	59 (59)	682 (2045)	2.99	Agree
5	environmental challenges affects learning	199 (796)	300 (900)	100 (200)	83 (83)	682 (1979)	2.90	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.06</b>	

- Note: Figures in bracket are in weighted values  
From the above statistical data presented in table 1 above showed that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all accepted. The statistical analysis in the respective columns above shows that Illegal and indiscriminate forest encroachment by people causes environmental problems to students and staff of higher institutions, ( $\bar{X}=3.29$ ), Human activities responsible for health crisis among students ( $\bar{X}=3.11$ ), poor implementation of government programmes causes environmental challenges in tertiary institutions ( $\bar{X}=3.02$ ), ( $\bar{X}=2.99$ ), environmental challenges cause delay in students academic programme ( $\bar{X}=2.90$ )
- With a grand mean of 3.06, it is confirmed that the meaning and causes of environmental degradation, poor distribution of resources, violent resistance to government exploitation and others which contributed to neglect of the people.
- **Research Question 2:** In What way have human activities on the environment affected Tertiary institutions? (Delta State and Ambrose Alli Universities)

S/N	STATEMENT	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	TOTAL	$\bar{X}$	DECISION
6	Environment affects students learning and performance	319 (1276)	223 (699)	90 (180)	50 (50)	682 (2205)	3.23	High Extent
7	most students falls sick at school due to the problem of environment	356 (1424)	240 (720)	50 (100)	36 (36)	682 (2280)	3.34	High Extent
8	Students activities and academic work have been put into confusion because of environmental degradation and its attendant health crisis	228 (1152)	208 (624)	90 (180)	96 (96)	682	3.01	High Extent
9	most students falls sick at school due to the problem of environment	400 (1600)	189 (56&)	43 (86)	50 (50)	682 (2303)	3.38	High Extent

- Note: Figures in bracket are in weighted values.  
Data from table 2 revealed that responses to items 6, 7, 8 and 9 indicated high extent. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that Environment affects students learning and performance ( $\bar{X}=3.23$ ), most students falls sick at school due to the problem of environmental degradation and its attendant crisis ( $\bar{X}=3.24$ ), most students falls sick at school due to the problem of environment ( $\bar{X}=3.28$ ). With a grand mean of 3.24 therefore, it is proven that the environment plays a major role whether positive or negative in human health and the educational system as a whole as shown in this research work.

**Test of Hypothesis**

Ho,: There is no significant relationship between the cause of environmental degradation and human health among staff and students in A.A.U (Edo State) and DELSU (Delta State)

**Table 3:** Chi-Square Analysis of the Relationship between the cause of environmental degradation and human health among staff and students

O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	X <sup>2</sup>
83	55.54	27.46	754.31	13.58			
78	62.83	15.17	230.07	3.66			
82	77.43	4.57	20.93	0.27			
98	80.67	17.33	300.40	3.72			
23	55.15	-32.15	1033.51	18.74			
44	62.39	-18.39	338.34	5.42			
83	76.89	6.11	37.39	0.49			
65	80.11	-15.11	228.19	2.85	66.678	9	16.919
23	15.67	7.33	53.67	3.42			

21	17.73	3.27	10.67	0.60			
11	21.85	-10-.85	117.76	5.39			
13	22.77	-9.77	95.39	4.19			
08	10.64	-2.64	6.98	0.66			
12	12.04	-0.04	0.00	0.00			
15	14.84	0.16	0.03	0.00			
23	15.46	7.54	56.87	3.68			

Self formulated chi square battle

The analysis in table 3, revealed that the calculated value ( $X^2$ ) was 66.678, while the critical value ( $X^2$  crit) was 16.919 at 0.05 level of significance and 9 degree of freedom (df). Since the  $x^2$  cal (66.678) was greater than  $x^2$  crit (16.919) at 0.05 level of significance and 9 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected and the increase act of violence as a result affect quality education in Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, Edo State and Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State.

#### **IV. Discussion of Findings**

Finding for research question 1, showed that the causes of environmental degradation and its impact on human health in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State and Delta State University, Abraka, Delta. Study clearly showed the extent to which the environment can affects the entire academic environment in terms of its output, performance, product, service delivery and more importantly the safety of human lives living in the area.

Findings or results from research question 2, showed that environmental challenges has drastically and to a large extent affected effective and efficient running of the school system in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and Delta States University, Abraka, . This is because majority of the respondents agreed that academic activities has been negatively affected owing to ill health and other related diseases that has on a daily basis affected tertiary institutions. Some staff and students find it difficult to come to school or even stay freely at school because of fear of lack of protection and safety. This findings supported Eme, (2011) when she observed that during conflicts, there is inadequate cooperation among students and staff, absence of outside support, destruction of completed projects, inadequate participation in school activities, difficulty in need identification, lack of concentration among others which impacts negatively on quality education in Nigeria.

#### **V. Conclusion**

The loss of livelihood resulting from environmental degradation is fast becoming a growing concern in Nigeria because of its negative effect on sustainability. Environmental degradation resulting from unsustainable use of resources is not only rapidly disrupting the socio-economic life of a significant number of people who depend on those resources for their sustenance, but is also generating a number of social negative social consequences. Environmental degradation induces vicious circle of problem which commence with natural resource scarcity. The scarcity created by degradation activities promotes social inequalities and rapid increase in economically marginalized people. And because, the livelihoods of those marginalized are threatened, such people utilize the limited resources available to them unsustainably thus further degrading the environment. Attempts at curtailing the rapid rate of environmental degradation towards sustaining livelihood will improve the wellbeing of staff and students in tertiary education which is an aspect of livelihood strategies with particular reference to informal education. This is germane because informal education will assist in promoting among the people. Degradation of the resource base occurs as a result of either natural occurrences or artificial (human) activities. Its effects are both immediate and futuristic as it threatens the capability of the future generation to meet their needs. The various measures in terms of programmes and policies put in place to overcome these anomalies have no doubt failed. The unfriendly attitudes of the people towards the environment through their activities and other practices have also aggravated this problem. Therefore, overcoming these environmental challenges requires the need to learn and practice the skills, and the development of conscious attitude and responsible behaviors of preserving, protecting, and restoring environmental quality which promote sustainable development. This necessitated the need for environmental education that will enable the people to appreciate the environment through its preservation and sustainability in Nigeria.

#### **VI. Recommendations**

Against this backdrop, the writer deemed it necessary to put forward the following recommendations:-

- The federal government should promulgate a law that can put an end to unwise way of exploiting the natural environment.
- The federal and state governments should continue to enlighten the citizens of Nigeria on the danger of unwanted destruction of the surrounding environment by man.
- The three tiers of government should continue to embark on tree planting campaign so as to replace the depleted vegetation cover.

- Our national government should endeavor to reduce the high cost of cooking instruments such as gas cooker, stove, etc, as well as kerosene in order to make them affordable to poor people.
- Local government officials, being close to the people using the environment too much, should always monitor unwanted destruction of the natural environment by man
- There is no doubt that education has been recognized as the most veritable tool for change. Hence, Environmental education should be taken with all seriousness it requires right from pre-school age throughout to school period and the entire one's life. It should be a continuous life long process beginning from home (the family) – training the young ones how to maintain safety environment, sensitization, re-orientation and public enlightenment campaign in the media (social and print), to capture those out-of-school adult individuals. It should be made interesting and meaningful to the learners. Natural study should not be restricted to in-class lesson. Most of the environmental related subjects and courses in our school presently are theoretical in emphasis.

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