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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, WATER SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Environmental sanitation in a developing economy of Anambra State, Nigeria.

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Many developing countries in Africa are under the siege of poor environmental sanitation. Anambra State, records the highest cases of environmental degradation in form of severe pollution and contamination in the southeastern Nigeria. This may be associated with the commercial activities prevalent in the major cities and peri-urban areas of the State. With unprecedented increase in population of about 2.8 million and the quest for urbanization, Anambra State generates the highest volume of poorly disposed wastes in southeastern Nigeria. Changes in consumption pattern without adequate arrangement for the management of the resultant waste products lead to poor environmental sanitation at the major cities of Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Ihiala, Ekwuluobia, Nkpor etc. Poor waste disposal and management with attendant poor environmental sanitation are given the least priority in poor developing countries. Disposal of domestic waste along the roadsides, abandoned buildings and drainages channels by women, youths and children are common practice. During the rains, floods carry the wastes along the drainage channels and roads. This results in the blocking of drainages and creation of stagnant waters that breed mosquitoes. Heaps of garbage form ugly scenes as one enters the major cities and peri-urban centres of part of Anambra State. People live close to waste dumps and garbage heaps especially in the major cities. The odors from these waste dumps are most unbearable. The inhabitants struggle with flies for their foods which is detrimental to human health. Hawkers and inhabitants, out of self-indiscipline, litter the streets and the general environment with refuse dumps. Environmental protection and sanitation laws are hardly-enforced. The performance of government-established agency, the Anambra State Environmental Sanitation Agency (ASESA) is limited by lack of funds and non-availability of expertise, thereby, nullifying their major role of ensuring optimum environmental sanitation for the State. The environmental sanitation in and around the numerous markets is most devastating. People throw away waste products from their houses, offices, moving vehicles, thereby, constituting themselves into an environmental nuisance. Central waste collection containers are rarely provided by both local and state governments. Where they do, the containers are not regularly evacuated as necessary.

Introduction

A healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Indiscriminate waste disposal in the state has resulted in the outbreak of epidemic that have untold affects on the poor inhabitants especially children and women. Pollution/contamination of available water resources by improper waste disposal/management and incessant outbreak of water borne diseases are common place. Poor waste disposal/management and attendant environmental implications exacerbates socioeconomic developments of the state. Man hours are lost and people's potentials not fully harnessed as a result of ill-health. For sustainable development through proper environmental sanitation, all stakeholders should be involved in environmental sanitation issues. To contain the menace of environmental sanitation, there is need to provide waste collection containers at strategic points in the cities and these containers regularly emptied. Private sectors should be allowed to participate in waste disposal/management from offices, houses, hospitals etc at a token fee. There is need to create awareness among

all stakeholders especially government at all levels, women, youths and children on the need for adequate environmental sanitation for both social and economic development. Bimonthly environmental sanitation exercise should be introduced and properly monitored. Installation of waste recycling plants close to government approved waste dump sites is hereby suggested. This will not only create employment opportunity but will also promote economic growth of the state.

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