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IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract
Environmental development is a challenge facing African communities and especially Nigerians. The sustenance of a good environment depends on the participation of every stakeholders of the economy. The study examined environmental education and its implications for Sustainable Development Goals for sustainable community development in Ilorin Metropolis. Four hypotheses and four research questions were formulated based on variables like concept of environmental education, sustainable development goals. 240 respondents were selected through the simple random sampling technique and the close ended structured type of Likert questionnaire was used for data collection. Chi-square was used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS 21.0. The findings of the study showed that proper environmental education as engaged in by both gender and action groups is key in achieving sustainable Development goals 13 and 15, based on which conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: *Environmental Education, Sustainability, Community Development, Sustainable community Goals and Assessment.*

Introduction

The whole world is facing the global challenges which accompany climate change and communities in Nigeria are not exempted from this confrontation of environmental hazard and its resultant effects such as erratic and scanty rainfall with a high level of anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHGs) released into the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide (CO_2: through fossil fuel burning and tropical deforestation) chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane (CH_4: Rice paddies, digestion in ruminants, Gas, coal production, Landfills and Tropical deforestation), and nitrous oxide (N_2O: Fertilizer use, Fossil fuel combustion, Tropical deforestation, Increased cultivation of land, Agricultural wastes, Fuel wood and industrial biomass). Beniston (2010) reiterated that human activities in most parts of the world are transforming the global environment. Among the numerous factors that contribute to global environment change, mention can be made of land-use change, desertification and

deforestation, loss of biodiversity, air pollution, ozone depletion and climate change resulting into changes in average and extreme patterns of weather and climate are capable of putting vital resources under pressure. All these activities results in excessive heating of the earth surface with the consequence of a rapid depletion of the ozone layer with an increase amount of these gases in the atmosphere, massive erosion due to rapid global warming among others and all these contribute immensely to the climate change experienced all over the world today (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,2007).

According to National Park Service (2016), climate change refers to changes in the Earth's long-term weather patterns. Some changes in climate occur naturally such as gradual temperature fluctuations over thousands of years which are a natural part of the Earth's climate. However, the major input for climate change leading to environmental degradation is man through his daily lifestyle such as rapid deforestation, resulting from unsustainable uses of forest resources for human survival (e.g. fuel wood and energy, housing etc.) as well as indiscriminate and inappropriate mining activities is also a contributing factor to land degradation among others with the resultant effect such as drought, floods and erosion while population increase is also exerting pressure on the environment.

The Federal Government has taken the issues of environmental pollution and degradation seriously with various national efforts being put in place at all levels of governance to promote environmental sustainability in the context of National Sustainable Development. To this end, Nigeria as a nation is poised to inhibiting this condition as clearly articulated by the country's 1999 Constitution Article 20 (sub-section 2), which laid emphasis on the environmental pillar of sustainable development, stating that "the State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria" (FGN SDG, 2015). In the pursuit of this mandate, the Federal Ministry of Environment responsible for environmental governance is poised to securing a quality environment conducive for good health and well being of fauna and flora, promoting sustainable use of natural resources, restoring and maintaining the ecosystem, ecological process and preserving biodiversity; and raising public awareness and promoting understanding of linkages of the environment. According to Justice, Development & Peace Commission (2016), for sustainable environment management, with Nigerian's vision of leaving no Nigerian behind, SDGs was integrated in an inclusive and people-centered manner while focusing on institutional and policy strengthening. Guiding this vision are goals some of which are to:

1. take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG Goal 13)
2. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (SDG Goal 15).

These goals are a pointer to the fact that environment has been prioritized as a pillar of sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that for the country to meet its development challenges and follow the path of sustainable development, environmental sustainability should be promoted and this birthed the SDGs; which is one of the policies

and programmes aimed at fulfilling its commitment towards social progress, accelerated economic growth and enhanced environmental management. Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) submitted that in a bid to address the challenge of sustainable development globally, and particularly in Nigeria, all available means must be employed to tackle related problems of the environment as well as economic and social issues. This can be achieved by taking a conscious step towards the achievement of the goal of sustainable development.

A clean and protected environment is good and important for human safety, good health and sustainable development and environmental education is therefore a veritable tool in actualizing it. Environmental education is not new in our society since it has been part of the African cultural right from early childhood. Elders, parents and teachers use to teach in schools, societies and in our communities on how to develop and maintain our environment to make it more habitable and conducive for our living in a constantly changing climatic environment. Different organs, agencies and instruments such as the Mass media-radios, televisions, newspapers, magazines; Religious institutions-churches, mosques; Educational institutions-teachers; Families-Parents, Children; Youth Organisations - Students Union, Boys Scouts, Girls Guide; Social Clubs among others are necessary for effective mobilization for environmental education to be successful. A study by Torkar (2014) had three groups of teachers (preschool, primary school and biology), working in preschools and in nine-year long compulsory basic schools in Slovenia provides evidence of the significant life experiences that have influenced teachers' attitudes towards the environment and present their teaching practices within environmental education. Four teaching practices important for environmental education were direct experience of nature, discussions about environmental problems, active participation of students in environmental activities and the importance of teachers as role models. UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education Programme (1994) also used solid waste management case study facilitated by an instructor interested in students taking a holistic look at the landfill, its environment, possible issues surrounding the site, alternative disposal methods, land reclamation, and citizen action if needed. Using fieldtrips as an environmental education strategy, a worksheet included in the case study unit provided students with an opportunity to synthesize a great deal of information back in the classroom and to participate in decision making about the consequences of one type of human behavior as well as citizens' action that might be needed. The purpose of this study is therefore the assessment of Environmental Education, Mobilization and Sensitization as a combined effort as a tool for attaining Sustainable Development Goals. The main purpose is to assess Environmental Education as a tool for Sustainable Development Goals through the mobilization and sensitization of concerned agencies, organs and instruments in a result oriented manner. The study provides answers to the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How impactful is environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of gender?

2. How impactful is environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of action group?
3. How impactful is environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of gender?
4. How impactful is environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of action groups?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of gender.

H_{02}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of action group.

H_{03}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of gender.

H_{04}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of action group.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study and the population for this study was Community Based Organizations, Community Development Associations, Change Agents and other Stakeholders. The sample of 240 was randomly selected which consist of leaders of CBOs, Community Development partners with other stakeholders that formed the bulk of the respondents.

A self-structured questionnaire was used consisting of one section that elicited responses in terms of the variables used for the study. The instrument was validated with adoption of test-retest method and a reliability of 0.86 was recorded. The questionnaire forms were personally administered with two trained assistants and collected back. The

inferential statistics of chi-square (x^2) was used to analyze all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of gender.

Table 1: Impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 13 on the Basis of Gender

S/N	Issues Raised	No	Male Freq (%)	Female Freq (%)	Chi Square Value	P Value	Decision
1	Environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	228	**50**(21.9)	178(78.1)	2.514	.113	Do not Reject
2	Environmental education assists to restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	200	53(23.0)	177(77.0)	0.050	.823	Do not Reject
3	Environmental education assists to promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	228	52(22.8)	176(77.2)	0.31	.860	Do not Reject
4	Environmental education helps to sustainably manage forests	231	53(22.9)	178(77.1)	0.003	.960	Do not Reject
5	Environment education helps to combat desertification	228	52(22.8)	176(77.2)	0.031	.860	Do not Reject
6	Environmental education helps to halt and reverse land degradation	223	51(22.9)	178(77.1)	0.004	.950	Do not Reject

As shown on table 1, with the p value greater than 0.05 for all issue raised 1 to 6 stating that environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification as well as halt and reverse land degradation on the basis of gender are not rejected. This connotes that gender differences do not significantly impact the use of environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 13.

H_{02}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG goals 13: Combating climate change and its impacts on the basis of action group.

Table 2: Impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 13 on the Basis of Action Group

S/N	Issues Raised	No.	NGOs Frequency (%)	CBOs Frequency (%)	CDPs Frequency (%)	GOVT. Agencies Frequency (%)	Chi Square Value	P Value	Decision
1	Environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	228	116(50.9)	48(21.1)	32(14.0)	32(14.0)	5.519	.137	Do not Reject
2	Environmental education assists to restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	230	116(50.4)	49(21.3)	30(13.0)	35(15.2)	3.595	.309	Do not Reject
3	Environmental education assists to promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	228	115(50.4)	48(21.1)	31(13.6)	34(14.9)	2.944	.40	Do not Reject
4	Environmental education helps to sustainably manage forests	231	116(50.2)	50(21.6)	32(13.9)	33(14.3)	2.215	.529	Reject
5	Environment education helps to combat desertification	228	113(49.6)	52(22.8)	30(13.2)	33(14.5)	1.400	.706	Do not Reject
6	Environmental education helps to halt and reverse land degradation	223	115(51.6)	44(19.7)	32(14.3)	32(14.3)	11.997	.007	Reject

As shown on table 2, the p value was greater than 0.05 for issue raised stating that environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests as well as halt and reverse land degradation on the basis of action groups are not rejected while the p value was less than 0.05 for the statement environmental education assists to combat desertification. This connotes that action groups differences do not significantly impact the use of environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 13 except for the use environmental education for combating desertification where the action groups view point differences was significant.

H_{03}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of gender.

Table 3: Impact of environmental education (E.D.) for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15 on the Basis of Gender

S/N	Issues Raised	No	Male Freq (%)	Female Freq (%)	Chi Square Value	P Value	Decision
1	E.D. assists on practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	187	44(23.5)	143(76.5)	0.180	.671	Do not Reject
2	E.D. promotes the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to managing forests and combat desertification by constantly planting at least two trees for each one fallen	200	43(21.5)	157(78.5)	1.363	.243	Do not Reject
3	E.D. assists the planting of cover crops to control erosion in their communities	189	43(22.8)	146(77.2)	.014	.907	Do not Reject
4	E.D. promotes the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to halting and reversing land degradation	108	18(16.7)	90(83.3)	4.342	.037	Reject
5	E.D. assist to combat clearing of tropical forests as the most important single cause of losses in the earth's biological diversity	127	25(19.7)	102(80.3)	1.595	.207	Do not Reject

As shown on table 3, the p value for issue raised stating that environmental education assists on encouraging practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promoting the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to managing forests and combat desertification by constantly planting at least two trees for each one fallen the planting of cover crops to control erosion in communities and combat clearing of tropical forests as the most important single cause of losses in the earth's biological diversity on the basis of gender is greater than 0.05 and as such not rejected while the statement environmental education promotes the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to halting and reversing land degradation is less than the p value 0.05 and so rejected. This connotes that gender differences do not significantly impact the use of environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 13 except for the use of environmental education to promote the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens in order to halt and reverse land degradation.

H_{04}: There is no significant impact of environmental education for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15: Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss on the basis of action group.

Table 4: Impact of environmental education (E.D.) for the achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15 on the Basis of Action Group

S/N	Issues Raised	No	NGOs Freq (%)	CBOs Freq (%)	CDPs Freq (%)	GOVT. Agencies Freq (%)	Chi Square Value	P Value	Decision
1	E.D. assists on practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	187	84(44.9)	38(20.3)	30(16.0)	35(18.7)	20.144	.000	Reject
2	E.D. promotes the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to managing forests and combat desertification by constantly planting at least two trees for each one fallen	200	94(47.0)	44(22.0)	29(14.5)	33(16.5)	6.412	.093	Do not Reject
3	E.D. assists the planting of cover crops to control erosion in their communities	189	97(51.3)	40(21.2)	25(13.2)	27(14.3)	0.713	.870	Do not Reject
4	E.D. promotes the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to halting and reversing land degradation	108	56(51.9)	21(19.4)	16(14.8)	15(13.9)	1.142	.767	Do not Reject
5	E.D. assist to combat clearing of tropical forests as the most important single cause of losses in the earth's biological diversity	127	65(51.2)	28(22.0)	18(14.2)	16(12.6)	.947	.814	Do not Reject

As shown on table 4, the p value was greater than 0.05 for issue raised stating that environmental education environmental education assists on promoting the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to managing forests and combat desertification by constantly planting at least two trees for each one fallen the planting of cover crops to control erosion in communities, combat clearing of tropical forests as the most important single cause of losses in the earth's biological diversity and combat desertification on the basis of action groups are not rejected while the p value was less than 0.05 for the statement

encouraging practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems was rejected. This connotes that action groups differences do not significantly impact the use of environmental education for achievement of sustainable development SDG Goals 15 except for the use environmental education for encouraging practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems where the action groups view point differences was significant.

Discussion of Findings

The community is an area of social living, an institutional and structural location in which people develop their potentialities and achieve fulfillment in life. The development of any community should include the involvement of the activities of her community people. The main aim of the people must be to make their community habitable. Findings show that there were no significant gender disparities on the fact that environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification as well as halt and reverse land degradation all in combating climate change and its impacts. This is in line with National Research Council (1992) and national Park Services (2006) opinions as well as Iltus United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) (2012), all underscoring the indispensable role of environmental education in achieving sustainable development. It further reiterated that facilitating access to information on climate change is critical to winning public support for climate-related policies. Krasny et. al. (2015) also supports the view that environmental education is well positioned to play a role, alongside management and policies initiatives, in addressing climate change.

Findings also show that there were no significant action group disparities on the fact that environmental education assists to protect sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, restore sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification as well as halt and reverse land degradation all in combating climate change and its impacts. This is in congruence with the submission of Krasny et. al. (2015) who explained that climate change, similar to other environmental and conservation issues, presents a collective action or "tragedy of the commons" problem. As such, employing the use of environmental education in combating climate change and its impacts help program participants analyze situations in which collective action is more or less likely to be successful.

Findings from the study also revealed that there were no significant gender and action group disparities on the fact that environmental education assists on encouraging practices to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, promoting the use of modern equipments for farming among the citizens to managing forests and combat desertification by constantly planting at least two trees for each one fallen the planting of cover crops to control erosion in communities and combat clearing of tropical forests as the most important single cause of losses in the earth's biological diversity; in a bid to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial eco-systems, sustainably

manage forests, combat desertification, and halt as well as reverse land degradation and loss of biodiversity. This finding agrees with the summation of SDGs Life on land (n.d.) which submitted that there are environmental educational programmes for achieving success in stopping habitat destruction and in reducing the menace to threatened species to combat the loss of biodiversity. Jackson (2015) reiterated that environmental education championed by businesses as well as other community agencies would go a long way to effect widespread change and sustain our natural habitats, as well as the need to grow and act on a unified approach which recognises the connections and pressure points across industries and supply chains.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Environmental Education is an important and integral part in achieving sustainable development goals. Both the community developers and stakeholders must embrace it and adopt the appropriate strategies to improve and develop their community to be more habitable for them and to improve their socio-economic status as well.

Recommendation

To achieve sustainable development goals 13 and 15 within the target year of 2030, the following recommendations were therefore made:

- Community developers and other stakeholders should continually engage in environmental educational campaigns.
- The government should include Environmental education as a subject in the formal schooling curriculum.
- Sensitization of community dwellers to stop dumping of refuge and waste inside the rivers to reduce environmental disasters and degradation being a contributory factor to climate change.

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