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Evaluating sanitation and poverty reduction strategies in Port Harcourt City

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Abstract

Until recently, Port Harcourt was known as the ‘garden city of Nigeria’ because of its neatness and the overwhelming presence of vegetation and the flowers all over the metropolis. But today, the presence of piles of refuse dotting the entire city may have turned Port Harcourt into a ‘garbage city’. Indiscriminate dumping of wastes- industrial, commercial and household – such as food waste, paper, polythene, textiles, scrap metals, glasses, wood, plastic etc at all street corners and gutters speak of a city lacking in adequate monthly sanitation exercise. Presently, there’s a shift from monthly sanitation exercise to daily sanitation exercise in the state. This research therefore aims at a carefully assessment of the present system of sanitation program in the city and its relationship with urban poverty-reduction within the city of Port Harcourt. The subject matter of urban poverty reduction through effective sanitation program is the object of discussion throughout this research paper. Employing the IMRAD method of data collection and analysis, the study emphasizes that there’s wealth in waste and that the State government should adopt the strategy of sourcing wealth, employment etc from waste.

Keywords: Waste, sanitation, poverty reduction

(I) Introduction

Sanitation and Urban Poverty:

‘Cleanliness is next to godliness’ is an aphorism that many Nigerians are yet to imbibe in their everyday life. This can be seen in the dwindling monthly sanitation exercises in most states of the federation. It could be recalled that the monthly environment sanitation exercise was introduced by the then military government of Mohammed Buhari with the primary objective of protecting the Nigerian environment. WHO (World Health Organization) defines sanitation as the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces (WHO Report: 2005). It further refers to the maintenance of hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection and waste water disposal. The free encyclopedia defines sanitation as the hygienic means of promoting health through prevention of human contact with the hazards of as well as the treatment and power disposal of sewage wastewater (free encyclopedia: 2002). The process of keeping places free from dirt, infection, disease, etc by removing waste, trash and garbage could be referred to as sanitation, it further helps to control environmental factors that form links in disease transmission. National environmental sanitation policy states that Nigeria, endowed with abundant and diverse resources, is committed to protecting its environment. However, the country’s climatic and ecological diversity have implications on the intensity of human activities, nature and character of waste generated, and

environmental sanitation. It has, therefore, become imperative that the settlement environment and as resources should be managed judiciously, to enhance sustaining national socio-economic development.

A search of literature has shown that there is no general consensus on the definition of poverty, since poverty affects many aspects of human condition such as physical, moral and psychological (Adato, Michelle :2007). Poverty is the state of human beings who are poor. It involves those that have little or no material means of surviving. Broadly speaking, it implies little or no food, shelter, clothes, health care, education and other physical means of living and improving one's life. Poverty is equally a state of general scarcity or death, or the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessing or money, absolute poverty or destitution refers to the deprivation of basic human needs, which commonly includes foods, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter, health care and education (Ankeri Guy: 1986). While the United Nations view poverty as the inability of getting choices and opportunities, or a violation of human dignity, poverty equally means inability to participate effectively in societal activities especially as regards monthly sanitation exercises. One that does not have enough to feed and clothe himself or his family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow ones food or a job to earn one's living, and not having access to credit will find it very difficult to think of or even participate in monthly sanitation exercises, because to him, what is he sanitizing? Also, any society or environment that's not clean by way of a regular monthly sanitation programme exposes its citizens to insecurity and powerlessness with regards to poverty. In fact, it will not be out of place to state that, an unclean environment is a poor environment. Thus poverty either as a plague or cause of other specific problems of under-development afflicts Nigeria as it does to other nations of the world. Poverty has made Nigeria to attain an unenviable status such that no government (no matter the level), organization, community, clan or family can survive effectively without introducing one kind of poverty- reduction programme. This problem of poverty is essentially, not that of programme introduction but effectiveness of such programme and strategies so adopted in poverty reduction efforts. This paper therefore is an attempt at evaluating the relationship between monthly sanitation exercises i.e. clean environment and poverty i.e. poverty reduction in urban cities.

Poverty Reduction Programs In Nigeria From An Historical Perspective: The centrality of poverty has made successive Nigerian governments to initiate sustainable development programs aimed at alleviating or minimizing the scourge of the poverty phenomenon. Programs such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) which was launched in the 1970s and Green Revolution initiated in 1980 existed in the past to address the problems of poverty. Other efforts made by successive government include the establishment of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme (BLP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), etc. The conscious policy effort by government towards poverty allocation began with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The period proceeded severe economic crisis that worsened the quality of life in Nigeria. The government through the assistance of the programme further worsened the living standard of many Nigerians especially the poor people. In quick reaction to tackle the crisis the government designed and implemented many poverty alleviation programs between 1986 and 1993 under the guided deregulation of the economy. The impact of these programs on poverty alleviation recorded degree of success. Such programs include; DFRRI, NDE, PBN, FEAN, FSP and National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA).

The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was an interim measure put in place in 2000 to address the problems of rising unemployment in the society and to improve the productiveness of the economy. It was designed to coordinate and monitor poverty alleviation efforts and ensure that Nigerians were provided with steady sources of income, high purchasing power, quality education, water, healthcare and housing: stable and affordable power supply among others. All these seem to have received attention in designing NAPEP and to make it different from past efforts. The mandate is to monitor and coordinate all poverty eradication efforts in order to harmonize and ensure better delivery, maximum impact and effective utilization of available resources.

Urban Poverty Reduction And Policy Proposals In Nigeria: Urban poverty is a major problem in Nigeria. It is closely linked to rural poverty due to the trend towards migration to cities (Urban report journal: 2009). This paper posits and recognizes the roles and contributions of the federal ministries of Health, Housing, and Urban Development, Water Resources, Information, Agriculture and Rural Area Development, Culture and Tourism, as well as External Support Agencies, the Academia; Organized Private Sector: Civil Society Organization and Communities, in the nation's drive towards achieving sound Environmental sanitation for sustainable development. The environmental sanitation related diseases exacerbate poverty by diminishing productivity, and household income. Additionally, the national cost of lost productivity, reduced educational potential and by huge curative health costs constitute a major drain on the local and national economy (Borowiecki, Karol J: 2003). Besides, dirty environment with its health consequences can discourage tourists/investors and undermine the economic benefit of tourism to the state.

Urban poverty reduction programme supports urban planning policies that seek to bring political, social and economic stabilization to poorer residential areas as soon as possible. In addition to measures addressing social infrastructure, investment and the development of small urban businesses, urban poverty reduction policies (UPRP) must support capacity development for urban development and management. In order to tackle urban poverty, the integrated urban planning approach underpins the project, paying particular attention to involving the population in decision-making and giving consideration to the poorest residents. A study of sweepers who assist in daily environmental sanitation in the university of Port Harcourt reveals that the least person collects is about #15,000 monthly, and close to 1000 men and women have been employed by the school to help sanitize the environment by way of grass-cutting, sweeping, picking etc. This singular move has helped to alleviate the poverty of these people (researcher's fieldwork: 2014). The same move is equally applied by the state, which employs as many hands as possible to help keep the state especially the city-urban centre clean on daily basis. This has helped in;

1. Keeping the environment clean.
2. Reducing the poverty levels of these urban dwellers by providing employment for them,
3. Reducing the rate of airborne diseases in the city. etc.

Over the years, poor environmental sanitation condition has contributed significantly to the high prevalence of communicable disease in the country (WHO: 2005). Most of these diseases, which include malaria, cholera, typhoid, diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, tuberculosis and helminth infections, account for a significant percentage of morbidity and mortality. Therefore despite increased efforts by various successive governments at improving public health and quality of life, basic health indicators have remained poor since this sanitation related diseases still play large role in the creating ill health and poverty (online journal: 2013). The Rivers State government is committed to protecting and ensuring quality environment that is adequate for good health and well

being for present and future generations. However, the effort of past government has achieved minimal success because of absence of an appropriate policy instrument to provide focus and direction for the planning and implementation of environmental sanitation programme in the state. This and other gaps have necessitate this paper as a means of discovering practical reasons behind the lack of adequate involvement of citizens in the monthly environmental exercise and its implication for urban poverty reduction.

Research questions/problems:

- ❖ Is there a relationship between sanitation exercises and urban poverty reduction?
- ❖ Is the Ministry managing the waste generated from sanitation exercises effectively?
- ❖ Is Rivers State environmental sanitation authority empowered adequately by the government to deal effectively with the challenges associated with sanitizing the state capital?
- ❖ What is the strength of the ministry in terms of engendering a reduction in the poverty levels of people in the city of Port Harcourt?

Research hypothesis:

- ❖ H₁: There is a relationship between sanitation exercises and urban poverty reduction.
- ❖ H₁: The ministry is doing its best in terms of managing the waste generated from sanitation exercises in the state.
- ❖ H₀: The ministry is not adequately empowered to deal with the challenge that's associated with sanitizing the city of Portharcourt.
- ❖ H₁: The ministry through her social responsibility is doing her best to engender poverty reduction in the city of Port Harcourt.

(II) Methodology

(A) Study Area: The study area adopted by this work is Port Harcourt city which is the capital of Rivers State, Nigeria. It lies along the bonny river and is located in the Niger Delta. According to the recent population census of the state capital, Port Harcourt city has a population of about 1,783,575. The city is about 360 km² (140 sq mi).

(B) Sampling Population: The sampling population which is of interest to this study will be 500 persons drawn from different sectors of the State; specifically the sample will be restricted to areas such as Choba, Rumuokoro, and Rumuochuruchi.

(C) Methodology And Data Collection Method: This study will make use of primary and secondary data sources. For primary sources, we shall engage in observation, conduct oral interviews and send out questionnaires. And for the secondary data collection, we shall rely on intellectual journals, text books, internet, newspapers, radio and television. Generally, we shall use descriptive method to describe issues, analytical method to analyze concepts and samples to test hypothesis. Sample shall be drawn randomly. Since sample shall be based on nominal scale, simple percentage method shall apply. This research format seeks to obtain detailed information about issues, problems, and situations that currently in existence or that exist at the moment such as of course the retrogressing level of unsanitary environment in Port Harcourt and seeks to profer solutions on possible ways of addressing such.

(D) Sampling Technique: This research work will adopt the random sampling technique method of data collection from which the target population will be drawn.

(E) Method of Data Analysis: this paper will adopt the simple percentage method of data analysis in analyzing the data obtained by the researcher from his fieldwork.

(F) Theoretical Framework: The primary function of the founding fathers of sociology was to develop ways of examining the nature and functioning of society and social change, Ekpenyong (1993, 2003:38). Similarly political systems perform particular functions for the stability of the system. To theoretically situate this paper, we shall adopt the structural-functionalism approach. Structural-functionalism was developed by Talcot Persons and Levy, Kalagbor (2001). The premise of structural-functionalism is to provide a consistent and integrated theory from which can be derived explanatory hypotheses relevant to all aspect of a political system, Kalagbor (ibid). It adopts a holistic approach to the analysis of political system and the unit of analysis is the whole system. The term structural – functionalism suggests that society must meet certain individual and group needs such as shelter, nourishment, replacement, sanitation, a measure of security etc which lead to norms, forms and institutions which control and coordinate men in the attempt to meet those needs, Robert E, Dowse and John A. Hughes (1927:75).

The early functionalists usually compare the society to an organism such as the human body. They posit that an understanding of any part or organ of the body such as the heart or lungs involves an understanding of its relationship to other organs, in particular, its contribution towards the maintenance of the organism. Similarly, an understanding of any part, organ or institution of the society requires an analysis of its relationship to other parts and most importantly, its contributions to the maintenance of the society. They argue that just as an Organism has certain basic needs which must be satisfied if it is to continue to exist. Thus, the place of sanitation in the overall sustenance and existence of the city of Port Harcourt and its role in urban poverty reduction cannot be over-emphasized. Sanitation therefore plays an important and significant role in the overall smooth-functioning of the society, and as an importantly component is necessary for urban poverty needs to be given its rightful place, effectively managed and adequately catered for the structures of the State

(II) Result: Here we shall present and analyze the data collected from the field work of the researcher. The data are tabulated and analyzed using the simple percentage form and the results of the analysis are based on higher percentage value. Data were collected from random sampling of the sample areas of Choba, rumuochuruchi, and rumuokoro all in the city of Port Harcourt. The following are the hypothesis of the researcher: There is a relationship between sanitation exercises and urban poverty reduction, The ministry is faced with a lot of challenges that is hampering its productivity by way of service delivery, A lot of trucks have been employed by the ministry to help evacuate the waste generated during sanitation exercises, The ministry is doing its best via its social responsibility but a lot still needs o be done were tested in order to determine the major catalyst for urban poverty reduction using the instrument of sanitation.

The first table will show the distribution of questionnaires, including questionnaires filled and returned by the respondents. Data collected are analyzed in two sections. Section 1, will show social demographic distribution of respondents. Section 2, will deal with the analysis of data based on the opinions of the respondents on sanitation as an instrument in facilitating poverty reduction in urban centers.

Section 1:
Table-1: Distribution Of Questionnaire

Areas Distributed	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Percentage (%)
Choba	60	52	32.7
Rumuochuruchi	60	54	33.9
Rumuokoro	60	53	33.4
TOTAL	180	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The above table shows that 180 questionnaires were distributed to respondents with the view to bringing out necessary information on the relationship between sanitation and urban poverty reduction in the city of Portharcourt. The table indicates that three areas within the city were selected and questionnaires distributed on equal number of 60 each (180). The table further reveals that out of 180 questionnaires distributed, 159 were filled and returned, representing 100%. Random sampling was adopted to obtain data from the sample areas mentioned.

Social Demographic Distribution of Respondents
Table-2: Showing Sex Distribution of Respondents

SEX	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	90	56.60
Female	69	43.39
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The above table shows that 90 respondents, representing 56.60% are male, while 69 respondents, representing 43.39% are female.

Table -3: Showing Age Distribution Of Respondents:

Age:	No of Respondents:	Percentage (%)
18-30	30	18.86
31-45	54	33.96
46 and above	75	47.16
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The above table indicates that 30 respondents, which represent 18.86% are between the ages of 18 and 30 years, while 54 respondents, representing 33.96% are between the ages of 31 and 45 years, and 75 respondents, representing 47.16 are 46 years and above. The reason for showcasing the age distribution is to show that a high proportion of the respondents (combined 129 respondents, representing 81.12%) are mature men and women that are informed about the state of things in the society.

Table-4: Showing Marital Status Of Respondents:

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Single	62	38.99%
Married	97	61.00%
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

From the table above, it shows that 62 respondents, representing 38.99% are single, while 97 respondents, representing 61% are married. Viewed from this distribution, the significance is that 61% of the respondents are people with socio-economic and political responsibilities. The above statement is misleading if we stop there. It would appear as if the single have no socio-economic and political responsibility in the society, they have but, as agreed it is lesser and limited when viewed from the cultural background of the society.

Section 2:

Data Analysis of Hypothesis (H1)

Table -5: Is there any relationship between sanitation and poverty reduction?

Options	Number Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	109	68.55
No	50	31.44
Total	159	100

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The above table represents two broad opinions about whether sanitation exercises can help reduce the poverty level in urban cities. Based on the data above, 109 respondents, representing 68.55% said yes, while 50 respondents, representing 31.44% answered no. Therefore, sanitation exercise has a significant relationship with urban poverty reduction.

Data Analysis of Hypothesis (H2)

Table-6: Is the commission managing the waste generated from monthly sanitation exercises effectively?

Options	Number Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	66.03
No	54	33.96
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The Table above represents two broad opinions about whether the ministry that's charged with sanitizing the city of Portharcourt is managing the waste generated from sanitation exercises effectively. Based on the data obtained above, 105 respondents, representing 66.03% said yes, while 54 respondents, representing 33.96% said no. Therefore, the Rivers State environmental sanitation Authority is doing its best with regards to management of Waste generated during sanitation exercises.

Data Analysis of Hypothesis (H3)

Table-7: Is Rivers State environmental sanitation authority empowered adequately by the government to deal effectively with the challenges associated with sanitizing the state capital?

Options:	Number Of Respondents:	Percentage (%)
Yes	17	11
No	142	89
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

From the above, 17 respondents, representing 11% claimed that the ministry is adequately empowered by the state government, while, 142 respondents, representing 89% said that the ministry is ill-financed and empowered by the state.

Data Analysis of Hypothesis (H4)**Table -8:** What is the strength of the ministry in terms of engendering a reduction in the poverty levels of people in the city of Portharcourt?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
31-50%	37	23.25
51-70%	42	26.41
71-90%	80	50.31
91-100%	Nil	0
Total	159	100%

Source: Researcher's field work, 2014.

The above table indicates that the percentage level to which the Rivers State Ministry of Environmental Sanitation has helped in engendering a reduction in poverty in the city. 80 respondents, representing 50.31% claimed that the ministry has achieved up to 90% level of poverty reduction in the city as against 37 respondents, representing 23.25% said the ministry has only achieved such up to 50%. 42 respondents, constituting 26.41% are of the opinion that ministry has helped in reducing unemployment up to 70%. From the data here, it is clear that the ministry of environmental sanitation authority has a pass mark with regards to poverty reduction in the city

A pleasant environment that is hazard free and promotes healthful living is one of the fundamental rights of all Nigerians. There cannot be a healthy nation without a healthy environment. An unhealthy population and a degraded environment will hinder progress towards development goals, especially as it affects poverty reduction. From the methods applied, it was discovered that the environmental sanitation authority is faced a lot of challenges, which tend to hammer their productivity with regards to effective sanitation programme in the state. Some of these challenges include: lack of adequate public participation in the programme. This tends to be very obvious in areas such as Oyigbo, Alou, woji etc within the state. Others include indiscriminate dumping of refuse especially with pure water sachets in and around the state metropolis this of course is in spite of the policy framework which stipulates the time and venue for such refuse disposal. Attitudinal issues, (i.e. government should clean our environment perception), based on this, the response of the average citizen as regards cleaning the environment is mostly poor. In spite of the fact that government takes responsibility of paying those who sweep Truck A and Truck B roads within the state on daily basis, the little that's expected of citizens living in the state by way of keeping their immediate surroundings clean proves a difficult to carry out even during monthly sanitation exercises. Thus, it can be concluded that an average citizen of the state's perception of sanitary exercises in the state such as picking up garbage, sweeping streets, sweeping roads, clearing away refuse, bagging waste, sorting bottle etc is very poor.

It was discovered from the study that the Environmental Sanitation Authority has 3 dump-sites and intends acquiring another before the year runs out. One of the major challenges facing the commission with regards to dumpsites comes in the form of this adage "Not my backyard", thus, many residents especially those in living in and around Oyigbo refuse the act of situating dump sites in their neighborhood.

"Going forward, we plan to reduce governments involvement in waste management by ensuring that all waste generators including households, pay for the volume of waste they generate" Mr. Ade Adeogun Sole Administrator of the Rivers State waste management Agency.

(IV) Discussion: It was discovered that sanitation definitely has a huge relationship with urban poverty reduction. This is because, through daily sanitation and monthly sanitation exercises a lot of youths and women gain employment. In fact, all Truck A and truck B roads in Rivers State, especially in Port Harcourt city is swept on daily basis by those employed by the state, and paid on weekly and/monthly basis. It was equally discovered that Rivers State has one of highest population with regards to unemployed persons in the federation. Sanitation from this study can help curb this, through recycling of waste especially pure-water sachet, evacuation of drains for payments, waste picking etc. Private individuals can equally go into public toilet and urinary management as it can serve as a veritable source of revenue. This way, the environment will be kept clean and income will also be generated by these private individuals. On the other hand, if individuals fail to consistently engage in monthly exercises, the environment will be polluted with diverse kinds of diseases which will eventually further take the little money available to them away by way of drugs and treatments.

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Inyikalum Daniel with one of the waste disposal trucks at the state ministry of environment's premises, shortly after his interview with the contractors managing the trucks.



Shortly after an interview section with the media officer of the commission, Inyikalum Daniel beside the management's public awareness bus, used primarily to educate and sensitize the masses on the benefits of keeping their environments especially the city capital clean.