

# PROBLEMS OF ENVIRONMENT SANITATION IN ONITSHA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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## **Abstract**

The study investigated the problems of environmental sanitation in Onitsha South Local Government Area of Anambra State. A self-developed, validated questionnaire with reliability of 0.76 was used to collect (the date, Analyzing the data from 1000 respondents, we found out Unit tack of facilities for environmental sanitation in terms of handling, transportation and accessible dump site, lack of active participation by the residents of the Onitsha South Local Government Area in environmental sanitation activities and inadequate budgetary allocation were problems militating against environmental sanitation. Part of our recommendation was to equip the environmental sanitation unit with skilled and unskilled personnel and be given adequate training and protection on how to handle health and sanitation matters.

## **Introduction**

Man's environment has been in continuous degradation as a result of inadequate disposal of wastes. This is noticed in most towns and cities of the developing world, where most often wastes once disposed in gullies or abandoned pits leading to deterioration of the natural environment and defacing its beauty, (Awake, 1996). Nigeria is plagued with vast number of environmental problems threatening the ecosystem and indeed the people. These problems vary in the occurrence and their intensities across various ecological zones of the country. These problems of environmental sanitation are as deadly as the weapons of destruction the United States of America is pursuing in Iraq (Sule, 2004).

According to WHO/UNICEF (2000) environmental sanitation and human health are closely linked. Poor management of human waste can lead to direct or indirect disease transmission. This clearly suggests the importance of providing adequate sanitation and the need for preventive measures to combat environmental transmission of pathogens. Kawu (2003) lamented that Professor Ransome Kuti fought a war for primary health care as a remedy for environmental sanitation among others and remained till his death, a lonely voice among local and international men whose teeth were sharpened by "Nigeria's oil boom. These men preferred the importance of expensive health services and facilities against the self participation, primary health care concept stressed for their personal economic gains.

Although government has held landmark conferences, negotiated dozens of bilateral and multilateral agreements, put in place instructions for improving the environment as it is always said than done, many of us still suffer from environmental fatigue. The establishment of ministry of environment at federal level in particular and state levels in general presupposed that the government acknowledged at least, in principle the enormous environmental problems that beset the nation (Usman, 2004) that as frustrated as we are one seems to do so much to help and that we cannot continue to sit down and watch floods, heaps of refuse and plastic bags take over our towns and cities. This assertion is applicable to Onitsha South Local Area which has been embedded with waste all over.

## **Statement of the Problem**

It is ironical that despite the nation's oil wealth many communities in this country, especially all urban settlements with Onitsha south Local Government Area inclusive are galvanized with refuse. Awake (1996) said, indiscriminate refuse dumping is terrifying because most often, its ill-effects on health spread like

wildfire and is even more dangerous than weapons of mass destruction. Supportive of this idea is the opinion of Wohler (1980) who said that air may appear fresh and pure and yet be radio-active and germs saturated, food and water may appear wholesome yet be full of chemical poison and germs contaminated. Ducas and Gilles (1979) confirmed that of a truth, it does not need the aid of a microscope to reveal to us that poor sanitation and refuse dump harbour micro-organisms and what may claim human lives massively.

There are obvious reasons that, despite the tremendous effort of the environmental protection agencies of both local and .slate government in small measure to dispose refuse, the rate at which the refuse accumulate again and again calls for the study in order to identify the problems for poor environmental sanitation.

### Hypothesis

In order to ascertain these problems some hypothesis were formulated thus;

1. Pre-requisite facilities for refuse dispose/would not be adequate in Onitsha South LGA
2. Inadequate participation of residents does not contribute to heaps of refuse seen in Onitsha South LGA.
3. Problems of environmental sanitation in Onitsha South LGA would not be largely due to inadequate budgetary allocation.

### Methodology

#### Population

The population for this study consisted of all people resident in Onitsha South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

#### Sample and Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was used. Ten wards were randomly selected, each was regarded as a stratum. Thereafter, through simple random sampling 20% of residents in each ward were sampled. 1000 residents that were sampled constituted the study sample.

#### Research Instrument

The questionnaire instrument used for this study was self developed, validated using the modified Likert scale pattern with the options of SA- strongly agreed, A-agreed, D-Disagree and SD-strongly disagreed which has the reliability coefficient of 0.76.

#### Data Collection

Twenty (20) trained research assistants helped in the administration and collection of questionnaire forms within one week. The research assistants visited the respondents in their various wards of residence.

#### Procedure for Data Analysis

The completed questionnaire form was collected, coded and subsequently analysed using the inferential statistics of Chi square ( $X^2$ ) for hypotheses testing at 0.05 level of significance.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

**Hypothesis 1:** Prerequisite facilities for refuse disposal would not be inadequate in Onitsha South Local Government Area.

**Table 1:  $X^2$  Analysis of Respondents on Whether Pre-Requisite Facilities for Refuse Disposal Adequate**

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	T o t a l ^	$X^2$ cal	Comment
	80	250	400	270	1000		
	80%	25%	40%	27%	100%	277.2	S
	33%	L_67%					

$X^2$  calculated = 277.2, df= 3, P 0.05,  $X^2$  Table valve = 7.82.

In Table 1, since the calculated  $X^2$  value of 277.2 was more than the  $X^2$  Table value of 7.82, the researchers rejected the hypothesis and accepted significantly that there are inadequate facilities for refuse disposal representing 330(33%) against 670 (67%).

**Onitsha South Local Government Area being the centre** for all Nigerians, thus based on its position commensurable facilities for **environmental** sanitation should be provided. But on the contrary, Adebena (1978) opined that though much attention has been focused on the problems of waste disposal in this country for long, instead of any improvement, the rapid increase in population of cities and urban areas without corresponding provision of necessary sanitation infrastructure, scorns to add more to the magnitude of the problem. Similarly, Ademuwagun and Adekunle (1998) supported that, the following constitute great problems to environmental sanitation:

- a) Inadequate general facilities for sanitation.
- b) Inadequate toilet (collection and storage) facilities for refuse which result in over use and consequent maintenance.
- c) Lack of maintenance culture in the citizenry of the available facilities.
- d) Continuous influx of people into the urban area when compared with space and facilities available.

**Hypothesis 2:** Inadequate participation of residents does not contribute to heaps of refuse seen in Onitsha South Local Government Area.

**Table 2:  $X^2$  Analysis of Respondents on Whether Inadequate Participation of Residents of Onitsha South Local Government Area Contribute to Heaps of Refuse Seen All Over the Area**

Response	SA	A	D	SD	Total $X^2$ Cal	Comment
Frequency	140	200	500	160	1000	
					340.8	S
Percentage	14%	20%	50%	16%	100%	

$X^2$  calculated = 340.8, df = 3, p = 0.05157,  $Ta^{\text{ivevalue}} = 7.82$ .

Since  $X^2$  calculated of 340.8 is greater than  $X^2$  table value of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance, df = 3, the researchers rejected hypothesis 2 and accepted significantly that inadequate participation of residents to environmental sanitation contribute to the heaps of refuse seen all over the area, representing 340 (34%) against 660 (66%).

The residents of Onitsha South Local Government Area said in the research that, their inactive participation in environmental sanitation exercise was due to inadequate mobilization and enforcement on the part of environmental sanitation council of the state whereas the council on its own was of the opinion that in spite of the re-introduction of sanitation exercise by the state government on last Saturday of every month, the altitude of the residents has not changed. This is line with Falomo (1995) that, the poor attitude always exhibited by Nigerian urban dwellers to sanitation are partly due to inadequate facilities and inefficient performance of the staff of the disposal authorities. As a result people have chosen to be altogether lawless and exhibit non-challant attitude to the supposed compulsory sanitation exercise conducted once a month.

**Hypothesis 3:** Problem of environmental sanitation in Onitsha South Local Government Area would not be largely due to inadequate budgetary allocation.

**Table 3:  $X^2$  Analysis of Respondents on Whether Problems of Environmental Sanitation would not Largely be Due to Inadequate Budgetary Allocation**

Response	SA	A	SI	Total	gcal	Comment
Frequency	60	120	340	480	1000	S
						456.0
Percentage	6%	12%	34%	46%	100%	

$X^2$  calculated - 456.0, df = 3, P 0.05, table value = 7.82.

In Table 3 since the  $X^2$  calculated of 456.0 is greater than  $X^2$  table value of 7.82, the researchers rejected the hypothesis 3 and significantly accepted that inadequate budgetary allocation is responsible for environmental sanitation problems in Onitsha South Local Government Area. This finding is supported by David (1999) that many cities of the world including America, Europe, Africa etc are experimenting wide initiative to address environmental sanitation problems but funds has always been the limiting factor. Similarly, Leopard (1997) agreed that the treatment of waste by federal and state government cost billions of money every year and often the money is not there.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, it was concluded that there were inadequate facilities for environmental sanitation, inadequate participation by residents of Onitsha South Local Government Area was due to inadequate mobilization and enforcement on the part of sanitation works of the area, inadequate budgetary allocation to sanitation. Based on this, we therefore made the following recommendations:

- (a) Sanitation is one of the most important statutory responsibilities of the Local Government in the country. It was discovered that the capacity of the Local Government is limited by funds, manpower and the challenge of heaps all over the place. The Local Government Areas can engage the services of the private sector by involving them in the construction of enough sanitary landfills on the site that are accessible and carefully chosen. They should equally be left with the responsibilities of ensuring that such sites are maintained and water sources not polluted.
- (b) Inadequate funding for environmental sanitation has been identified as a fundamental factor affecting, the Local Government Area and this area needs to be improved by increasing, budgetary allocation for the purchase of facilities like communal bins, evacuation vans etc, also more funds would enable the unit to hire/employ more handlers and manpower.
- (e) The environmental sanitation unit be equipped with skilled and unskilled personnel they should be given adequate training and protection on how to handle health and sanitation matters.

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