



# Addressing Environmental Factor for Re-Engineering Nigerian Educational System: A Panacea for Sustainable Employability and Economic Development

**Francis U. U. \***

\*Department of Business Education  
Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria

**Solomon J. E. <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Education  
Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria

**L. A. Adewuyi<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Education  
Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria

**Solomon Gabriel<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>Department of Educational Foundation  
State College of Education, Akwanga Nasarawa State, Nigeria

## Abstract

Environmental factors can pose a very big challenge to the educational system of any country. Addressing it could go a long way in revamping it. The paper therefore by used of literature posited on the following issues: the educational system of Nigeria, the structure of educational system in Nigeria, environmental issues in Nigeria, Effects of environmental challenges on Nigerian educational system, remedies, findings from literatures and studies, conclusion and recommendations. The literature reviewed found that there is great impact of environmental challenges on educational system as well as lives. It also revealed that the causes of environmental challenges are; Erosion, Flooding, Improper waste disposal, Excessive cutting down of trees (i.e., deforestation), and Pollution. Other related environmental factor includes absenteeism to classes due to illness caused by contaminated water taken into the body system can lead to poor performance withdrawals, uncontrolled erosion around the academic environment can cause damage to roads leading to learning centers, destruction of schools due to heavy wind can lead to interruption in the teaching and learning process, unhealthy inhale of polluted air promotes diseases dangerous to learners/teachers health, heavy outbreak of water into school premises can lead to the destruction of relevant educational materials/equipment. The following were recommended among others: Government and other agencies should environmental awareness unit. This must be done both at federal, state and local level with the sole aim of enlightens the general public about environmental challenges with implications to lives and educational system, individual should be held responsibility be held responsible for violating disposal order and be obligated to proper disposal of waste products and cleaning of their vicinity.

**Keywords:** Environmental Factors, Nigerian Educational System, Sustainable employability and Economic Development.

## Introduction

The physical surrounds on which a person depends for tasks like production, consumption, and education are referred to as their environment. A healthy environment is essential to human survival and nutrition. There must be a balanced degree in the ecosystem for the continuity of life. However, in recent years, the environment is becoming unhealthy and unsafe for habitation due to plague of numerous pollution issues. This problem of pollution affects natural resources such as soil, plants, metals, energy carriers, ecosystem and animals in addition to the air, water, and land. The biodiversity is disappearing up to ten thousand times faster than it was one hundred years ago (Bio-Explorer, 2021) <sup>[5]</sup>. This was also elaborated by Population Matters (2022), who opined that the environment is under greater strain than ever before. The growth in unhealthful behaviors in the environment is to blame for this. Anderson (2019) <sup>[4]</sup> in the same vein opined that animals, plants, microorganisms, and humans are all at risk from environmental degradation, which jeopardizes their safety and overall long-term health. Thus, environment supplies the necessary elements for air, water, food, a place to live, raw materials, a place to dump generated waste, as well as the fundamental needs for technological and civilization advancement.....

### **Publication Information:**

- **Received Date:** 28-10-2022
- **Accepted Date:** 15-11-2022
- **Revised Date:** 19-11-2022
- **Publication Date:** 20-11-2022

### **How to cite this article:**

Francis U. U., Solomon J. E., L. A. Adewuyi, Solomon Gabriel. Addressing Environmental Factor for Re-Engineering Nigerian Educational System: A Panacea for Sustainable Employability and Economic Development. Int. Jr. of Contemp. Res. in Multi. 2022; 1(1):09-15.

Negative effects of activities of human on the world, its natural systems, which have an adverse effect on plants and animals, are referred to as environmental issues (Giving Compass, 2022) <sup>[14]</sup>. Deforestation, pollution, global warming, ocean acidification and climate change are a few of these environmental problems. According to Anderson (2019) <sup>[4]</sup>, both human activity and natural factors can contribute to some of these environmental issues, such climate change. Tane & Ochekwu (2010) <sup>[27]</sup> claim that human activities have continued to worsen the condition of the environment in many places of the world. Therefore, realizing how human activities contribute to environmental deterioration is a step in the direction of developing long-term solutions to environmental problems. (Fasolya, 2016; Lauwrens, 2021) <sup>[11]</sup>. According to the speaker, being conscious of our surroundings and understanding how human actions impact the ecosystems in which we live are examples of environmental awareness. Therefore, the increased engagement of human beings in activities that causes environmental issues and the desire to create awareness motivated this study.

Environmental issues are increasing, leading to a variety of environmental disasters that threaten human health such as air pollution, floods, tsunamis, glacier melt and the advent of non-communicable and infectious diseases. Numerous environmental challenges, such as greenhouse effects, soil degradation, waste production, global warming, unrestricted usage of land, deforestation, acid rain, ozone layer loss and climate change, show how serious environmental issues are and chemical toxicity in Nigeria. Other environmental issues affecting the environment are green gas emissions, ineffective waste water and solid waste management, and energy use. Due to the harm it causes to marine life

and its contribution to the increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which causes global warming and ocean acidification, problem of oil drilling is one big influence on the environment. Based on the above challenge human activities is causing on our environment; this article seeks to assess the environmental challenges and its remedies to Educational system in Nigeria.

### **Educational System in Nigeria**

The concept of education is difficult to describe and can be rather obscure. The intricacy of the field is required by the roles that education, as one of society's institutions, must play. For the sake of this essay, few definitions of education will be considered.

The Latin words "education" and "educare," both of which have Latin etymologies, denote "to lead forth" and "to bring up," respectively. This is a pointer to the fact that education its recipients to develop their skills and bring them out. Okoorosaye-Orubite (2019) <sup>[21]</sup> asserts that education is a social creation designed to meet the particular needs of the society at every given period. The society controls its format, subject matter, approach, and audience. According to Nzewu (1985) <sup>[19]</sup>, educating plays a part in fostering or preparing people to live in society and, as a result, enable them to carry out particular tasks for society. According to Clark, who was referenced in Vikoo (2016) <sup>[29]</sup>, it is an interaction between instructors and a learners (teachers and student) which is under instructor's purview to effect desired change in the behavior. O'connor (1966) argued that the purpose of any civilizations of educational system is to instill in people particular traits or attitudes that are deemed to be beneficial and desirable in that community. According to Adelowo (2010) <sup>[1]</sup>, the purpose of education is to instill ideals, attitudes, and

skills in society's members in a coordinated manner. Excellent support according to Pauley and Buseri (2019)<sup>[23]</sup>, who regard a socializing agent that equips all of its beneficiaries with the skills, knowledge, cultural values, attitude, language, and social skills they need to adapt to the wants and wishes of their society as education.

In Nigeria, government has actively participated in and extensively intervened in education as a public project (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981)<sup>[12]</sup>. According to Nigeria's established education policy, education should be used as a tool to advance national development. Nigeria's education policy has changed as a result of a variety of historical events because education is an instrument for change.

## **The Organization of Nigerian Educational System**

The Nigerian educational system is organized on four levels. The official educational system is made up of the following three and the first is informal. Among them are:

### ❖ **Pre-primary Education**

This type of informal education, known as early child care and development education, is geared toward kids between the ages of 2 and 5 years old. These institutions were founded in accordance with 1985 Decree No. 16. (National minimum standards and establishment of institutions) Private organizations and individuals have been operating it as daycare centers and preschools. The young child's development of a proper educational attitude and awareness is one of the main goals.

### ❖ **Primary Education**

This is the foundational stage of the Nigerian formal educational system. It offers a six (6) years programme for pupils between the ages of 6 and 12. This level is regarded as the official beginning of education and as the determining factor in whether the entire system succeeds or fails. The goal involves being ready for a wide education with a focus on acquiring numeracy, effective communication skills and lasting practical literacy.

### ❖ **Secondary Education Stage**

This stage of Nigerian education system that proceeds primary school is called secondary education. This stage is divided into two phases that lasts for six (6) years. Classes in the first phase, runs from Junior Secondary School (JSS) 1 to Junior Secondary School 3, Students must take and pass the Junior Secondary School Certificate examination (JSSCE) at the end of Junior Secondary School 3. This phased is geared toward kids between the ages of 12 and 14 years old. It is required of those who struggled in formal schooling to pick up some occupational skills. In reality, junior secondary school is seen by Uruakpa (1995)<sup>[28]</sup> as a phase of education where kids are talent-hunted and exposed to academic prevocational subjects in an effort to determine their gifts, talents and attitudes. The second phase of

secondary school education runs from Senior Secondary 1 (SS 1) to Secondary School 3 (SS 3) at the senior secondary level. Subject selection takes into account the student's interest, ability and attitude. Despite the fact that he or she is required to study technology, humanities, and business. Continuous assessment and external examinations such as WASC and NECO are used to evaluate and certify students. The student is between the ages of 15 and 18.

❖ **Tertiary Education:** Successful students are admitted to universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and other related institutions for post-secondary education. According to Gbamanja (1997)<sup>[13]</sup>, tertiary education objectives include the development of intellectual ability and skills to understand and apply the environment.

### **A. University Education**

Successful students are accepted into colleges of education, polytechnics, universities, and other post-secondary institutions. Higher education goals, according to Gbamanja (1997)<sup>[13]</sup>, include the intellectual capacity to comprehend and adapt to the environment as well as the learning of suitable skills.

### **B. Colleges of Education**

Colleges of education are tertiary institutions of learning that train teachers. They provide a three-year program leading to the award of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE).

### **C. Polytechnics Education**

Nigerian polytechnics train middle level workers or artisans, who will at graduation provide varieties of needed vocational skills. Polytechnic education is divided into, the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND), two (2) years for ND and two (2) years for HND. We also have interuniversity centers, monotechnic. Nigerian educational system also operate specialized institutions they include: colleges or schools health technology, colleges of agricultural, National Teachers Institutions (NTI), and so on.

## **Environmental Issues in Nigeria**

The following is a brief discussion of a few environmental issues or difficulties in Nigeria:

### **Pollution**

Air pollution is caused by atmospheric pollutants like vehicular emissions, greenhouse gas, and agricultural fires. Power generating machine exhaust releases the lethal gas carbon monoxide, which is produced. Additionally, harmful emissions from older automobiles are more likely to enter the environment. Kerosene burners in homes produce flames, which contribute to inadequate air ventilation. The neighborhood's rubbish burning contributes to air pollution (Dopheide, 2019)<sup>[10]</sup>. The poisoning of the land and the water in Nigeria is another environmental problem. According to Bolaji and

Alatise (2021)<sup>[6]</sup>, land contamination is any alteration to the physical or chemical makeup of the soil. Pollution of land is brought or caused by garbage improper disposal, agriculture chemical, mining, urbanization, soil erosion and air decomposition. Without proper treatment, trash is dumped straight into surface water sources like lakes and streams, which results in water contamination (Alfarra, 2010)<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Improper Waste Disposal**

Untreated sewage and open solid waste dumps in Nigeria have poisoned the nation's water systems. People who reside near these waste sites, particularly those who do so in urban settings, frequently eat food that has been contaminated with hazardous compounds like high amounts of nitrate. Rain and debris can contaminate clean surface water during the rainy season and infiltrate into underground water supplies (Pona et al., 2021)<sup>[24]</sup>. Similar to this, using plastic bags and improper disposal severely increase Nigeria's rubbish situation. Salami (2018)<sup>[26]</sup> stated that in Nigeria, the effects of plastic trash on marine life are becoming more obvious, due to inadequate waste management system in the country and general lack of environmental issues sensitization for the populace.

### **Flood**

The problem flooding in Nigeria is prevalent in largest cities. Flooding causes damage to both property and the natural environment. Flooding is a result of precipitation and can be caused by both natural and human sources, including human activities like project development and obstructed waterways. On the other hand, excessive deforestation, inadequate waste management and other practices that have adverse long term effect on ecosystem can cause flooding (Muhammed et al., 2018)<sup>[18]</sup>. Nigeria experiences frequent natural and man-made flood disasters; this issue needs to be addressed immediately.

### **Erosion**

The majority of people concur that erosion is one of the most significant environmental problems the world is now facing. Soil erosion has damaged subsistence farming, management for food security, and sustainable agricultural production, especially in the South-Eastern Nigeria. In Nigeria, anthropogenic activity, weather factors (rainfall), underlying geology, undulating topography and soil type are the key contributions to soil erosion (Chude, Ezendu, Ugadu & Adiaha, 2020)<sup>[9]</sup>. Lowering soil C-sink potentials, lowering agricultural productivity, lowering soil fertility due to top soil erosion, and influencing climate changes, it has an effect on life of humanity. Degradation of soil and land, soil loss, and erosion have been attributed to a variety of human activities, including overgrazing excessive farm activity, tillage, bush clearing, road construction bush burning, over population, tree felling, residential building, urban center development industrialization,

pesticide fumigation, stone and sand quarrying and mining (Chude et al, 2020)<sup>[9]</sup>. The destruction and deformation of soil vegetation cover, which is essential to presenting soil erosion, has also been exacerbated in the majority of the south-east states of Nigeria by human involvement with the environment, such as continual borrow-pit excavation According to a Vanguard Editorial, soil erosion is a major factor in desertification in addition to human displacement (2021). Ecological upheaval, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss are all effects of desertification.

## **Other Environmental Factors includes**

### **Finance**

To create successful entrepreneurs, there is a significant financial and for practical education lessons as well as for financing the beginning and growth of business enterprises. The following justifies why these sources do no assured funding for young people's start-up and business expansion. The money may originate from internal sources like individual savings, monetary assistance from friend, relative and conventional co-operative clubs and societies, as well as external sources like bank, government entities non-profit groups. Resources from within the country are often insufficient because of the high degree of poverty. There isn't much in the graduates' favor. However, because these groups typically need collateral and, in some cases, only accept partial assistance for educational programs, it could be difficult to get funds from outside sources. The kids do not have access to these collaterals or the partial financing. They haven't submitted these, therefore they can't get the money they need for their business operations.

### **Inadequate Equipment and Technology**

Most Nigerians, especially young graduates, cannot afford the equipment's hefty cost as technology is closely tied to or a crucial component of Nigerian education, this presents challenges for the growth of education. Therefore, the availability of technology at reasonable prices is required.

### **Economic Pressure from Parents**

Nigerian parents who are favored with children earning money near above the long term advantages of education frequently exert a lot of pressure. Youths find it challenging to commit the necessary amount of time to training because of this. These pressures are also to blame for Nigeria's high percentage of child labor without the necessary skills for independence.

### **Education and Brain drain**

The Nigerian educational system calls for a skilled labor force. The foundation for such a workforce is not adequately provided by our educational system. Currently, the curricula up to tertiary level in our schools do not focus on initiatives to promote accountability.

Well able Nigeria leaves the shore of Nigeria for search of greener pasture, since the government cannot provide enabling environment for adequate job creation. Some people in Nigeria has gone ahead to tag our education as a scam.

### **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

There are many issues facing growth. These include lack of electricity, access to information, water supply and decent roads etc.

### **Research and Linkages**

Openness and links to the innovation systems of other countries are essential for academic achievement. This is because robust innovation changes plans are reliant on local and global connectivity. Relationships between universities, research institutions and outside world are still developing. Both the teaching and learning sides of education must advance for this to happen. All of these must be addressed if we must make any headway. If we must produce a workforce that will be employable and also an economy that is self-sustaining then we must all go back to a drawing board and get things done the right way.

### **Effects of Environmental Challenges on Nigerian Educational System**

The aforementioned environmental challenges affect educational system negatively in Nasarawa state and Nigeria entirely will be discussed below:

Pollution most especially water and air pollution has great impact negatively on the health of an individual. An unhealthy person cannot learn in an academic settings, which means once the water students drink is contaminate by toxic substance that are harmful to the health it tend to cause havoc on the health of an individual as a result of that the education of such entity will be disrupted thereby breeding a half-baked end product. Because an unhealthy person cannot learn or mixed with healthy entity once it involves contagious illness.

Erosion also can affect educational system, whereby such erosion will affect the land space that will be used in building the classes where learning can take place. Under this erosion, some environmental hazard like tsunamis, landslides and hurricane, which are caused by human activities can turn out to affect lives and properties of man. Thereby destroying lives in school and collapsing educational structures designed for learning. Same effect on lives, properties of an individual and schools will occur once flooding surface. Other factors aside natural disasters are environmental in a sense. These factors such as finance, inadequate equipment and technology etc. does more harm that the natural environmental factors.

### **Remedies to Environmental Challenges**

Pachamama Alliance (2021) <sup>[22]</sup> opined that the knowledge of the fragility of the ecosystem, the value of preserving it is the foundation of environmental rejuvenation. The possibility exists for human activity to preserve the planet. The public need to be properly informed and aware of environmental issues, this endeavor will be ineffective (Marsh, 2021) <sup>[16]</sup>. Marsh continued by outlining strategies for increasing public awareness of environmental challenges, such as using social media and educational institutions. More individuals can be educated about environmental issues with the aid of these platforms. Sharing environmental themes that might educate people, engage them in conversation, and encourage sharing of posts, for instance, might not seem like much, but they could have a significant impact.

Raising people's awareness of environmental issues also benefits from the use of online platforms like blogs and YouTube to communicate environmental knowledge. The print and electronic media can contribute to public awareness of the environment, the protection of natural resources. Mondal (n.d) argued that the print media might helped by its network service and multi-channel regional programming which provides interviews, dramas, conversations and documentary content. Mondal opined that with the use of electronic media, factors that have an impact on the built environment as well as the natural environment can be identified and avoided. It is in the same vein as educating children about environmental issues through the teaching of Environmental Education (EE) in primary and secondary levels. Akpafun et al. (2020)<sup>[2]</sup> opined that Environmental Education (EE) is a branch of education that focused on methods for reducing effects of the activities of human on the environment; it is important for increasing public awareness of environmental problems. Raising public awareness is essential to reducing pollution and improving environmental quality.

### **Findings from Literature and Studies**

Whereby erosion, flooding, pollution (such as water and air pollution), excessive cutting down of trees (i.e., deforestation) and improper waste disposal are the causes of environmental challenges. This finding agrees with (Muhammed et al., 2018)<sup>[18]</sup> opined that flooding can be brought on by excessive deforestation, poor management of waste and other actions that possesses a long term negative impact on the ecosystem. According to Pona et al., (2021), incorrect garbage disposal can contaminate clean surface water during the rainy season and leak through the soil into underground water. Similar to this, using plastic bags and improper disposal severely increase Nigeria's rubbish situation. In agreement with Salami (2018), <sup>[26]</sup> who stated that the impact of plastic waste on marine life in Nigeria is becoming more obvious? Garbage winds up in the river and the ocean due to inefficient of management waste

culture in the nation and a general lack of environmental awareness among the public. All of these provide significant problems for education at all levels, which require investigation.

On the aspect of erosion (Chude, Ezendu, Ugadu&Adiaha, 2020) <sup>[9]</sup> opined that underlying geology, human activity, soil type and climate (rainfall) are the key causes of soil erosion in Nigeria. It affects life on Earth by deteriorating soil C-sink potentials in the soil, lowering agricultural production, diminishing fertility of the soil owing to loss of topsoil and climate change. In addition to displacing people, soil erosion is a key cause of desertification, according to a Vanguard Editorial (2021), desertification results in biodiversity loss, degraded soil, and ecological disruption.

Pollution most especially water and air pollution has great impact negatively on the health of an individual. An unhealthy person cannot learn in an academic settings, which means once the water students drink is contaminate by toxic substance that are harmful to the health it tend to cause havoc on the health of an individual as a result of that the education of such entity will be disrupted. Erosion also can affect educational system, whereby such erosion will affect the land space that will be used in building the classes where learning can take place. Thereby destroying lives in school and collapsing educational structures designed for learning. Remedies for curbing or curtailing environmental challenges, some of these remedies are sensitization, seminars; symposium on health precaution which can be cause by environmental challenges should be communiqué to the general public via various social media. This findings agrees with (Marsh, 2021) said that without the public being aware of environmental challenges, effort will be ineffective. Marsh continued by outlining strategies for increasing public awareness of environmental challenges, such as using social media and educational institutions. Using online platforms like blogs and YouTube to share environmental knowledge also aids in raising people's awareness of environmental issues. Mondal (n.d.) argued that effects impacting the natural and even man-made environment can be found and stopped through electronic media. According to Akpafun et al. (2020)<sup>[2]</sup>, Environmental Education (EE) is a subfield of education that focuses on methods for reducing the effects of activity of human on the environment; this is important for increasing public awareness of environmental problems. Raising public awareness is essential to reducing pollution and improving environmental quality.

## Conclusion

Studies have considered environmental challenges which can be caused by erosion, deforestation, and flooding, improper waste products and so on which is a global problem that severely harms peaceful and amusing living in every learning society. However, irrespective of the factor causing environmental

challenges, the noticeable negative effects of environmental challenges includes loss of lives and properties, destruction of schools and educational materials/equipment, absenteeism of learners/teachers to classes due to illness caused by intake of contaminated water and inhaling of polluted air, damage of access roads to academic/learning centres caused by erosion leading to disruption in the free flow of academic calendar.

## Recommendation

In order to achieve good remedies to re-engineering the educational system in Nigeria, the following recommendations were to be observed.

1. Government and other agencies should environmental awareness unit. This must be done both at federal, state and local level with the sole aim of enlightens the general public about environmental challenges with implications to lives and educational system.
2. Individual should be held responsibility be held responsible for violating disposal order and be obligated to proper disposal of waste products and cleaning of their vicinity.
3. Government and other authorities should re-plant economic trees which can serve as wind breakers most especially in environment that trees are been fell down either for timbers or charcoal.
4. There should be adequate Community sensitization by government at all level on the causes, effects and ways of curtailing or curbing the environmental challenges especially as it affect the Nigerian educational system.
5. Ministry of education both at federal, state and local level should create a department that will be assigned on monitoring of various educational equipment/materials as well as learning infrastructures.
6. Learning centres should be built in areas or land that is free from what can lead to destruction of the academic amenities.

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