

# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, BOSSO CAMPUS, MINNA, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*This paper examined information dissemination and environmental management in the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. The research design used was survey method. The Environmental Abuse Questionnaires (EAQ) was randomly distributed to 1,200 respondents out of which 900 (75%) returned the questionnaires. The data collected were presented and analyzed using simple statistics as well as tables, charts and percentages. It was discovered among other things that environmental degradation was a direct aftermath of lack of absence of information on the part of students about what constitute proper environmental ethics, inadequate student accommodation and lack of inadequacy of cleaners in various departments. Plausible recommendations geared towards ensuring a filth-free campus were made which include putting big inscriptions in strategic places to direct the students to where refuse should be dumped, construction of more toilets for students, employing more cleaners and construction of more halls of residence among others.*

## Introduction

Urbanization with its attendant thick population is bedeviled by the problem of waste generation and how to properly manage the waste with the hope of preserving the beauty of the society. The problem of waste disposal and waste management with a view to maintaining a clean and healthy society is a thing of grave concern in all cities in Nigeria and in the entire globe.

At present, in almost all states of the federation (Nigeria) are waste management boards that are saddled with the responsibility of proper disposal of waste and maintaining a cleaning and healthy society. Many of those boards have vehicles with which they collect and pack refuse from different refuse locations in many of the cities in Nigeria. In some states, a particular day, like one Saturday in a month, has been set aside for state sanitation. The clarion call is simply to maintain healthy and clean environments.

Hazardous wastes that are at times wittingly or inadvertently dropped in our cities are potential health risks to man's existence. Inhalation of polluted and contaminated air also constitute serious threat to man's survival. In many of our urban centers are witnesses of the fact that many people have died of preventable diseases like cholera, typhoid etc. which are

contracted from contaminated water and unhealthy environment. Suffice is to say that hazardous toxic waste was recently dropped in Ibadan which spontaneously attacked the populace like a plague. Few died of cholera at Makurdi due to poor sanitation and contaminated water and cancer-causing chemical were founding Niger Delta waters. Hence, the task of maintaining a health, clean and sane society is the duty of all citizens in the country. The leader and the led, in all communities must work as an individual team to ensure that befitting environment are not only maintained but also bequeathed to the coming generation.

The campus community in Nigeria which is a micro-community within the larger Nigerian community is not absolved from the normal environmental problems of the Nigerian community. The reason is that it is the same group of people who live in other communities in Nigeria that are brought together to form the nucleus of the university community environment.

A university campus has been described as the citadel of learning and the image-maker of the city or town where it is located. The Federal University of Technology, Minna was established on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1983. The objective for its establishment is to give effect to the

nation's drive for the much needed self-reliance in science, engineering and especially technology. At inception, the university acquired on permanent basis the facilities of the former Government Teachers' College, Bosso which now serves as the Bosso Campus of the University. While it is true that the campus has undergone a tremendous face lift since inception, notwithstanding it ahs to contend with some serous environmental debacle.

The following research question were asked in view of this study. (1) Is environmental degradation a direct consequence of lack or absence of information on the part of the students about what constitute proper environmental ethics (practices)? (2) Is environmental degradation due to inadequate accommodation? (3) Is environmental pollution due to lack of good and functional toilets? (4) Is environmental abuse due to lack of cleaners in the various departments (sections) of the university? This study assumes that the Federal University of Technology Bosso Campus, Minna is a full fledged university and that all the architectural designs that befit a modern university are present in the campus.

Owolabi (1996) while contesting the need for environmental ethics in Africa opines that respect for land, earthworm, and forest should be given from scientific point of view since we need them for our survival and health. UNICEF (1989) corroborated Owolabi's view that it is among the young people that the ethics should be fostered to regard natural resources as a precious heritage which must be protected and where possible, enhance to sustain development.

Isu, (1999) argued that Nigeria's increasing environmental problems coupled with her decreasing natural resources call for conservation practices among her citizens. He added that there are relatively few people in the country, who have access to sufficient environmental information to ensure support for initiatives to protect, manage and restore depleted resources. He postulated for the establishment of school environment clubs which should be saddled with the responsibility of sending conservative message to the people with a view to increasing their knowledge so as to

positively change their shabby environmental practices.

Onyekakeyah, (2005) emphasized the need to inculcate proper waste disposal habit and hygiene on the citizenry as guarantee for sound and healthy living.

While remarking on the need for concerted effort towards the provision of safe drinking water and a healthy environment in the developing nations, Bartram, (2005) as quoted by Strohecker, K. asserted that there should be an outcry, from the health community above all, for immediate, concerted efforts to confront the reality that sanitation coverage rates in the developing world barely keep pace with population growth. He observed that four out of 10 people around that globe do not have access to a simple pit latrine and one-fifth have a source of safe drinking water.

From the foregoing reviewed literature, the need for an efficient environmental management and hygienic lifestyle cannot be overemphasized. They are indispensable ingredients for a healthy and a happy living. This can be adequately obtained if the citizens are adequately informed through the various media.

In spite of the huge material and financial commitment geared towards the fast lifting of our university environment, the Bosso campus is yet to take its rightful pride of place that is second to none among other campuses. A citadel of learning with beautiful features. All past Vice-Chancellors of the Federal University of Technology, Minna have tried their best to ensure that this university ranks second to none in terms of learning and beautiful environment. The current Vice-Chancellor Prof. Tukur Sidi has taken a giant stride in de-congesting of the Bosso campus, with the movement of the school of environmental and agricultural and engineering technology to the permanent site but it appears as if nobody has moved to the permanent site. The Bosso campus is as busy and thickly populated as ever. The question is, what effort has not been made or what else has not been done by our visionary and indefatigable chief executives to ensure that Bosso campus retain a pride of place among other campuses in the country? Is there any stone that has not been

turned? Is there any effort that has not been made? The desire to answer questions led to this

The research design used was survey method. The researcher went round the department and other sections of the university community to collect information that formed the bulk of data presented in this study. The researcher designed a self constructed questionnaire tagged Environmental Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ) which were randomly distributed to 1,200 students which account for 1/10 (10%) of the

study

### Methodology

total student population of around 12,000. To enhance the reliability and the validity of the instrument, the researcher had to subject the instrument to thorough scrutiny by experts to ensure that the instrument measures what it purports to measure with consistency and reliability. The information (data) collected from the sampling technique and the distributed questionnaire are presented and analyzed.

### Results

**Table 1: Environmental Practices due to Lack of Environmental Information**

S/No	Practices	No. of Respondents	
		Yes and (%)	No and (%)
1	Regular crossing of lawns	675 (75%)	125 (25%)
2	Dumping of refuse like nylon bags and waste indiscriminately	900 (100%)	Nil
3	Urinating and defecating at corners	675 (75%)	125 (25%)
4	Parking of vehicle on the road. Total respondents = 240	200 (83.3%)	40 (16.7%)
5	Sleeping in lecture halls and bathing outside	112 (14.2%)	788 (85.8)
6	Making hell of noise at lecture halls (noise pollution)	675 (75%)	125 (25%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,237</b>	<b>1,203</b>

From table 1, 675 (75%) of the respondents engage in shabby environmental practices such as regular crossing of lawns, urinating and defecating at corners and making noise in lecture halls. The entire 900 (100%) respondents dump refuse such as cellophane bags

and waste indiscriminately in the campus, 83.3% of a total of 240 respondents park their vehicles on the road, all of which these are direct consequences of lack of information on the part of the students about what constitute proper environmental ethics (practices).

**Table 2: Cleaners in the Department/Units**

S/No.	Departments/Units	Number of Cleaners
1	Mechanical Engineering	01
2	Civil Engineering	02
3	Electrical Engineering	01
4	Chemical Engineering	Nil
5	Bio-Chemistry	Nil
6	Geology	01
7	Geography	01
8	Mathematics/Computer	Nil
9	Chemistry	02
10	Industrial and Technology Education	Nil
11	Library and Information Technology	Nil
12	Microbiology	Nil
13	Clinic	05

Table 2 indicates that Departments of Mechanical/Electrical Engineering, Geology and Geography have just one cleaner each, Departments of Civil Engineering and Chemistry have two each, the clinic, has five while Maths

Computer and LIT Departments have none. The number of cleaners in each of Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Geography Departments is grossly inadequate.

**Table 3: Students Population in Hostels**

S/No	Name of Block	Total Number of Students Accommodated	Number of Toilets	Students/Toilets Ratio
1	Block O (female)	124	06	21:1
2	Block L (female)	196	06	33:1
3	Block M (female)	152	06	25:1
4	Block N (female)	164	06	27:1
5	Block P (Male)	464	30	16:1
6	Block Q (Male)	456	30	15:1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>84</b>	

Table 3 shows revealed that total population of the students that are accommodated by the University in Bosso Campus is 1,556 against the total students

population of 12,000. This means about 7.7% of the total students population are officially accommodated in the hostel.

From the data gathered and analyzed, it is clear that lots of shabby environmental practices are exhibited. Such shabby environmental practices are exhibited, which include: regular crossing of lawns, and dumping of refuse like cellophane bags indiscriminately among others. 675 (75%) of the respondents have formed the habit of regularly crossing lawns. The entire 900 respondents are guilty of dumping of refuse like cellophane bags and other wastes indiscriminately in the campus. 675 (75%) urinate and defecate at jungles and 75% (675) also use the opportunity of large crowd to create environmental pollution in form of noise making. These are direct consequences of absence of adequate information on the part of the students about what constitute proper and decent environmental practices (ethics). Many of the students claimed in the questionnaire that they do not know where toilets are located. Absence of information about where toilets are located made majority to urinate and defecate in open places. Moreover, if enough refuse drums and baskets are provided and a lot of write ups and big inscriptions are put in conspicuous places about where should be dumped probably

**Discussion**

this would reduce to the barest minimum the high trend of indiscriminate dumping of refuse in any part of the campus. Furthermore, if there are write ups at the sides of the lawns and fields which forbid crossing and defacing of lawns, and civilized person will think twice before crossing the lawns. In addition, if there are sign posts at some of the mini-roads in the campus such as "no parking" or "car park", there will be decency and orderliness in the way vehicles are parked in the campus. The clarion call is for the dissemination of information to the student on what proper, decent, acceptable and good environmental practices or ethics entail.

It is obvious from table 2, that many of the departments have no cleaner at all. One begins to imagine the type of magic which Departments like Chemical Engineering, Biochemistry, Maths/Computer, etc. will perform to maintain a healthy environment. Other Departments like Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering have a cleaner each which is too small for any meaningful work to be done. Departments like Chemistry and Civil Engineering where there are two cleaners each can still manage. The presence of five cleaners in

the clinic is commendable if such workers can be supervised to do their work. Absence or inadequacy of cleaners at Departments (section) is a major contributory factor to environmental abuse and vice versa.

The students accommodation is grossly inadequate as shown in Table 3. The total population of the students that are officially accommodated in Bosso Campus stands at 1,556 vis-à-vis the total population of around 12,000. This means about 7.7% of the total students population are officially accommodated in the hostel. The squatters are not included in the above figure. Adama (2004) authenticated the precarious situation of students accommodation in the university when he remarked that some students have no choice than to sleep in the classrooms or at the cafeteria and some female students resorted to taking their bathe in the open within the hostel premises while majority of the students live off campus especially in zones that are bedeviled by insecurity and exploitation. It is appropriate to add that some anti-social behaviour like cultism, rape, drug addiction etc are the direct impact of lack of accommodation. However, it is not only the halls of residence that are inadequate, lecture theatres too are grossly inadequate. A situation where about 300 students attend lecture in a room at D Block is rather pathetic and unfortunate. Hence, the need for construction of more hostels and big lecture theatres. The students/toilet ratio too is too poor as authenticated in Table 4.

### Conclusions

In view of the foregoing discussion the following conclusions can be reached.

1. A lot of shabby environmental practices can be identified ranging from regular crossing of lawns, dumping of refuse like cellophane bas and waste indiscriminately to urinating and defecating at corners among others. These are direct consequences of absence of information or awareness on the parts of the students about what constitute proper environmental ethics.
2. Environmental abuse at Bosso Campus of the Federal University of

Technology, Minna can be traced to inadequate halls of residence and lecture theatres.

3. Lack of specific toilets for students in various departments is a function of environmental degradation.
4. The sordid sites that are obvious in some departments in university are due to lack or inadequacy of cleaners in such departments.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in view of this study.

1. Large inscriptions with pointing arrows should be put in strategic places to direct students, visitors and workers to appropriate places where refuse could be dumped. Write ups on awareness banners like "Don't Dump Refuse Here", "Keep Our Campus Clean" etc. should be put in different places all over the campus. Write up like "Don't Cross the Lawns" should be placed conspicuously across lawns. The present planting of flowers all over the campus is highly commendable. It will not only make the campus beautiful but also indirectly send information and awareness signals to students and workers on the need to join hands with the authority to make the campus a citadel of excellence-academically and aesthetically.
2. Pointing arrows and sign posts should be placed in conspicuous areas in the campus to direct student repressed to where to ease themselves. Moreover, small signs posts should be placed at comers all over the campus with inscriptions such "Don't urinate here", "Please go to the toilet if you are pressed" etc. This will help to curb this anti-social behaviour which is inimical to health rent.
3. At every point in all the roads within the campus, there should be inscriptions forbidding parking on the roads. Write-up like "No parking", "Don't obstruct traffic" should be placed on the roads all over the campus. This will go a long way to prevent parking of vehicles on the roads,

- avert accident and enhance free movement of vehicles on the road.
4. In libraries and lecture areas, writing of short messages like "Silence please", "Maintain orderliness please", "Lecture is in progress" etc will help to reduce the problem of environmental pollution in form of noise making to the barest minimum level.
  5. Crossing of lawns and defacing of campus fields and lawns should be checked immediately. On this note, pedestrian routes should be clearly demarcated and big inscriptions should be written and placed conspicuously across lawns to check unguarded crossing and defacing of lawns.
  6. Periodic seminars and workshops on environmental management should be held henceforth at the Federal University of Technology, Minna. This help to inculcate what constitute proper environmental ethics into the minds of the students. Papers and reports on such workshops and seminars can be placed at both departmental and central libraries for student consultation. Moreover, writing information that have bearing with environmental management in the University's Campus News and distributing such to both students and staff will help to curb shabby environmental practices among students.

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