

INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF APPROPRIATE VALUES OF LIFE, IN TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *As part of the on-going effort to attract attention to the natural environment of Nigeria, which over the years has been much degraded, an investigation is carried out into the use of appropriate values of life, in tackling the challenges of this environment. The investigation reveals that environmental value, values of appropriate attitudes and justice, are the most appropriate values that could be deployed to tackle the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria. Others such as aesthetic values, value abstinence from criminal activities that affect the natural environment and those of patriotism and nationalism, can also play some important role, in tackling these challenges.*

KEYWORDS: Values, Challenges, Natural Environment, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria have a wise saying which goes thus: **“If a blacksmith is continuously beating a portion of a metal, it is because such a portion has a mark, which requires beating it hard, to make it smoothen up.”** So it is with the natural environment of Nigeria. A lot has gone wrong over the years with this environment and this requires bringing to the attention of all and sundry, at every available opportunity. This is particularly true of our policy makers and policy implementors – the technocrats. No patriot among Nigerians, who knows about the natural environment of Nigeria, will be happy at the present state of Nigeria’s natural environment, which has been much plundered over the years. So worrisome is the degree of degradation of Nigeria’s natural environment, that Asiodu in 2013 in a public forum, brought to the attention of Nigerians, the unpleasant State of Nigeria’s natural environment. He remarked that the forest vegetation cover, which was a little over 30% in 1960 as at Nigeria’s independence, is just a meager 4% as at 2013. This is a far cry from the 25% average, recommended by United Nations’ Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). This is probably a reflection of other forms of degradation a number of other natural resources of the natural environment of Nigeria, has suffered, over the years.

As part of contributions by authors and well-meaning people, to attract attention to the natural environment of Nigeria, the author has in recent times, written on diverse issues on this environment. These diverse issues are contained in the following papers:

- i. **Our Environment, Their Environments and The Sustainability of our environment** (Fatubarin, in press)

- ii. **Nigerian Nation, The Challenges of its natural environment and The imperative of a prompt action on them** (Fatubarin, in press)
- iii. **Managing Nigeria's natural environment in the 21st century for sustainable development, through a multidisciplinary approach** (Fatubarin, in press).

The author has also carried out a study on the implication of the trio of governance failure, corruption and violence, among other issues of importance, on the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria (Fatubarin, in press). This present study, is a natural follow-up to this earlier one. It is on the possibility of making use of the age-long time-honoured values of life – which themselves are on gradual decline in the country, in tackling the multifarious challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria. Good enough, certain values are ascribed to the environment in the literature. Examples of these are environmental values and aesthetic values (Kaushik and Kaushik, 2008). These are beside individual values, family values, societal/communal values and the national values, all of which are of relevance in environmental issues. All these are besides the values of appropriate attitudes and abstinence from criminal activities, which are also important in tackling the issues of the natural environment.

METHOD OF STUDY

In this study, the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria which are highlighted in the paper with the title “**Investigation into the influences governance failure, corruption and violence, in the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria,**” (Fatubarin, in press) are studied for the implication of diverse values of life, in the challenges highlighted in the paper. The number of times the values are implicated in the challenges, are assessed and the percentage of their implication in the 50 highlighted challenges calculated. The total number of times the diverse values are implicated in the challenges, are also calculated and the percentage of the implication of each type of value in the total number of times are also calculated.

From the analysis of the results, the types of values implicated are known and their level of involvement, based on their number of occurrences are known. From this study, the types of values on which emphasis has to be placed in tackling the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria, are inferred and appropriate suggestions are made on them.

RESULTS

The table below, shows the implication or not, of values and the types of values implicated.

The Challenges	Value(s) of life implicated or not	Types of values implicated
Environmental degradation		
Degradation of valuable lands	Environmental value	Environmental value
Loss of valuable soils	Environmental value	Environmental value
Dumping of chemical wastes within the environment	Values of justice and Abstinence from crimes	Value of justice; Value of abstinence from crimes
Wasteful mining of solid minerals	Values of abstinence from criminal activities and patriotism	Value of patriotism; Value of abstinence from crimes
Burning and abuse of fire	Environmental value; Value of justice	Environmental value; Value of respect for lifes of plants and animals
Deforestation of natural vegetation	Environmental value; Value of justice	Environmental value; Values of justice and respect for living plants and animals
Oil spillage in oil-producing communities	Environmental value; Value of justice	Environmental value; Value of justice to affected communities and organisms
Soil compaction	—	—
Gas flaring	Environmental value; Value of justice	Environmental value; Value of justice to affected communities
Pipeline vandalisation	Environmental Value; Values of justice and abstinence from crimes	Environmental Value, Values of integrity, self control and abstinence from crimes.

Key to use of symbols:

* means values are implicated

-: means values are not implicated

The Challenges	Values of life implicated or not	Types of values implicated
Loss of biodiversity Loss of plant biodiversity through illegal felling of trees	Environmental Value, Value of justice; Abstinence from crime	Environmental Value; Values of justice to life and abstinence from crime
Loss of plant biodiversity through abuse of fire	Environmental Value	Environmental Value; Values of justice to life and abstinence from crimes
Loss of animal biodiversity through illegal hunting	Environmental Value, Value of justice; Abstinence from crimes	Environmental Value; Values of justice to life and abstinence from crimes
Loss of animal biodiversity through abuse of fire	Environmental Value	Environmental Value; Values of justice to life and abstinence from crimes

Natural enemies within the environment		
Pathogens	*	Environmental values. For all these natural enemies within the environment, environmental value is implicated. Through appropriate environmental education which environmental value confers, ways and means of taking care of these enemies are sought and applied to control these natural enemies.
Parasites	*	
Animal pests	*	
Weeds	*	
Invasives	*	
Environmental Pollution		
Air, Water, Land and Soil Pollution	*	Environmental value; Aesthetic value
Oil spillage	*	Environmental Value; Value of justice to affected communities and organisms

Key to use of symbols: * means values are implicated
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The Challenges	Values of life implicated or not	Types of values implicated
IV. Environmental Pollution		
Gas flaring	*	Environmental Value; Value of justice to affected communities
Noise pollution	*	Environmental Value; Value of justice to affected communities
Radiation pollution	*	Environmental Value; Value of justice to affected communities
Environmental sanitation		
Sanitation of the environment in our communities, including the drainages, gutters and banks of stream and rivers.	*	Environmental value, Aesthetic value; Value of appropriate attitude to dirty things and filthy environment
Sanitation and hygiene of animal slaughtering places	*	Environmental value, Aesthetic value; Appropriate attitude to filthy environment
Sanitation and hygiene of our foods during preparation and sale to the people	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitude to sanitation and hygiene
Wastes, their generation and disposal	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitude to waste disposal
Climate change and its attendant consequences on the natural environment	*	Environmental value
Challenges of effective management of the natural environment based on sound conservation principles	*	Environmental value
Challenge of adequate human resources development for effective management of the natural environment	*	Environmental value

Key to use of symbols: * means values are implicated
-: means values are not implicated

The Challenges	Value(s) of life implicated or not	Types of values implicated
Natural disasters	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes to all these forms of natural disasters.
Floods		
Erosions		
Drought		
Desertification		
Challenge of appropriate laws on the environment and non-enforcement of these laws	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of environment-related diseases, such as water-borne diseases, soil-borne diseases and air-borne diseases	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes to these diseases
Challenge of zoonosis	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of human population	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of environmental beautification	*	Environmental value; Aesthetic value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of Agricultural practices	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of food security	*	Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of transhumance	*	Value of appropriate attitudes and justice to other people and communities

Key to use of symbols: * means values are implicated
-: means values are not implicated

The Challenges	Values of life implicated or not	Types of values implicated
Challenge of effective management of natural environmental scenery	*	Environmental value; Aesthetic value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Challenge of exploration of renewable energy resources of Nigeria	*	Environmental value and Values of nationalism, justice and appropriate attitudes
Heavy metal pollution	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
The Lake Nyos Issue	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
The Lake Chad Issue	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes
Environment-related Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	*	Environmental value; Values of appropriate attitudes and patriotism
Environmental Education	*	Environmental value; Value of appropriate attitudes

Key to use of symbols: * means values are implicated

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ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Table1: The values implicated and the number of times they occurred among the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria and The percentages of occurrence among 50 highlighted challenges and 92 Total Times of Occurrence of the implicated values.

Serial No	Implicated Values	Number of times of occurrence among the challenges	Percentages over 92 occurrence	Percent ages over 50 challenges
	Environmental Value	45	48.9	90
	Value of Appropriate attitude	22	20.9	44
	Value of Justice	13	13.0	26
	Aesthetic value	5	5.4	10
	Value of abstinence from criminal activities	5	5.4	10
	Value of Patriotism	1	1.0	2
	Value of Nationalism	1	1.0	2
Total	:	92		

DISCUSSION

The results as analyzed above in Table 1, shows that of the 92 times when all the values are implicated in the 50 challenges highlighted in this study for the natural environment of Nigeria, environmental value was implicated 45 times, which was 48.9% of the total. This environmental value was also implicated in as much as 90% of the challenges. This is not surprising, considering the fact that this value is the most relevant of all values, to the challenges of the environment. These results show that if the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria, has to be tackled effectively, special attention must just be paid to the all-important issue of environmental value. This is a value which embraces such issues as attaching value to nature, and according it some measure of respect and justice as important component of the environment. Environmental value also expect humankind to appreciate the environment and get thoroughly educated in it. Other issues covered by the concept of environmental value, are protection of the environment, conserving it and ensure an adequate balance of nature in it and between it and humankind (Fatubarin, in press). This is where an all-hands-on-deck involving our governments and all people of the nation and all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) relevant to issues of the environment, come in as appropriate drivers of the engine of sustainable development of our natural environment in Nigeria.

Table 1 containing the analysis of the results, shows that of the 92 times when all the values were implicated in the 50 challenges highlighted in this study for the natural environment of Nigeria, the value of appropriate attitudes to the environment, was implicated 22 times, which was 20.9% of the total. This value of appropriate attitudes, was also implicated in as much as 44% of the challenges. Again, this is not unexpected, when one remembers the fact that the natural environment is one of those important issues of life, people as well as their

governments, should develop positive attitudes to, by doing all things possible that will assure its sustainability.

In the analyzed results in Table 1, the value of justice was implicated in as many as 13 times, out of the 92 times when all the values were implicated in the 50 challenges highlighted in the study. This was 13% of the total. It was also implicated in as much as 26% of the challenges. The high figure of 26% of its implication in the 50 challenges highlighted in this study, is indicative of the fact that pockets of injustice exist, in the dealing of Nigerian people and governments with the natural environment of Nigeria. Justice is a core national value that must be upheld by the people and governments of the nation, not only to all people but also to the environment. Justice must be upheld not only to ensure the sustainability of the environment, but also its components. Degrading the environment through oil spillage and gas flaring among other injustices, not only endangers the living organisms within the environment, it also hinders sustainable development of the affected environment.

Both aesthetic value and value of abstinence from criminal activities within the natural environment, were implicated in as many as 5 times each, in the 92 times when all the values were implicated. This was 5.4% of the total and 10% of the total number of challenges highlighted for this natural environment in the study. Their figure of 10% implication in the highlighted challenges, is far from being negligible. It is indicative that in Nigeria, not much premium is placed on the aesthetic value of our natural environment, particularly, on the aesthetic value their components of air, water, soils, lands, rocks among others, can bring to the environment. The rather high percentage of implication of the value of abstinence from criminal activities within the natural environment of Nigeria, also indicates that people engage in criminal activities within the natural environment of Nigeria, to such extent, that makes such activities count in this type of investigation. This again is not surprising, considering the fact that people engage in illegal felling of timber species, poaching of wildlife, pipeline vandalism, stealing of crude oil, among other criminal activities within the natural environment of Nigeria.

Default in both values of patriotism and nationalism were implicated only once each in the 92 times, when all the values were implicated in the 50 challenges highlighted in this study. This expectedly, is a meager 1% (approx) of the total and just a meager 2% of the challenges. Though both values of patriotism and nationalism are only slightly implicated in the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria, as revealed in this study, the duo if embraced by most Nigerians in their attitude to the natural environment, will assist in effective management of the country's natural environment.

CONCLUSION

This study has once again opened the eyes of people to some important facts about the natural environment of Nigeria. Such facts include the following:

- i. That though the natural environment is beset with diverse challenges (Fatubarin, in press) and the challenges have issues such as governance failure, corruption and violence, among others, implicated in them (Fatubarin, in press), there are ways out of these challenges.
- ii. That a way out of these challenges, can be found in the appropriate deployment of values to manage these challenges.

- iii. That the values most implicated in managing these challenges, are those of environmental value, value of appropriate attitudes and value of justice. Other values include those of aesthetics, value of abstinence from criminal activities that affect the environment and those of patriotism and nationalism.

It is in the issue of appropriate deployment of values to tackle the multifarious challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria that the duo leadership and good governance, comes in. It is also in this issue of appropriate deployment of values, that the future of the natural environment of Nigeria, comes in. Come year 2015, Nigerians will be electing new leaders in the States and at the Federal level of governance. It is for such aspiring leaders that the following issues should provide some food for thought:

- i. Are such aspiring leaders determined to offer Nigeria, the best in terms of good governance, the type of governance that will effectively address the multifarious challenges of the diverse environmental landscape of Nigeria?
- ii. Are these leaders even conscious of the importance of natural environment in the sustainable development of the country, in the 21st century, an importance that Adelegan (2009) cited Pius Okigbo, as having deposed on as a sine qua non, in the 21st century?
- iii. Are these leaders knowledgeable of the extent to which the natural environment of Nigeria has become degraded over the years, as a result of the multifarious challenges?
- iv. Are they familiar with the challenges of this natural environment and are they determined to make their mark, in confronting these challenges head long?
- v. Are they themselves imbued with the appropriate individual personality values, that will make them suitably qualified to tackle the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria?
- vi. Are they aware of the values that can be appropriately deployed, to tackle these multifarious challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria?

It is probably true to remark that the appropriateness of their response to these all-important questions, will provide an adequate platform to tackling the challenges of the natural environment of Nigeria. It is quite clear to all well-meaning people of Nigeria, who are knowledgeable about the environment, that things must just change for good, in the management of the natural environment of Nigeria. This is the only way sustainable development of the natural environment, can be assured for the country. Aspiring leaders who are not equipped with the wherewithal, to tackle the multifarious challenges of the diverse environmental landscape of Nigeria, has no business aspiring to leadership in Nigeria. Nigeria can no longer afford to make it business as usual, come year 2015. May the Almighty God, forbid such things in Nigeria, come year 2015.

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