



**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC
PERCEPTION OF THE MONTHLY
ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION EXERCISE IN
THE NASSARAWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF KANO METROPOLIS, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

An interview based study on the perception of people on the monthly environmental sanitation in Nassarawa Local Government Area of Kano Metropolis was conducted to determine how adequate were the sanitation monthly, the timing convenience, the level of facilities contribution to the residents by public authorities in charge of environmental sanitation and the supervision exercise on the sanitation days. Questionnaires were administered using the systematic random sampling technique and forty people were interviewed, ten people each from the planned, unplanned residential quarters, commercial and industrial areas of Nassarawa Local Government Area. The questionnaire was designed using the three point Likert scale system of agree, neither agree nor disagree

and disagree options. Findings indicated that the majority of people found sanitation to be adequate, as it is once in every month, timing for the sanitation was inconvenient to most, movement restriction during sanitation hours by many people was found to have certain implications, facilities contribution and supervision by public authorities were found to be very inadequate and in most cases certain areas are secluded completely. The study recommended that a clear policy be made assigning the responsibilities of environmental sanitation to not only government but individuals as well, public enlightenment campaign on the perception of sanitation as an essential service and the determinant of good health and standard of living, the promotion of an appropriate institutional framework involving both government and the general public as stakeholders of environmental sanitation, the provision of adequate professional manpower at both state and local government levels, improvement in the research activities of environmental sanitation and awareness as well as the allocation of resources for environmental sanitation services and sensitization and the mobilization of communities in planning, designing and decision making on environmental sanitation matters.

Keywords: People's Perception, Environment, Sanitation

Introduction

Environmental sanitation is intimately related to health, productivity and national development. Inadequate sanitation is a major cause of disease world-wide and

improving sanitation is known to have a significant beneficial effect on health both in households and across communities (Abogan, 2014). Strong healthy men build up a strong healthy nation; therefore, the health condition of any nation determines the progress of that nation. A nation engulfed with an unhealthy environment and populated with unhealthy people can be named an unhealthy nation and this will result to low productivity and backwardness (Blakely, *et al.*, 2005). The primary and direct impact of environmental sanitation and hygiene promotion is on health, and its impacts. The most significant is probably the prevention of diarrheal and viral disease (WSSCC and WHO, 2005). However, environmental sanitation is still a difficult task in many developing nations, such as Nigeria, where people carry out general monthly sanitation exercise not with the intention of promoting health and cleaning up the environment but to adhere to a compelling task of performing the sanitation, as prescribed by the authority. Diseases, due to poor environmental sanitation, an unsatisfactory waste disposal system and inadequate vector control as well as the general unsatisfactory condition of environment contribute immensely to poor public health prevalent in the nation with the attendant decline in the personal productivity and retardation of national development (Blackburn, *et al* 2004; Blakely, *et al* 2005).

The perception of sanitation is different among different people. To some it is simply a process of sitting or squatting on a pit toilet and letting the waste matter build up in a pit, sitting on a toilet and flushing away the

excreta to the environment as waste or cleaning up all sewage and sweeping the dirt found in the immediate environment where people live in either daily or periodically. In both cases, the excreta and waste are disposed of and forgotten. To these people, environmental sanitation comprises daily or periodic build up and the flushing, collection and disposition of waste (Rahman, 2011). Every year between two to three million people die because of inadequate sanitation, insufficient hygiene and contaminated food and water and most of these people reside in Africa and Asia (Rahman, 2011).

Thus, the paper generally aims to assess people's perception on the current monthly environmental sanitation exercise in Kano. And to do that, it would assess the monthly adequacy of the sanitation exercise; examine people's view of the sanitation exercise timing; identify the implication of movement restriction during the exercise; uncover (if any) Local Government's contribution in terms of facilities provision and examine the role of Environmental Board in supervision of the exercise.

Background to Environmental Sanitation in Kano

Environmental sanitation has been defined as the process of changing the environment that no longer constitutes a hazard to man (Blackburn, *et al.* 2004). The word 'sanitation' also defines the maintenance of hygienic conditions through services, such as garbage collection and waste water disposal. Since the demise of the Second Republic in 1983, environmental sanitation has

become a prominent issue in Nigeria. Countless sanitation edicts have been promulgated by state governments, such as Environmental Pollution Control Laws in Lagos State (1989). Many of these edicts have at least temporarily had considerable impact on the lives of citizens in the major cities. The state's preoccupation with sanitation reached its peak in 1985 during the latter months of the Buhari regime. Environmental sanitation was chosen as the theme for the fifth phase of the War against Indiscipline (WAI), which was launched in Kano on the 29th day of July, 1985 by the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major- General Idiagbon. He announced that a one million naira prize will be awarded to the cleanest capital. Frenzied sanitary activities ensued in all the state capitals. State Sanitation Task Forces were organized; additional sanitation workers were hired to remove rubbish, government offices and businesses were directed to close on designated clean-up days and mobile sanitation courts established to prosecute backsliders intensified. During the month of August 1985, many 'permanent' piles of rubbish disappeared and drains which have been clogged for years were opened. Most of this work was accompanied by community self-help groups aided by workers from the offices and factories (Robert, 1985).

The pace of the fifth phase of WAI was slowed following the demise of the Buhari government on the 27th day of August, 1985. Although the new head of state did not cancel the War against Indiscipline, he deemphasized it and counseled against the excesses which had become characteristic of its execution. The

one million naira prize for the cleanest state capital was revoked and federal pronouncements on sanitation once again became infrequent. At the state level, environmental sanitation was also deemphasized, although various issues linked to sanitation have continued to be raised periodically (Robert, 1985).

A new Environmental Sanitation Campaign was formally launched with the promulgation of environmental sanitation and petty trading edicts, which came into effect on the 1st day of January, 1986. Previously, Governor Hamza Abdullahi had promoted 'Operation Keep Sabon Gari Clean'. Sabon Gari, a densely populated suburb for migrant southern Nigerians, had a long history of sanitary neglect; the sensory evidence of very infrequent refuse removal and poorly designed drainage systems was blatantly obvious. In 'Operation Keep Sabon Gari Clean', the Kano State government assisted community groups to at least temporarily clean up much of the refuse blocking drains and even major streets. Prior to the January 1st, 1986 formal launching of environmental sanitation and petty trading edict, Governor Abubakar Rimi made enormous efforts to address the sanitation problem through the creation of a Ministry of Housing and Environment. This ministry took over the responsibility of urban sanitation from the Kano Municipal Local Government and increased sanitary efforts through the purchase of waste bins and tippers and the engagement of additional sanitation staff. The Ministry of Housing and Environment was abolished during the Sabo Bakin Zuwo regime. Nevertheless, Kano had been in the forefront

with respect to environmental sanitation consciousness during the early 1980s; this leadership was recognized in the choice of Kano as the launching site for WAI Phase Five (Robert, 1985).

The Environmental Sanitation exercise is conducted once every month in Kano State; it is declared that every last Friday, Saturday and Sundays of the month are environmental sanitation exercise days in markets and other work places on Fridays. Meanwhile on Saturday people are expected to stay at home between 7am and 10am in the morning to carry out a general sanitation of their immediate environment and on Sundays it is expected that every gathered refuse be collected and disposed, making it a sanitation day also, but without restrictions of movement. During field interview report gathering, sources from the Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMASAB) informed that the sanitation exercise has come with some conditions, such as restriction of movement (between 7am and 10am of the last Saturdays of the month), charges made by sanitation courts, very early period of starting the exercise and its three last days of the month and hours duration. Kano city has not only been the commercial and cultural capital of northern Nigeria, but the most populated in the region. However, a very negative relationship exists between high population, commercial activities and environmental cleanliness. This is because high population, in addition to commercial activities, gives rise to a ghetto-like situation that culminates into slum settlements and refuse generation from markets due to the commercial activities. All these are in most cases

accompanied by poor environmental conditions (Blackburn, 2004). Field interview reports gathered showed that in Kano the progress in sanitation, particularly in the urban centers, has developed since 2011. This was followed after the re-launch of environmental sanitation campaign by the immediate past government of Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso. The policy still remains intact and strict, as environmental sanitation is part of the agenda laid by the present government of Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje.

Since the re-launch of the environmental sanitation exercise in Kano in the mid-2011, the government has taken several policies and operational decisions to promote environmental sanitation. The Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMASAB) under the State's Ministry of Environment was funded and provided with more facilities, such as waste collection and carrying vehicles (tippers), creation of more urban permanent dumpsites, sanitation task force and sanitation courts and also monthly environmental fleeting by the vector control unit of the board. However, it is important to note that politics and interest keep playing a significant role in the activities carried out by several governments in Nigeria at different levels. For us to live in a safe environment, people just need to pay more attention to hygiene related problems, most especially environmental sanitation. Public awareness could be heightened by effective information and education about environmental sanitation basics. However, it should be understood that these fundamental changes and behaviour about environmental sanitation and hygiene

are best not enforced or legislated. Public education and awareness should focus at least as much on the advantages of environmental sanitation, such as comfort, dignity and health benefits.

To accomplish widespread behavioural change, everybody in the society should set a good example on hygiene and sanitation. It is maintained that people of all ages always respond to the realities they see rather than the rhetoric they hear. Work places, market places and all other public locations all need to set an example on environmental sanitation. In other words, public health awareness programmes and action campaigns could take place in any of those places. And also, if those places are neat, then members of the community are indirectly educated. Government at all levels (Federal, State and Local) should be aware of the importance of public participation in environmental management, most especially environmental sanitation. Hence, one of their primary assignments here is to raise public awareness (Jacinta, UD).

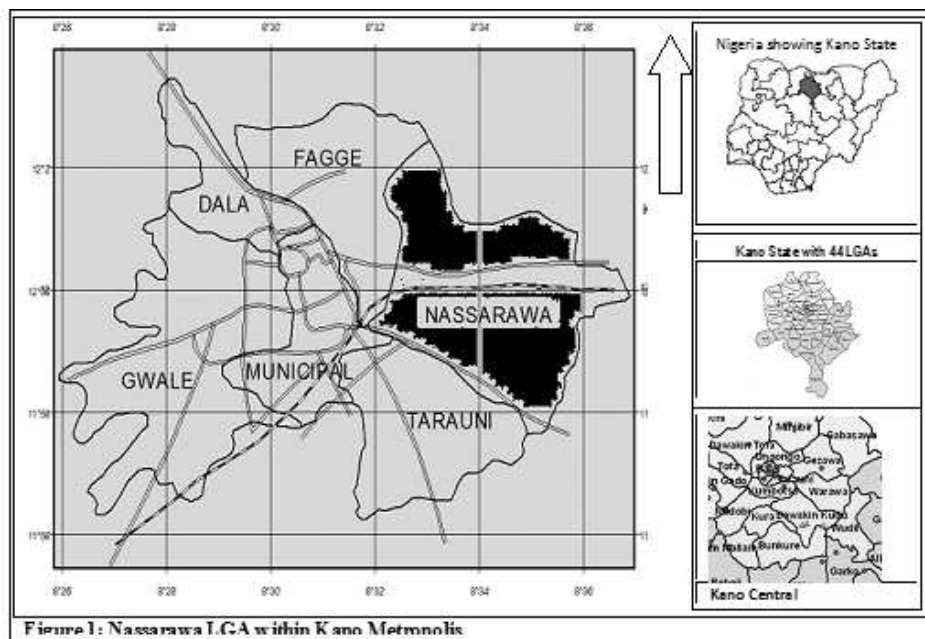
Environmental sanitation does not place regards on social or economic status. Mankind must out of necessity generate waste and others generated by some biological organisms. Therefore, at all levels of social and economic strata environmental sanitation is necessary. Due to inadequate supervision by the Refuse Management Board and enforcement by the task force committee; people do not abide by the environmental sanitation rules in Kano. Also, charges made by the sanitation courts have gone a long way in generating ill-

feeling between the people and government on the exercise. According to field interview report, the government has a very good intention of tackling the problem of environmental sanitation in Kano Metropolis; it has an interest surpassing its political will to back up its desire. This is because of the political and social conditions in which the country in general passed through which does not allow for policy continuity. In order to improve the existing environmental sanitation policies in Kano, there is the need for an improvement of the efficiency of the Refuse Management Board in terms of facilities provision; staff adequacy, monthly sanitation supervision and other operational decisions that will help foster a better public friendly monthly environmental sanitation.

Study Area

Kano State lies between Latitude $10^{\circ} 31' 41.14''\text{N}$ to $12^{\circ} 34' 10.57''\text{N}$ and Longitude $7^{\circ} 41' 26.40''\text{E}$ to $9^{\circ} 17.50''\text{E}$. The metropolitan area lies between Latitude $11^{\circ} 55' 23.93''\text{N}$ to $12^{\circ} 3' 53.10''\text{N}$ and Longitude $8^{\circ} 27' 42.26''\text{E}$ to $8^{\circ} 36' 41.62''\text{E}$ and is 150 meters above sea level. The estimated area of Kano metropolis increased from 122.7 km^2 in 1962 to 154.6 km^2 in 1981, an increase of about 25% based on the average expansion rate of two square kilometers per annum. As at 2006, the Kano metropolis comprised an estimated area of 499 km^2 and a population of 3,399,859 (NPC, 2006). However, with the annual population growth rate of 2.47%, according to the Nigerian Population Commission, the Kano metropolis in the year 2015 has a total population figure of

4,234,787. The metropolis now comprises eight local government areas – Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Kano Municipal, Kumbotso, Nassarawa, Tarauni and Ungoggo (Figure 1).



Method of Data Collection

The purpose of this research is on people's perception of environmental sanitation in Kano. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to the respondents randomly. The questionnaire was designed using the Likert three point scale of agree (A), neither agree nor disagree (U) and disagree (D).

The research scope of the study is restricted to the monthly environmental sanitation exercise in Kano Metropolis. The study focused itself on people's view of the environmental sanitation exercise in relation to government and individual roles and its adequacy and suitability in terms of duration and timing. The

geographical scope of the study is the Nassarawa Local Government Area of Kano Metropolis. The study will cover some selected commercial and residential known places within the Local Government Area, which will include; Gama residential area of Brigade, Bompai residential area, Gawuna market area also in Brigade and Dakata vegetable market all in Nassarawa Local Government Area. The choice of Gawuna and Dakata markets is to provide representation for commercial areas as the local government area of concern consists of both commercial and residential areas. Bompai and Gama respectively represent the planned and the unplanned residential settlement. In order to achieve the aim of the research, a questionnaire was administered to a total of forty people comprising residents, industrialists and traders as earlier described in data collection method.

Method of Data Analysis

The aspects considered in the study include adequacy, timing, restriction, facilities contribution and supervision of environmental sanitation.

Adequacy

Adequacy for this research refers to the people's perception on setting aside just a day in the month for the sanitation exercise.

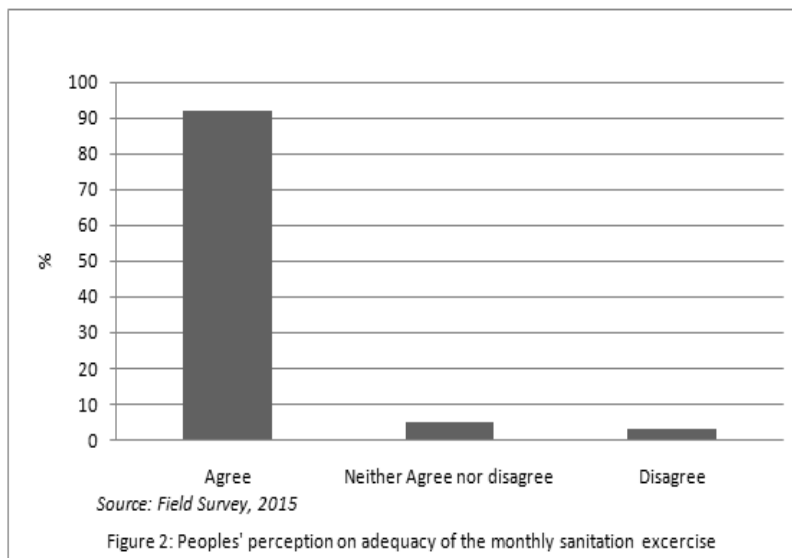


Figure 2 indicates that majority (92%) of those interviewed agreed that the existing monthly sanitation exercise is adequate. Meanwhile 5% were undecided about that. Out of all interviewed however, only 3% disagrees to the opinion that the monthly sanitation is adequate.

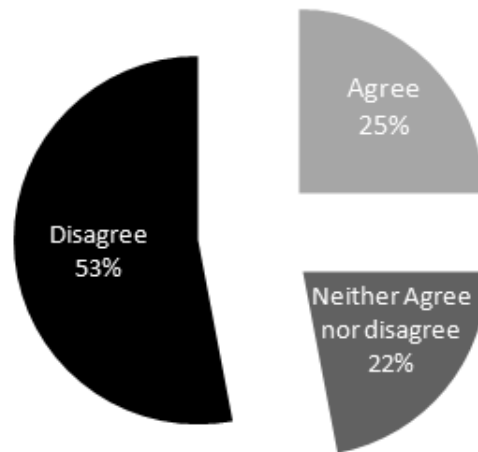
Sanitation day is a *symbol* not a set out day to clean up the general immediate environment. However, many see sanitation from the environmental cleaning up day perspective, and saying it is adequate once in a month confirms people's lack of will towards sanitizing their environments. They feel it should not be a continuous process but should be once in a while. This is so because on sanitation days people of all genders and class are expected to come out and participate in the general clean up their immediate environments. The situation in their own thoughts should be cleaning up of surroundings is to be done by women and children, as they are more domestic and culturally it is the practice. This has given

most of those interviewed the feeling that their participation once in a month in the cleaning up of their environment is adequate enough. Babalola (1993) stated that more than 2.4 billion people in the World currently lack access to adequate sanitation and are forced to dispose of their excreta in unimproved and unsanitary conditions (WHO, 2004). Those who suffer from the lack of this most basic human need also tend to be victims of poverty, ill health and an overall poor quality of life. Sanitation is a critical intervention needed to improve living conditions among the world's poor and to reduce or prevent diarrhoea and other seriously debilitating conditions, especially among children. The absence of supportive policies to provide the basis for planning and implementing sanitation programmes is a missing link to improving coverage at a large scale. Sanitation policies have often been unclear, contradictory or non-existent. With a few exceptions, national level sanitation policy frameworks, within which national, state and local government agencies and the private and non-profit sectors operate, have not been adequate.

Timing

Timing in this research means the respondents' opinion on how convenient is the time set for sanitation exercise monthly. The duration is three hours, which is between 7 am to 10 am on the last Saturday of every month. Findings of the field survey revealed that 53% of those interviewed disagree that the timing for sanitation is convenient. In the same vein, 22% remained undecided

about the timing while 25% were in agreement to the timing for the sanitation (Figure 3).



Source: Field Survey, 2015

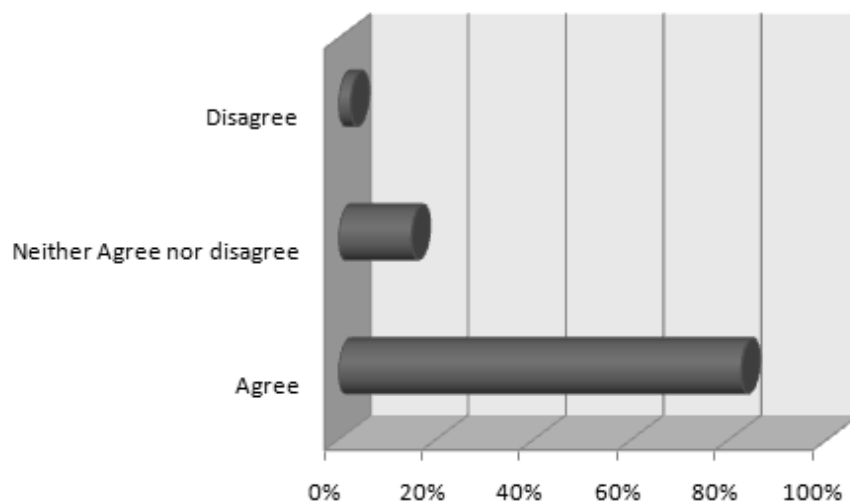
Figure 3: Peoples' perception of the convenience of the timing

The sanitation exercise is conducted on the last Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays of the month. However, it is only on Saturdays that sanitation is being timed and movement restricted for three hours of the early morning period. Saturday being a weekend and the timing set being in the early morning hours pose a very significant discomfort to the leisure of most residents. They see Saturday as a day to rest in the comfort of their homes after a long week of working daily. Setting a time for sanitation in the early hours of the last Saturday of the month seems inconvenient to most of the people interviewed.

Restriction

Restriction is about the people's view on the restriction of movement during the sanitation hours of every last Saturday of the month. It is against the law to move

around between the hours of 7 am to 10 am of every last Saturday of the month, either by foot (walking) or using a vehicle that attracts a penalty of charges made by sanitation courts.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 4: Perception on Movement Restriction

As seen on Figure 4 above, the findings of the field survey about movement restriction, respondents were asked if during sanitation days it has certain implications. Majority (82.5%) of those interviewed agreed to it and 2.50% disagreed.

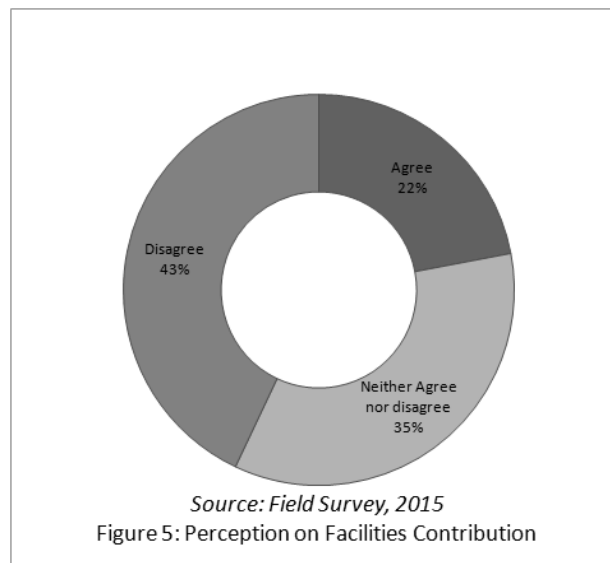
Traditionally, on every last Saturday of the month when timing is set during the early hours of sanitation, movement is also restricted during that period. Failure to obey that can lead to arrest and a fine by sanitation courts sitting on every last Saturday of the month. Many of those interviewed complain that the emergency situation of health, assistance or other needs may arise

on sanitation days and the fear of getting arrested and later charged stops a lot of people from carrying out very important affairs during those hours. Therefore, movement restriction has affected most of those interviewed. They feel it is an inconvenience of the sanitation rules they must follow.

According to an online news source “PM News Online”, on Monday the 16th day of March, 2015 a Federal High Court in Ikoyi, Lagos State, presided over by Justice Mohammed Idris, nullified the restriction of movement during the monthly environmental sanitation in the State. The policy of the Lagos State Government restricts citizens to their homes for three hours between 7am and 10am every last Saturday of the month. The court held that there is no law in force in Lagos State by which any citizen could be kept indoors compulsorily. The court found that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria grants freedom of movement to every citizen and such freedom cannot be taken away by executive proclamation in the absence of any law to that effect. It found that there is no regulation in force currently in Lagos State which authorizes the restriction of movement of citizens on the last Saturdays of the month for the purpose of observing the monthly environmental sanitation. Human rights activist, Ebun Olu Adegboruwa, instituted the case against the Inspector General of Police and the Lagos State Government to challenge the restriction of human movements on the last Saturday of every month for the purpose of observing the monthly environmental sanitation.

Facilities Contribution

There is a great need for both REMASAB and local government contribution in terms of refuse collection and facilities; trash cans, refuse tippers, shovels, rakes and brooms provision to help carry out an effective sanitation exercise.



As presented in Figure 5, 43% were in disagreement that not only the local government but REMASAB as well does not contribute any facility during the monthly sanitation exercise. Another significant majority of those interviewed (35%) were undecided about facilities provision on sanitation days and the least majority of those interviewed. However, 22% agreed that local government and REMASAB especially contributes in terms of facilities provision (motorable) to help move their dumped refuse from their immediate environments to dumpsites.

According to Nabegu (2010), majority of the respondents interviewed were of the view that the services of REMASAB covered not more than 20% of the city residents. However, waste collection in the Kano metropolis extends only to a limited part of the population. One of the main reasons limiting the coverage is lack of accessibility to most areas of the old city and the new settlements on the fringe of the city. The old city predates town planning as we know it today. Consequently, most of the alleys leading to the city are too narrow to allow equipment to access the waste. The new areas on the fringes are inhabited mostly by low income immigrants and those who have moved out of the city are built without planning. A number of options have been considered to solve this problem, including the use of donkeys, to evacuate the waste to collection centers that are accessible. A further option is to use small providers of service from the community as practiced with some measure of success in Lagos. The providers of this service evacuate waste from individual houses often using simple hand push trucks from places where conventional equipment cannot access. This system can provide also the much needed employment for the teeming youths of the city.

Supervision

The respondents' opinions were gathered about the supervision of the sanitation exercise by the staff of Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMASAB).

Table 1: Respondents' opinion on Supervision

Respondents status	Percentage	Number
Agree	22.5	9
Neither agree nor disagree	45.0	18
Disagree	32.5	13

Source: Field Survey, 2015

As it was indicated in the Table above, it was revealed that majority (45%) remained undecided about the existing status of REMASAB's participation and supervision, which was said to be conducted monthly on every sanitation day. Another 32.5% disagreed that any form of participation or supervision is conducted, while the least 22.5% interviewed agreed that REMASAB participates and supervises environmental sanitation monthly.

According to the Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMASAB), solid waste in Kano Metropolis was to be dumped by the public at designated collection areas which are made up of metal boxes that are easily loaded on to trucks mechanically or made of block (Nabegu, 2010). However, the practice of disposing mixed waste without treatment has a price to pay in terms of collection, transport and disposal costs, loss of valuables (recyclables, reusable and repairable) and the impact on the environment due to air, water and soil pollutions, and associated health risks that ultimately impact the economy.

It was also observed that residents who collect and transport the waste to the collection/transfer point from

where the waste should be collected immediately by REMASAB collection is never immediate and this creates not only unhygienic dump but resistance from residents close to the collection points, thereby disrupting the whole operation. 70% of the residents do not have an authorized dumping site for their waste. This confirms a nationwide survey by the Federal Office of Statistics (1978), which found that 52% of urban households in Nigeria did not have access to an authorized dumping ground. The above revelations by Nabegu and the Federal Office of Statistics have proved the failing condition of refuse collection, dumping, management and Refuse Officials roles in terms of participation and supervision at both the State and Federal governments.

Summary

The environmental sanitation exercise day is symbolic and not a day set out to clean up the general environment. It was an effort by the authority to make people realise the importance of collectively coming together to clean up their immediate and general environment monthly. However, many out of those interviewed (92%) see sanitation as adequate once in a month. This is so because of the sheer lack of will towards the cleaning up of people's immediate environment and the cultural perception of that to be domestic and should thereby be performed by women and children. Two other very significant reasons affecting environmental sanitation are the timing and movement restrictions made by the authority during the sanitation hours. More than half of

those interviewed are of the view that the sanitation timing is inconvenient to them and 82.5% of those interviewed have been affected by the movement restriction rules set by the authority during sanitation hours.

Concerned authorities' contribution in terms of facilities provision and supervision are found to be not so promising. This is so because close to half of those interviewed (42.5%) are in disagreement that Local Government agencies or the refuse management board hardly contributes any facilities, especially on the sanitation days. However, supervision is found not to be adequate as expected, as those who disagree to the lack of supervision are more than those who agreed that supervision takes place. Lack of accessibility to most of the areas has hindered a lot in terms of facilities contribution efforts by the authority and supervision is found out to be concentrated in some specific minor areas within the metropolis.

Conclusion

From the revelations in the data analysis, environmental sanitation in developing countries is not only neglected by the general populace but rather by their governments as well. Environmental sanitation has up to now not yet been realized as a significant part of national development and a major determinant of good health, especially in Kano. In Kano Metropolis specifically in the Nassarawa Local Government Area, there is the existence of rapid urbanization, commercial activities and the development of slum-like areas, which are all major determinants of environmental pollution. These

problems are coupled with sheer negligence and the total lack of will to sanitize the environments through sanitation. The lack of policy and programmes continuity, the perception of the adequacy of sanitation, the inconvenience timing, the biased supervision exercise, the exorbitant charges made by sanitation courts, the forced restriction of movement during sanitation hours and uneven facilities contribution have made the general populace uninterested and unhopeful of the environmental sanitation. Therefore, there is a great need for a better environmental sanitation policy to be put in place; this will foster effective public perception and participation of the environmental sanitation.

Recommendations

The findings of this study on environmental sanitation has shown that the lack of will to clean up the general environment by most residents, timing inconvenience and movement restrictions during sanitation hours coupled with the not so promising effort by the authorities concerned and refuse management board have adversely affected the issue of environmental sanitation in Kano. The following measures can help revive the situation to a better status than it is:

1. Introduction of a clear policy assigning the responsibilities of environmental sanitation to not only the government, but individuals as well.
2. Public enlightenment campaigns on the perception of environmental sanitation as an essential service

and a major determinant of health and good standard of living.

3. Promoting an appropriate institutional framework involving the roles of both government and general public as stakeholders of environmental sanitation.
4. Provision of adequate professional manpower at both the state and local government levels.
5. Improvement in research activities, environmental sanitation and awareness and the allocation of resources for environmental sanitation services.
6. Sensitization and the mobilization of communities in planning, designing and decision making on environmental sanitation matters.

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