

Resource Management As Panacea For Sustainable National Economic Development And National Unity

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Abstract: This paper examines "Resource Management as a Panacea for Sustainable National Economic Development and National Unity". The nation has been besieged by numerous problems due to poor resource management. These problems include; corruption, health implications, poverty and inequality in income distribution, ethnic crisis, pollutions, and it has also resulted in economic losses. These problems have militated against the country's ability to create wealth for the present and future generation. The paper also looked at the concept of conservation and sustainability and their relationship with resource management. The main thrust of the recommendations was hinged on the problems mentioned. These recommendations include making revenue from resources more equitably distributed, compensating the people of the area through the development of infrastructures like health facilities and provision of pipe borne water, making and enforcing laws that will reduce pollution and development of capital projects.

Keywords: Conservation, Development, Economic well being, National unity, Resources, Resource management and Sustainability

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world with over 178, 841,235 million people [4]; it is located in western region of sub Saharan Africa. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with over 250 ethnic groups and languages. The country is blessed with many natural resources among which are crude oil, gold, tin, coals, iron ore, limestone and many others. These resources are important commodities in the international market and therefore keep the economy going by being a source of foreign exchange to the government. These resources are used to satisfy human wants and because they are sources of foreign exchanges, they affect the overall performance of the government and therefore contribute to the growth of economic development and affect the standard of living in the country. The word resource according to [14] is defined as "a means of attaining a given social end". Resources therefore mean that a commodity can satisfy human needs (posses utility) or has the attributes of providing a means of livelihood. Therefore, the word "resources" cannot be limited to crude oil, gold, tin, limestone etc but also includes land for farming, rivers for fishing, clean air, forest for ecological life etc Resource management is the efficient and effective deployment and allocation of resources to where they are needed. Resources should be managed efficiently in order to prevent negative environmental impacts and disunity. With good economic management put in place, the decision maker will be able to recognize the economic resources that are scarce, and they will be able to put in place policies that will be sustainable to the present generation and future generations.

The word "Resource Sustainability" has become a common word today in the face of political up-haven, poverty, diseases, overpopulation etc. Sustainable resource use is seen as the potential solution for many international, regional and local problems [10]. The Nigerian economy can develop if its resources is managed adequately to cater for the problems of over population, infrastructural decay, political/ethnic crisis, pollution and increasing urban growth without complimentary resources to meet with limited resources. The United Nation World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987 defined sustainability as the "development that meets the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet there own needs". Poor resource management is a problem in many countries of the world of which Nigeria is not an exception. The argument that the more resources a country has the more economic prosperity a country will experience in terms of economic growth and development does not hold true when one examines the country. Nigeria as the eight highest exporter of crude oil in the world with immense wealth coming from annual oil production and trade in other mineral resources continues to suffer poor resource management. This statement holds true in Niger Delta, according to [13] this problem manifest specifically in that area as the largest oil producing region in the country but the poorest because it does not benefit adequately from the wealth derived from oil production. Poverty which is defined by Wikipedia as the general dearth or state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possession or money can be noticed all over Nigeria. This issue is compounded by the fact that oil revenue is poorly distributed among the population with higher government spending in the urban areas than the rural areas; oil extraction has also resulted in pollution and civil unrest in regions where they are extracted. This paper presents the basic concepts of resource sustainability and management and it application in natural resource use and development. This paper also views resources management as an important factor that can be used to improve the economic well being and unity in the country. In addition, the paper also looks at the problems associated with resource use in the face of political upheavals, poverty, pollution, environmental degradation, etc and how adequate

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resource management can be used to correct these problems.

National Unity and Economic Development in Nigeria

National unity as defined by the department of national unity in Malaysia and cited from [3] is a situation in which all citizens from the various ethnic groups, religions and states lives in peace as one united nationality, giving full commitment to national identity based upon the federal constitution. Resource management is a tool for economic development and national unity in any country. Economic wealth is used to develop other infrastructure in many nations. This is the case of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate (UAE) and Qatar which are ranked 27th, 29th and 49th respectively on logistic performance index data of 2014, while Nigeria is ranked 75th on the same index. Comparing Nigeria with other resource rich countries, it will be noticed that the country is far down the ladder in terms of infrastructural development. In addition to the above, income per capital in some resource rich countries is higher than in Nigeria. For example, income per capital in Qatar is \$137,162, UAE \$66,347, Saudi Arabia \$52,311; they are ranked 1st, 7th and 11th respectively on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Outlook, 2014, while Nigeria is ranked 124th in the world with per capital income of \$6,054 [9]. From the above, one can easily infer that per capital income is low in Nigeria. Low per capital income will fuel hunger, poverty, lack of basic amenities among others leads to crisis in the country and these are all indices of under development.

Resources Management and Sustainability

Resources are source of economic wealth which can be used to attain social and economic goals. A good or service can be called resource, if it has a monetary or economic value. Resources are source of revenue to the government and private individuals in a country. The revenue gained from the sales of resources serves as source of wealth to a nation and these revenues are used to meet the basic needs of individuals in a country. Resources therefore affect the ability of a country to create wealth and this wealth has effect on the standard of living of citizens of any country. Otokiti (2008) defined resources as "a means of attainment of social given end". This end may be the satisfaction of anything useful or that have the attributes of utility [12]. Therefore resources transcend Mineral endowments like gold, crude oil, limestone, tin etc but also includes the clean air for man and animal, forestry for ecological life, Sea, health, Knowledge etc because they also satisfy human life. Zimmermann (1980) in [14] sees resources as functional and it does not refer to a thing or substance, but to a function which a thing or substance may perform or to an operation of attaining a given end such as satisfying a want. From this definition, a factor such as gold, limestone, crude oil and so on will continue to be a resource as long as it satisfies human wants but cease to be resources when it can no longer satisfy human want therefore becoming a "neutral staff". Since resources has the ability to satisfy human wants, there is need to manage the resources in an effective and efficient way so that sustainability will be achieved within the limitation of the global environment. According to [10] sustainability involves solutions for human

welfare that does not result in degrading the environment or impinging on the well being of other people. World Commission on Environment and Commission (WCED (1987)) define it as development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future to meet there own needs. Before sustainability can be achieved, revenue gained from the sale of these resources must be used for development so as to cater for the need of future generation. Steiner, Stark, Pilz & Hutterer (2000) resources can be defined according to their regeneration rate:

1. Renewable resource like food, forest and wildlife. For resources to be sustainable, the consumption rate should be maintained within the capacity of the natural system to regenerate (renew) in a human relevant period.
2. Semi-renewable resources- this are resources that are in their intermediate state of their possibility to renew or to deplete
3. Non-Renewable resources like mineral oils and gas, coal, gold etc. their use as material and energy source lead to depletion of the earth's reserves and are characterized that they do not renew in human relevant period

Table 1
Classification of Resources

	Time for regeneration	Environment al resources	Energy resource s	Material resource s
renewable	Less than a year and controllable by humans	Agricultural products and non permanent pollution of water and air	Solar energy, water, ethanol	Salt
Semi-renewable	1-200 years, no human influence	Fish, forest, ground water, permanent pollution of water and air	Water, firewood, geothermal energy	
Non-renewable	Non economic relevance	Ozone, endangered fauna and flora	Oil, gas, coal, uranium	Minerals, soil

Classification of resources Adopted from Wacker and Blank (1999) in Steiner et al (2000)

In addition to the above, some resources are exhaustible and others are inexhaustible. Exhaustible resources are the resources which are available in limited supply and are going to be exhausted as a result of continuous use example are crude oil, coal, gas etc while inexhaustible resources are resources which cannot be exhausted by human use (i.e they are unlimited in supply). This includes wind, sand, water, clay, solar radiation, etc. There seems to be many contention about the definition of sustainability but three basic concepts are involved in sustainable measures; living within certain means of the earth capacity to maintain life; understanding the interconnections among the economy, society and environment; and maintaining a fair distribution of resources for this generation and the next [10]. Resources are the backbone of any economy; it provides raw material for production, it is a source of revenue to the government (internal and external) and it also performs environmental services. Resources can

either be degraded or depleted. In the renewable resources depletion occur when resources exceeds the renewal rate (this happens in non renewable and non recyclable resources) while resource degradation means to reduce the quality and quantity of the factor (i.e. environmental resources, renewable resources, flow resources and slowly renewable resources can be degraded but they always exist). Managing resources effectively and efficiently is the key to continuous wealth creation in any country. This wealth's that has been created are used to meet the need of the present and future generations. This can be achieved by improving and developing the capital and infrastructure wealth of a country, because management of a resources and in particular non-renewable resources is strongly connected with economic interest, national unity and development, liable instrument to achieve this, have to be based on economic principles (Steiner et al, 2000).

Resource conservation

Resource conservation is the exploitation, improvement and protection of human and natural resources in a wise manner so as to ensure derivation of their highest economic and social benefits on a continuing or long term basis. Conservation is achieved through alternative technologies, recycling and reduction in waste spoilage and implies consumption of the conserved resources. In Nigeria many women make use of wood to cook thereby destroying the forest and ecological life. Conservation of natural resources is important because there is increasing demand for these resources, these resources needed for sustainability and development are continuously been depleted and destroyed and the knowledge gained from the study of conservation will help educate individuals on how to conserve resources for the present and future use.

Sustainable resource use-a must for human well-being

Nigeria has benefited from the exploitation and exploration of natural resources, and this has been witnessed in the growth of the nation Gross domestic product (GDP). Trading economics (2015) asserted that Nigeria GDP was worth 568.51 billion US dollars in 2014 and this represents 0.92% of the world economy. This was up from 4.20 billion US dollars in 1960 to 568.51 US dollars in 2014 representing a 99.3% increase. The revenue gained from these resources as been used to develop many capital projects like roads, airports and other infrastructures. However, the increase in the country GDP has not been translated to increase income distribution among citizens of the country. According to [19] Global economic and social development over the last two centuries has been achieved through intensive, inefficient and unsustainable use of earth's finite resources. According to [5] over 62% of Nigeria's population lives in extreme poverty. As Nigeria strives to improve economic welfare, a large part of these efforts is passed onto the environment and the future generation. Unsustainable production and consumption pattern of land based products are exerting unprecedented pressure on land and the environment. Olademeji (2014) asserted that resources have fueled a lot of conflict in African nations (Nigeria inclusive). This is because revenue generated from these resources is not properly used. For example in the South South, the major occupation of Niger

Delta dwellers is agriculture, land and rivers that aid these agricultural practices has been spoilt/polluted by oil companies' oil activities through spillage and gas flaring thereby reducing the resources needed for fishing, destroying terrestrial vegetation and Farm crops and compromising the health of the people. These problems have further escalated poverty in the country. To address the above problems, the resources exploited from this area have to be managed so as to increase its sustainability and improve the living standard of people living in those communities.

Problems associated with poor resource management in Nigeria

Poor resource management is some of the causes of the poor infrastructure and low per capital income in the country. This has negatively affected peace and security in Nigeria and therefore need to be addressed. According to [13] "the notion of natural resources curse is closely linked to poor resource management as it increases stagnation and conflict, rather than economic growth and development". Corruption and mismanagement of the wealth from these resources are some of the factors causing poor resource management in the country. Most of the regions where some of these resources are mined remain in abject poverty, experience poor economic growth and in general experience lower standard of living, infrastructure decay and unemployment compared to other parts of the country [13]. These situations has fueled economic crisis like destruction of oil installations, kidnapping, sabotaging and so on. Corruption and Mismanagement has serious negative implications on national unity and economic development in Nigeria. The management of resources in Nigeria has been plagued by numerous problems ranging from poverty, health problems, pollution, land and water degradation, low standard of living, corruption, civil unrest, rising inequality and so on. Low standard of living, rising inequality and Poverty are some of the negative result of poor resource management in the country. Variation in effect of resources wealth on well-being can be seen all over the country and within the oil producing regions (thus making Nigeria a rich country with poor people). This has fueled poverty and has also lead to increased ethnic crisis within the oil producing communities and the country. Ethnic militias are in the habit of constantly sabotaging the effort of oil producing companies by destroying oil facilities. According to the United Nation's Human Development Index [18] that illustrates Nigeria is ranked 152 out of 187 countries this according to them was because about 72% of the population are either living in poverty or multidimensional poverty with overlapping deprivations in education, health and living standards or risk falling back into poverty. In addition, most of those involved in the mining of these resources are corrupt. Corruption has this has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. It is one of the major problems that have plagued the development of the country despite its vast resources. According to the report in premium times on September 8, 2015, \$11.56 trillion in oil revenue remain unaccounted for in the past eight years this is because a hung chunk of Nigeria resources are either stolen or unaccounted for. Maji (2003) and Petters (2005) in Nuhu (2007) stressed that oil wealth tends to breed corruption.

Most of the royalties paid on exploited raw materials are mismanaged, embezzled and siphoned by the managers of this fund. This does not give room for efficiency and sustainable development. Pollution is another visible negative impact of resources on the nation. Pollution contributes to the destruction of ecosystem services and the destruction of land used for farming and rivers used for fishing. Most of the people dwelling in the areas where these resources are exploited have seen little or no improvement in their standard of living while suffering serious damages to their natural environment. Amnesty International (2009) asserted that Nigeria experience more than 7000 oil spills between 1970 and 2000 thus causing serious pollution to the environment. Emissions (flares, dust, chemicals etc) from the processing of these natural resources also have adverse effect on the environment and health of the people, it makes water and land unfit for consumption and nor habitable for man and animal. Furthermore, gas flaring and emissions from the processing of other natural resources is hazardous to the health of the people. According to [1] these pollutants are associated with varieties of health impacts like cancers, neurological, skin problem, lung damage, anemia and leukemia, reproductive and developmental effects. Aside the above negative consequences of resources in Nigeria, the nation has also lost billions of naira through gas flaring and poor management of her resources. Much of the gas flared can be converted for domestic use and for electricity generation. In addition, increasing exploration of natural resources has affected other sector of the economy negatively. Foreign exchanges earned from natural resources are used to purchase internationally traded goods at the expense of domestic manufactured goods. These therefore make the exportation of non-natural resources difficult thereby turning Nigeria into a mono-economy country. Finally, resource producing communities in Nigeria has been bedeviled by series of ethnic crisis. According to [6] poverty and lack are the major factors responsible for this especially in the Niger Delta Region. Hundreds of billions of naira has been made from these resource producing areas, despite this huge amount of money, the people remain in abject poverty and deprivation. This has resulted to ethnic militias carrying arms and destroying the effort of resource producing companies. Ethnic crisis and civil unrest in resource producing areas have socio-economic implication on the peace and national unity of Nigeria and can serve as a disintegrating factor that has the ability of splitting the country to numerous segments.

Recommendations

- 1 Efforts should be made to make the distribution of wealth from resources more equitable. These will reduce poverty and increase the standard of living in the country especially in the resource producing regions.
- 2 Corruption should be curbed through proper monitoring and evaluation. Foolproof laws should be made so that there is no room for mismanagement of revenue from resources.
- 3 Government should as a matter of urgency, make stringent laws and take drastic actions against pollution. Gas flares can be processed into gas for cooking. Defaulting companies should be fined heavily

so as to deter them from polluting the environment.

- 4 Resource processing companies have social responsibilities to perform. They should make sure that they provide health facilities, clean source of water and provide employment to communities were this resources are exploited. These will reduce poverty and improve the health of the people.
- 5 Effort should be put in place to diversify the economy. This will reduce over dependence on crude oil and help improve the nation revenue. Revenue from crude oil should be used to develop other mineral resources, the agricultural sector and industries. These will help improve the country production capacity and reduce over dependence on crude-oil and it will reduce the country dependence on foreign made commodities.
- 6 The resource producing regions should be employed by the resource processing companies. Indigenes should also be encouraged to participate actively in extracting and processing these resources.
- 7 Revenue from natural resources should be used to develop other capital projects and some should be saved. This helps in creating wealth for present and future generation.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that sustainable resource management is important in creating economic wealth for the country and that the creation of this wealth will lead to improvement of standard of living and brings about unity within the country. The paper has also shown that corruption, ethnic unrest, pollution, health hazard, poverty, inequality in income distribution among others are some of the problems militating against proper resource management in Nigeria. However, if the resources are to be adequately managed, the government has more to do by reducing the negative effects of these resources on the people.

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