

## **MDGS-ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: ITS IMPACTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ONDO STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines Millennium Development Goals project in Ondo State and its impacts on rural development. To achieve this, the eighteen LGA in Ondo State were arranged alphabetically, selected at the interval of two and six local government areas were selected through systematic random sampling. Seven hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire were administered, interview conducted and on-spot-check on MDGs projects was carried out and data analyzed descriptively, interpretation analysis of reports of interview conducted and the use of frequency count and percentage were done. Findings therefore, suggest that our environment is dynamic and its activities interconnected in which human, animal and other organism species life continued indefinitely, hence, activities need to remain within bounds so as to maintain the ecosystem. Also, the need for governments (local, state or federal) and international agencies to collaborate with the local institutions and structures in the community concerned among others.*

**Key words: Rural Development, Millennium Development Goals, Environment Sustainability**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The destructive acts of nature and man in the uses of nature and its natural resources are not only continuous but increase in quantum and in rate. Effects of these actions may be gradual or immediate; consuming the host community with loss of life and property. The three tiers of government in Nigeria, Non-Government Organizations and some individuals at different forum and dispensations had been trying to conserve and protect our environment to no avail. Therefore, the integrity of our environment is compromised daily without remediation.

According to Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) 2005, Nigeria has the highest rate of deforestation in the world, having lost about 55.7 per cent of its primary forest. Deforestation has negative implications on the environment in terms of soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, ecosystem, and loss of wildlife. Also, it affects economic activities, agriculture, conflicts and most importantly quality of life ([www.eduresourceworld.com](http://www.eduresourceworld.com)). There is growing increase in oil spillage, water hyacinth invasion in the coastal areas among others. These had completely clogged the waterway and makes fishing almost impossible in the areas, hazardous to health and livelihood of the communities concerned.

Nigeria and some countries in the world signed the millennium Development declaration in 2000, while Ondo State hosted Ikaram/Ibaram millennium village which was established in 2005 as one of the twelve millennium village projects in Africa to scale-up the achievement of MDGs in the following areas among others:

- i. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources,
- ii. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss,
- iii. Halve, by 2015 the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and
- iv. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100million slum dwellers.

Ondo state government took steps to address the challenges which are peculiar to its environment (terrestrial and marine) with a view to achieve the set goals and targets. These include;

deforestation; illegal logging, bush burning, and water pollution, flooding, coastal erosion, sanitation among others. Ondo State had attended to these challenges for about 14years now and it is said that our environment determine our health. This paper therefore, evaluates the effects of MDGs on sustainability of rural environment in Ondo State.

### **Conceptual clarification**

This paper sees rural as an overall improvement in the economic and social wellbeing of rural residents and in the institutional and physical environment in which they live (Shortall; 1994:12). A process of not only increases the level of per capital income in the rural areas but also, the standard of living of the rural population. Also, it is the restructuring of the rural economy from being a dependent peasant and largely agricultural to one economy capable of sustaining the quality of life. It is a process of bringing improved level of living to the rural population with notable and reasonable changes at all levels (Diejomaoh 1973; Gana; 1990).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the eight time-bound development goals to be achieved by 2015 as a response to the world's main development challenges. They are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by one hundred and eighty nine (189) nations and signed by one hundred and forty-seven (147) Heads of States and Governments during the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 in New York, United State of America (Oladunni:2004;31). Millennium Development Goals represents commitment by governments worldwide to do more to reduce poverty and hunger, to tackle ill- health, gender inequalities, lack of access to education, lack of access to clean portable water as well as environmental degradation (Oyewole and Oti:2007:12).

Environmental Sustainability is when the rate of environmental harvest does not surpass the rate of regeneration, the rate of waste generation from projects for do not go beyond the assimilative capacity of the environment and the depletion of the non renewable resource should require comparable development of renewable substitutes for that resources (Herman 1990). These often times involves actions to reduce the use of physical resources, the adoption of a recycle everything approach, the use of renewable materials, protection and restoration of natural habitats and environment valued for their livability or beauty among others (Sutton 2004)..

### **Conceptual framework**

The discourse hinges on the Participatory Development paradigm (PPD) as conceptualised by OECD( 1994) "Partnership which is built upon the basis of dialogue among the various actors, during which the agenda is jointly set, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected". This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda. This concept attributed the existence and sustenance of development to participation which involves stakeholders who influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank; 1994). Also, people should become actors in their own development rather than just passive beneficiaries in order to ensure relevant and sustainable development efforts; particularly in regard to environment.

### **Literature review**

Japan International Agency (JICA) conceptualizes participatory development as "an approach to development that is designed to enhance sustainability and self-reliance and to achieve social justice through improvement in the quality of peoples' participation. This participation must not be transient but entails the sustainable upgrading of participation qualities like raising the awareness of local people, forming community groups, upgrading their requisite resources management abilities, and creating norms or internalizing their mechanisms, and improving capabilities for external negotiations".

Ijaiya (2006:145-155) examines the influence of beneficiary participation on the performance of some borehole water projects in Offa town. His study was borne out of the fact that studies have

identified the importance of involvement of the people in the successful implementation of development projects in countries like China, Uganda, India, Kenya etc. This story is not the same with some projects in Nigeria. He observed that the reason for the limited success recorded in Nigeria is the non-involvement of the people in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and projects; particularly the borehole project because the beneficiary's participation in the construction of the project (borehole) was statistically insignificant. He therefore emphasis the need to bring people to the main stream of the projects with a view to sustaining the spirit and tempo of participation through continuous orientation, training, funding, and enlightenment of the people by the agencies in charge of the projects. These are, the government, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and the people themselves. This will allow the people to have sense of belonging, motivation and commitment to the successful execution of the projects.

Utuk, (2014: 31-36) works on the evaluation of the European Union Micro-projects Programmes in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as regard participation of people, sustainability, and enabling policy environment and its effects on project execution. He realised that non-participation of all the sub groups in the community, lack of sustainable plan, and lack of enabling policy environment led to abandonment of some of the projects in the community. As a result, the good intention of the donor agencies of reducing poverty in the rural communities, reaching out to the disadvantaged groups, easing social tension and ensuring sustainable development of the rural areas have been negated.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): Therefore, UNDP views the basic purpose of development as efforts to expand human capabilities by expanding their choices to live full and rewarding lives. Human development is a composite measure consisting of life expectancy, educational attainment, and per capital income. It stresses that, while wealth (GDP per capital) is of great importance to development, it is not a sufficient measure of human development because it does not always capture progress. Hence it examines a country's achievements in three basic human developments; longevity, knowledge and decent standards of living. (Russett, Starr, and Kinsella, 2006: 113).

Aribigbola (2009:7) studied The Institution Constraints to achieving the MDGS in Africa using the example of Akure millennium city and Ikaram/Ibaram Millennium Village both in Ondo State. He observed that although both the millennium city and millennium village projects have taken off as programmed, the effect in the programme has not been widespread especially in Akure, though the effect of the programme seems visible in the Ikaram/Ibaram Millennium Village. He discovered that the problems which programmes are designed to solve are still widespread and the lack of adequate conceptualization and understanding both by the implementers and the will of the beneficiaries (people of the grassroots), over politicisation by the government, lack of interest on the part of grass roots would- be beneficiaries/ communities and inadequate funding and capacity under utilization are the major problems militating against the success of the projects. He recommended a collective participation that will carry the community along in project design, and implementation which is crucial to the achievement of the MDGS cum complete removal of civil service bureaucracy.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Table 1a: Sector Distribution of MDGs Projects in Nigeria**

Project Sector	Number of Projects	Percentage of Completion
Education	1899	72.69
Water and Sanitation	1599	73.36
Health	1940	80.05
Energy	29	56.55
Others	9	75.44
Total	5476	75.44

Source: adapted from MDGs Comprehensive Implementation Report, 2013

### **Table 1b: Project Type in Ondo State**

Criteria	Number of Project	Percentage
Construction	75	22.9
Borehole	92	28.0
Equipment	14	4.3
General Procurement	118	36.0
Rehabilitation/Renovation	28	8.5
Programmes	1	0.3
Total	328	100.0

Source: adapted from MDGs Comprehensive Project Implementation Report, 2013

Table 1a: above shows the type of MDGs project executed by the federal government while table 1b shows the ones executed by the Ondo State government which were general procurement 36% and the highest, follow by borehole with 28%, while rehabilitation/Renovation is 8.5% and programmes 0.3% and the lowest.

Table 2: The Total Respondents' Responses on Whether There Is Improvement in Water Supply in the Communities

Local Govt. Area	Yes		No		Not sure			
	Respondent	%	Respondent	%	Respondent	%	Total	%
Akoko North East	51	45.13	57	50.44	5	4.43	113	100
Akoko South West	31	28.18	61	55.46	18	16.36	110	100
Ese Odo	9	7.83	106	92.17	-	-	115	100
Ilaje	13	12.38	88	83.81	4	3.81	105	100
Odigbo	37	33.33	74	66.67	-	-	111	100
Ondo West	47	41.23	47	41.23	20	17.54	114	100
Total	188		433		44		665	100
Percentage	28.27		65.11		6.62		665	

Source: field work 2015

Fig.1: Percentage Distribution of Whether There Is Improvement in Water Supply

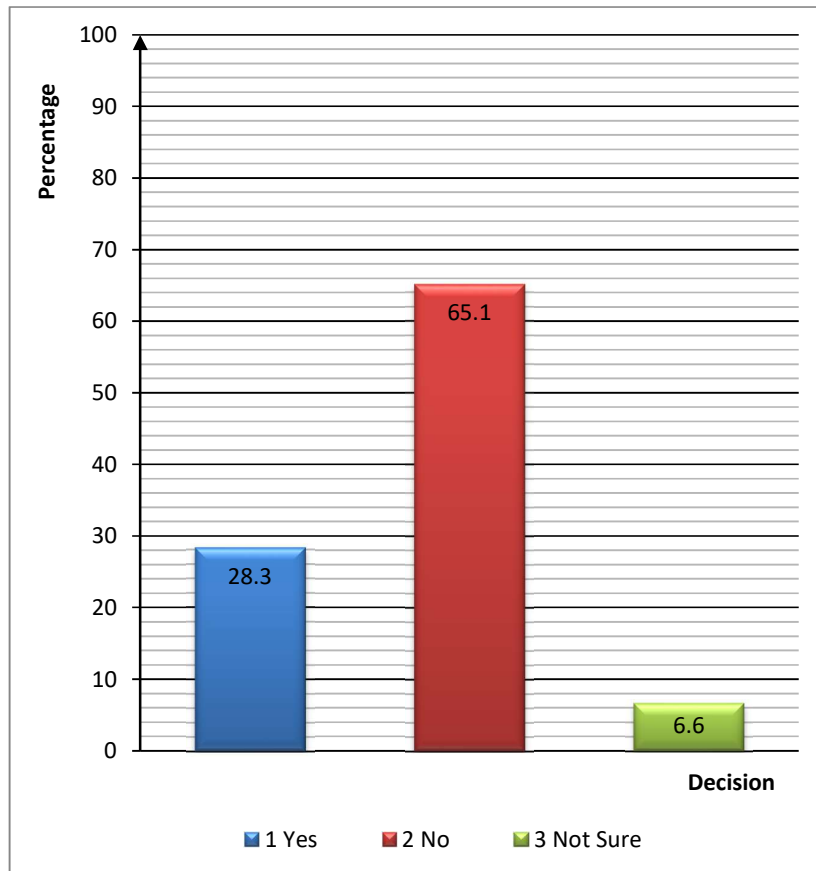


Figure 1 above shows that “no” response has the cumulative percentage of 65.1, “yes” response has 28.3 while “not sure” has 6.6 percentage and the lowest. Also, the figure depicted that there is wide margin between “no” and “yes” responses.

Table 1: The Total Percentage of the Respondents’ Responses on Whether There Is Clean Environment

Local Govt. Area	Yes		No		Not sure			Total	%
	Respondent	%	Respondent	%	Respondent	%	Total		
Akoko North East	69	61.06	38	33.63	6	5.31	113	100	
Akoko South West	44	40.00	47	42.73	19	17.27	110	100	
Ese Odo	23	20.00	69	60.00	23	20.00	115	100	
Ilaje	50	47.62	46	43.81	9	8.57	105	100	
Odigbo	52	46.85	52	46.85	7	6.30	111	100	
Ondo West	28	39.47	45	39.47	41	35.97	114	100	
Total	266		297		105		668		
Percentage		39.80		44.40		15.70		100	

Source: Field work 2015

Table 3, shows that Akoko North East LGA, Ilaje LGA and Odigbo LGA benefited from improved environment with 69%, 50% and 52% respondents respectively. The other three LGAs did not benefit from the project with 28%, 23% and 44% responses from Ondo West LGA, Ese-Odo LGA and Akoko South West LGA respectively. Figure 5.1.9, indicates that in the six LGAs; “no” responses is 44.46% while “yes” responses is 39.8%.

Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of The Benefit Derived From Improved Clean Environment In The Communities

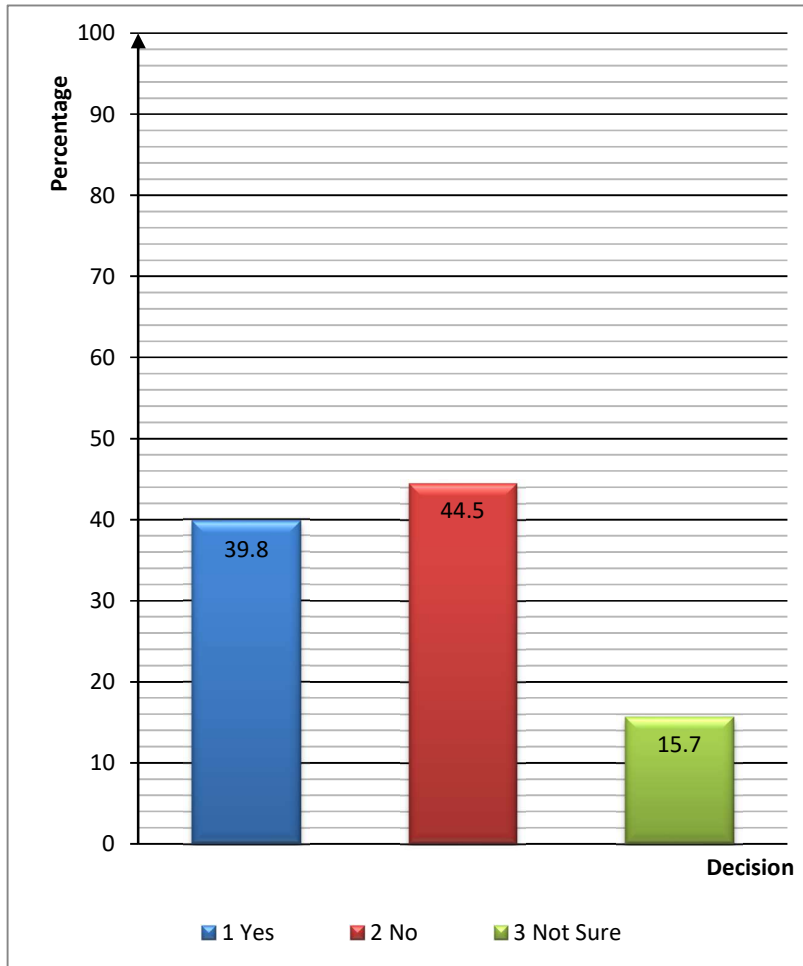


Table 1a shows that the federal government made provision for water and sanitation, but in table 1b, shows that Ondo State government only made provision for borehole. However, the interview conducted revealed that government only carried out the rehabilitation/renovation of some of the existing boreholes in some of these local government areas. From the table 1b, it is clear that no new project was carried out either in sanitation or drinking water. Although, government may claim that these projects fall in the categories of rehabilitation/renovation in the existing boreholes in some areas.

Table 2 which indicates the responses of respondents shows that more than 50% of the respondents, except in Ondo West Local Government Area agreed that there is no improvement in water supply in their communities. The margin between “Yes” and “No” response is so wide, which is between 28.37% and 64.96% respectively. It may be necessary to note that Ilaje and Eseodo

Local Government Areas are with 83.81% and 92.17% respectively. These are the coastal areas of the state. The interview conducted in these areas shows that there is no drinkable or portable water and in some towns, people experience different texture of water at different locations in the same town.

Table 3 shows whether MDG has ensure clean environment in these Local Government Area. From the responses of the respondents, it shows that Akoko North East Local Government Area has clean environment with 61% "Yes responses" likewise, Ilaje Local Government Area with 47.62%. Also, it is indicated that the margin between "Yes" and "No" responses is very close with an average of 40.02% and 44.42% respectively. From the analysis, it becomes extremely difficult for the state to halve, by 2015 the proportion of the population without sustainable antes to safe drinking water and basic sanitation drinking water sources safe from contamination. Although from the interview some rural dwellers have wells, communal sources and vendors but may not be well improved. The interview conducted revealed that an average inhabitant in this Six Local Government Areas sees his/her environment as something to be exploited. Activities like illegal logging, bush burning, excavation of land, farming practice of shifting cultivation and felling of tree for fire wood which constituted the main sources of fuel for rural dwellers among others are predominant in all the local government areas, leading to deforestation of the available forest in these areas; these activities decreases biodiversity of the environment. Ignorantly, majority of the respondent see these activities as sources of livelihood, but have driven to extinction some macro and micro organisms, bird and animal species in our forest either reserved or not reserved and it affected human live and livelihood. Unfortunately, provision was not made for afforestation in the MDGs in the state before the expiration of the target that says biodiversity loss will be reduced by 2010.

The interview conducted revealed that none of the stakeholders in the rural areas of the local government areas concerned participated in the programme at any level. If the community leaders, local experts and chiefs are not carry along, it will be extremely impossible to ensure the huge success of Integration of the principle of sustainability development into country policies and programmes and reserve the loss of environmental resources.

### **Findings**

Majority of the respondents in the six local government areas see their immediate environment as the gift of God, and that is meant to be exploited for their livelihood and survival without minding the impacts on the ecosystem. More importantly, physical, chemical and biological veracity of this environment is being compromised daily. Environmental laws and regulation, state edicts and bye laws are flouted without sanction; probably, because of high level of corruption in the society, political alligence or/and political godfathers. Institutions in the local or community level are not well integrated into government policy at state or federal in regard to the environment challenges and their solutions; control, monitoring and remedy. For instance, the monthly environmental exercise in the state is not well monitor in order to ensure strict compliance in rural areas. It is equally revealed that majority of the culprits of these unwholesome acts are indigenes of these communities. It obvious from interview conducted that the fiscal allocation to the sector, if any in the state, in the recent time has not matched the magnitude of natural and man-made threat to their environment. For example, the cost and rate of Coastal erosion in Ilaje and Eseodo LGAs where some towns are moving upward or relocating to escape being wash away by the encroaching sea. Very large numbers of these rural communities obtained and depend on rivers, streams, pond and unprotected or poorly protected wells for their drinking water. This therefore, led them to using communal water sources which might have been microbiologically contaminated. Unlike other local government areas, youth resti in Ese-Odo and Ilaje Local Government Areas disrupt the execution of the programmes. From the interview conducted, youth in these areas usually demand for compensation for any project to be executed in the local government areas probably because they felt exploited and they need to collect their share from the national cake.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident from this paper that the combined effects of environmental threats have resulted in visible and alarming rate of lost of lives, destruction of properties and environmental squalor in Ondo State. Ondo State government has attempted to tackle these challenges without considerable effects; the reasons being that, the solutions were merely cosmetic. Although, these challenges could be enormous and costly to tackled, the MDGs had put in place necessary and required instruments and institutions for the achievement of its targets in State. Of course, Ondo State may be highly vulnerable to environment risks, but when its planning, execution and monitoring are integrated or connected with the communities concerned a lot of improvement will be witnessed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The leadership of the three tiers of government in Nigeria should put in place good monitoring system, necessary commitment and require political will to achieve quality improvement in the sector by vigorous domestic enforcement of the existing laws and the articles of convention on environment compliance. Government and other international agencies should collaborate with the community leaders, youth and other relevant social groups/clubs in the community concerned in order to achieve the required result. The fiscal allocation for this sector should be increased, probably to about 10 percent of the state annual budget. Government must ensure that the said percentage is judiciously appropriate, through good planning, execution and monitoring exercises particularly at the local government level. There should be unique method of educating government officials and creating the necessary awareness in members of the community on these challenges in ways that is peculiar to each community's norms, customs, culture and tradition. Ese-odo and Ilaje Local government areas need well equipped marine police to tackle illegal loggers, etc and mobile courts to prosecute criminals on the high sea.

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