Vol. 11(11), pp. 172-182, December 2018 DOI: 10.5897/JGRP2018.0711 Article Number: 1C1BE1259273 ISSN: 2070-1845 Copyright ©2018 Author(s) retain the copyright of this article http://www.academicjournals.org/JGRP



Full Length Research Paper

# Environmental sanitation practices in Kuchigworo and Garamajiji along airport road, Abuja

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Received 19 September, 2018; Accepted 17 October, 2018

Good environmental sanitation is a precondition for good health and success in the fight against poverty, hunger and death. It is also central to the human rights and personal dignity of every human being. The study adopted direct field observation, it involved interview and physical assessment. Results were presented in tables and charts, while data analyses were carried using simple percentages and frequencies. The results of findings showed that well/boreholes is a major source of water (75.5%). Also, 13.7% washed toilets daily, while 55.8% washed toilets on alternate days. The study revealed that the dumping of refuse on roadside/open spaces has impacted the environment negatively, some of these impacts are physical nuisance of the solid wastes to the environment, the dumpsites serve as hideouts to rats and other dangerous insects and it emit offensive odor. The study recommended that refuse can be collected regularly to avoid pollution, and there is a need for proper environmental sanitation awareness to educate people on the importance of a clean environment.

Key words: Environment, sanitation, environmental-sanitation, informal, settlements.

# INTRODUCTION

Environment means different things from different perspective to different peoples and professionals. The environment is the set of conditions and circumstances affecting people's lives. The environment includes water, air and soil but also the social and economic conditions under which we live (Park, 2011). Globally, poor environmental quality is increasingly recognized as a major threat to social and economic development and even to human survival (Daramola and Olowoporoku, 2016; Acheampong, 2010; UNICEF, 2007; UNICEF, 2006; WHO, 2005). The impacts of environmental deterioration are even more severe on developing countries such as Nigeria; thus, obstructing and destabilizing socio-economic development (Bello, 2007; Mmom, 2003). The living environment is well polluted owing to social misdemeanor of indiscriminate littering, improper domestic wastewater discharge, and poor sewage disposal. These behaviors promote unsanitary living conditions that result in the breeding of communicable diseases (Daramola and Olowoporoku, 2016; Adimekwe, 2013).

Sanitation is the state of cleanliness of a place, community or people particularly relating to those aspects of human health, including the quality of life determined by physical, biological, social and psychological factors in the environment (Mensah, 2002). It can also be considered as interventions to reduce people's exposure to diseases by providing a clean environment to live and

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Author(s) agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the <u>Creative Commons Attribution</u> License 4.0 International License with measures to break the cycle of disease (Schertenleib, 2005). Nyamwaya (1994) also described sanitation as the proper disposal of human waste that is faeces and urine. It includes keeping the human environment free of harmful substances, which can cause diseases. It could also be seen as the principle and practice of effecting hygienic conditions in the environment to promote public health and welfare, improve quality of life and ensure sustainable environment. Wherever humans gather, their waste also accumulates.

Sanitation is one of the most basic services in human life. Inadequate sanitation is a major cause of disease worldwide and improving environmental sanitation is known to have a significant beneficial impact on health in both household and across communities (Philip, 2010). Environmental sanitation is an essential factor contributing to the health, productivity and welfare of the people. Environmental sanitation comprises the disposal and treatment of human excreta, solid waste and wastewater, control of disease vectors, and provision of washing facilities for personal and domestic hygiene, which work together to form a hygienic environment (Schertenleib, 2005).

Progress in sanitation and improved hygiene has greatly improved health, but many people still have no adequate means of appropriately disposing their wastes. This is a growing nuisance for heavily populated areas with the risk of infectious disease, particularly to vulnerable groups such as the very young, the elderly, and people suffering from diseases who have low resistance. Poorly controlled waste also means daily exposure to an unpleasant environment (Philip, 2010). Environmental sanitation is geared towards the protection and promotion of environment improvement. Sanitation is, thus, that aspect of our environment that may affect the health of the citizen (Uchegbu, 2015). It is averred that there is a strong people-environment relationship. The quality of man's environment is an integral contributor to the overall quality of families and individuals life (Adedeji, 2005). It is expected that when the environmental sanitation standards of a city improve, there will be up-liftment in the living conditions and health security for the inhabitants. Thus, there will be improvement in the quality and aesthetic of the environment at large, thereby making it habitable (Owoeye and Adedeji, 2013).

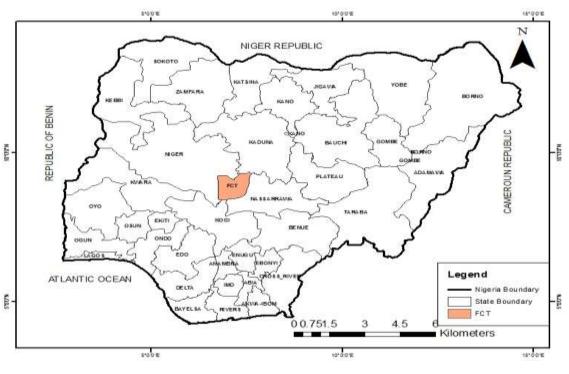
With globalization, developing nations all over the world are urbanizing at an alarming rate. Although urbanization is the driving force for modernization, economic growth and development, there is increasing concern about the effects of expanding cities, principally on human health, livelihoods and the environment (Philip, 2010). The rapid urbanization process of Abuja has its own consequences such as overcrowded dwellings, informal settlements, pollution, inadequate household facilities and carefree attitude of people toward poor environmental conditions which have been the precondition for deteriorating environment (Ezeamaka, 2015). The indiscriminate disposal of wastes in the environment is an eyesore in many parts of the Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) and mostly in informal settlements in Abuja. Parts of the city and mostly the informal settlements are usually dirty. Open spaces, market places, car parks and many other public and private places are littered with refuse. In most cases, gutter or drainages (open or closed) are clogged or totally blocked and many compounds are hemmed in by solid waste, posing health threats to residents, especially children who live and play around the area.

Environmental sanitation, therefore, is conveyed as the control of all the factors in man's physical environment that may exercise deleterious effect on human physical development, health and survival (WHO, 2011; Laoye, 1994; Owoeye and Sogbon, 2012). According to Adeniyi (1994), the environment should be protected through different means such as regular removal of wastes, maintenance of clean surroundings, good food and appropriate personal hygiene. It also involves regular supply of safe water, prevention of pollutions, and provision of decent housing with appropriate facilities essential for human conveniences.

The Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) is charged with the care of the environment in Abuja. AEPB and other agencies (public and private) are not adequately equipped with sufficient materials required to cope with the increasing challenges of maintaining an environment free of health hazards and problems occasioned by poor sanitation. Several efforts have been made by the AEPB to ensure that the city is always clean. However, the behavior and attitude of the inhabitants towards sanitation do not augment this effort. People do not seem to care about good environmental sanitation practices and constantly litter indiscriminately, without considering the future effects of these poor sanitation practices on their health. Poor environmental sanitation is a serious health risk and an affront to human dignity. Adequate environmental sanitation practices are more than just an inconvenience. It allows users' knowledge and experience to design and manage the facilities and services and to increase the likelihood that the services will be used sustainably. This paper therefore attempts to assess the effects of poor environmental sanitation practices in Abuja with references to informal settlements; Kuchigworo and Garamajiji along the Airport Road. To achieve this, this research assessed the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents; the availability of environmental sanitation facilities, services and also residents' environmental sanitation practices across the study area.

#### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research adopts the Nightingale's environmental



**Figure 1.** Nigeria Showing FCT, Abuja. Source: AGIS (2018).

theory and sustainable development to illustrate relevant subject matters to the study. Nightingale (1860) postulated the environmental theory, which states how certain environmental factors affect health. These factors include pure fresh air, pure water, effective drainage, cleanliness and light. Nightingale (1860) is of the opinion that any deficiency in one or more of these factors could lead to impaired functions of life processes or diminished health. Cleanliness of the environment related directly to disease prevention and aspects of the physical environment influence the social and psychological environments of a person.

The concept of sustainable development is an essential tool necessary for the world to effectively deal with current global problems of the environment and the development process (Owoeye and Adedeji, 2013). Barton (1994) observed that development is not synonymous with destruction, and for the development to be meaningful, it must be sustainable (Okusipe, 1998). Sustainability has become a central theme of environmental, human development and resource use studies. Although the idea of sustainability has many facets, the central idea is that we should use resources in ways that do not diminish them (Menegat, 2002). An important question in environmental studies today is how continuous improvements can be made in human welfare within the limits of the earth's natural resources (Mitchell, 2002). This is because the problem of environmental pollution has assumed a serious and gigantic proportion

and this threatens the very existence of human society (Philip, 2010). Thus, there is dire need for a solution to this problem.

## THE STUDY AREA

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja falls within Longitudes  $6^{\circ} 45^{1}$ E and  $7^{\circ} 39^{1}$  East and Latitudes  $7^{\circ} 25^{1}$  N and  $9^{\circ} 20^{1}$  North of the Equator as shown in Figure 1. It covers an area of about 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> (FCDA, 1979).

The study area is bounded to the north by Airport Road, and by Ring Road 2 to the East and South by Abuja Metro-Rail line and to the West by National Park as shown in Figure 2; and is located between Longitudes 7° 25<sup>1</sup>E and 7° 26<sup>1</sup> East and Latitudes 9° 0<sup>1</sup> N and 9° 2<sup>1</sup> North of the Equator. Kuchigworo and Garamajiji are among the informal settlements in FCC and are located in Phase II of the Abuja Master Plan along the airport road. However, these settlements are considered informal settlement as the development and growth were carried out outside the provisions of the Master Plan (Ezeamaka, 2015). Zubair et al. (2015) acknowledged the sprang up and merge of squatter settlements and squalors have in and around the FCC due to poor housing scheme, city unaffordable rent, and failure of development plan. However, the numeration carried out by the Department of Resettlement and Compensation of the FCDA in 2016 reported a population of 2,101 for

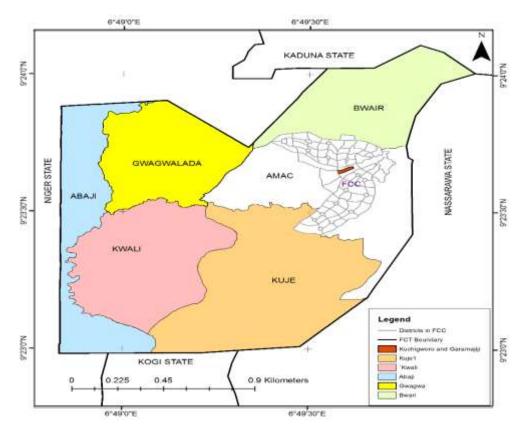


Figure 2. Abuja showing study area. Source: AGIS (2018).

Kuchigworo and 1,385 for Garamajiji, with 850 households (FCDA, 2017). The land use is mainly residential with some commercial activities in Garamajiji and Kuchigworo satellite settlements along the airport road Abuja.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Reconnaissance survey was conducted and oral interview was carried out on the residents of the study area. This enabled the researchers to have a better knowledge of the size of the study area. Furthermore, this also enabled the researchers to determine the relevant issues to be addressed in the questionnaire and to ascertain the most appropriate sampling method and suitable statistical analysis to employ. The study adopted direct field observation; it involved interview and physical assessment. The interview questions were administrated on each selected household. The information collected on site formed the major bulk of the data. Other information was obtained from the Abuja Master Plan and maps were from the Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS). The data were presented in tables and charts, while data analysis were carried using simple percentages, and frequencies in Microsoft excel. The exponential model formula (Pn =  $P_0 (1 + r/100)^n$ ) was applied to project for the 2018 population to 3,761 as shown in Table 1. Where  $P_n$  is projected population,  $P_0$  is population of the base year, r is population growth rate and n is the number of years, which the population was projected (2018-2016= 2). This study collected socioeconomic data from the selected 233

households by interview. Systematic sampling technique was used to distribute the interview questionnaire by selecting at the interval of four households in each settlement.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section discusses the profile of the respondents, the available environmental sanitation facilities based on residential characteristics, and environmental sanitation practices in the study area. The social statuses were also considered with respect to the ownership of house of dwelling. This enables the study in understanding the dynamic of the relationship between the people and the environment.

## **Profile of the Respondents**

The profile of the respondents discussed are the gender, age, educational status, marital status, occupation, income status and household size; all these are relative to their settlements which are more residential with very little commercial activities. Table 2 shows the distribution of demographic characteristics of the respondents, 114 respondents (48.9%) were male and 119 respondents

Settlement	2016 population	2018 population	Selected household
Kuchigworo	2,102	2, 267	140
Garamajiji	1,385	1, 494	93
Total	3,487	3,761	233

 Table 1. Result of Survey Questions.

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

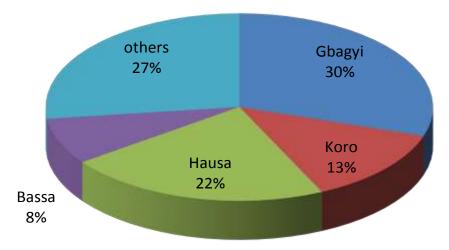
Gender	Frequency	(%)	Educational Status	Frequency	(%)
Male	444	48.9	None	2	0.9
	114		Primary	72	30.9
Female	110	51.1	Secondary	116	49.8
	119		Tertiary	42	18
Total	000	100	No response	1	0.4
	233		Total	233	100
Age	Frequency	(%)	Occupation	Frequency	(%)
19 – 29	23	9.9	Student	17	7.3
30 – 39	139	59.7	Trading	83	35.6
40 – 49	56	24	Civil servant	71	30.5
>50	10	4.3	Others	49	21
No response	5	2.1	No response	13	5.6
Total	233	100%	Total	233	100

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

(51.1%) were female. This is an indication of the role women play in sanitation management in the various households in the study area. Traditionally, women by African culture are saddled with the responsibility of handling environmental sanitation and with greater sensitivity towards environmental issues were fully involved in the study.

This implies that the women are the home managers and they handle the care of the environment. A further probe into this shows that 75.3% of the men do not know much about the management and disposal of waste in their houses. The study discovered that, where many details were required for garbage disposal, men indicated that they knew little and thus either failed to respond to some of the questions or called a woman to ask for specific answers. Age is expected to play a significant role as maturity could affect level of environmental awareness. Schultz et al. (2005) as well as Mayer and Frantz (2004) opined that the higher one's age, the more the person is concerned about the environment. This implies that older residents are expected to be more environmentally conscious than the younger counterparts. 23 respondents representing 9.9% of the respondents were between ages 19-29 years; while 59.7, 24.0, and 4.3% were between ages 30-39 years, 40-49 years, greater than 50 years, respectively. Five respondents (2.1%) did not respond on age group. Furthermore, a large percentage of the respondents had secondary school as their education status (49.8%) as shown in Table 2. Educational status of the respondents plays a significant role in environmental awareness. Studies such as Olofsson and Öhman (2006) as well as Theodori and Luloff (2002) opined that educated people are more concerned about the environment and place more emphasis on preserving the environment. The study also reveals that eighteen percent of the respondents have tertiary education while 30.9% have primary education and 0.9% no education. However, 0.4 of the respondents did not respond on the status of educational level obtained which may be attributed to shame of status.

The survey also revealed that 35.6% (83) of the respondents are traders and 30.5% (71) are civil servants. About 3% of the respondents are professionals; while 7% are welders and 14% of the respondents have mini-Jobs (tailoring, seller girls, house-help), which make up the 21% of others as shown on Table 2. Further probe reveals 5.65% of the respondents who did not respond are jobless and applicants. The study further revealed that 45.7% of the respondents were married, while 30% were single, 12.9% were widowed, and 11.4% divorced. This implies that a very young and active age group occupies the settlements.



**Figure 3.** Ethnic Groups of Respondents. Source: Fieldwork (2018).

On the ethnic groups in settlements, Gbagyi had 30%, followed by Hausa 22% and other tribes such as Igbo, Yoruba and the rest had 27% as shown in Figure 3. This means that the communities shared a good substantial number of other tribes in almost a mix ratio which makes the community to interact well especially in the area of business and social exchange of culture values and norms. Further probe disclosed that most of the Hausas are migrants. The survey further discovers that 52% of the household have a size of 1-5 person per family, 25% have 6-8, and 16% have 9-12 and 6.5% have 13 and above person per family. Thus, due to high cost of living, people in the community tend to control their family birth rate.

Closely related to residents' marital and education status is their income level. The field survey revealed that 47% of the respondents earn average monthly income of below  $\pm 20,000,25\%$  earn above  $\pm 20,000$  and below  $\pm 50,000$ , while 15% earn above  $\pm 50,000$  and 13% has no job. Results also show that 80% of the respondents live in rented houses and 12% are living in personal houses; while 8% do not respond if their houses are personal or rented. Further probe indicate that the house owners do not have any legal title but bought the land from village heads. The implications are that the respondents do not have the economic power to afford land in Abuja.

## **Environmental sanitation**

Information on residents' of environmental sanitation facilities is presented in this section. It is also imperative to consider the environmental sanitation facilities available to residents. This is necessary because availability of facilities may influence resident's environmental sanitation practices.

# Water

The major source of water in the study area was well/boreholes (79.8%) and only 3.9% get their water from community tap as shown in Table 3. The community taps (one at each settlement) was constructed by the FCT Administration under the millennium development goals (MDGs) Projects (FCDA, 2017). This prevailing situation does not guarantee quality water supply in the area as the water obtained from these sources are not treated before used. Hence, the people stand a greater risk of serious water borne diseases. Also, further probe into the storage system for water reveals that 75.5% of the respondents store water in closed containers. There is less access to the community water as its centrally located and most residents found out waste of time to walk over 3km to take drinking water. This may be also the reason why most houses have borehole or well.

# Toilet

Table 4 reveals that 74 (31.7%) respondent had access to flush toilets, 127 (54.6%) make use of pit latrine. 62.7% of the respondents claimed that they sometimes covered their toilets, while 25.7% never covered their toilets. In addition, 13.7% washed toilets daily while 55.8% washed their toilet on alternate days with the use of Izah (41.6%) and Dettol (37.8%).

## **Refuse disposal**

The state of refuse disposal is generally absurd which emanate from laissez-faire approach of the people towards indiscriminate dumping of refuse and delay in evacuation by the waste management authority. Over

<b>Table 3.</b> Source of Water and Method of Storage.
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Variables	Frequency	(%)
Source of water supply		
Community Tap	9	3.9
Well/boreholes	186	79.8
Others	38	16.3
Total	233	100
Method of water storage		
Open containers	14	6.1
Closed containers	176	75.5
Direct from source	24	10.3
Others	15	6.4
No response	4	1.7
Total	233	100

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

Table 4. Toilet Use and Toilet Hygiene Practices by Respondents.

Toilet	Frequency	(%)	Regularity of Washing	Frequency	(%)
Water system	74	31.7	Daily	60	25.8
Pit latrine	127	54.6	Alternate days	130	55.8
Others	30	12.8	Weekly	32	13.7
Total	233	100	Occasionally	11	4.7
			Total	233	100
Toilet covered	Frequency	(%)	What do you Use?	Frequency	(%)
Always	26	11.2	Dettol	88	37.8
Sometimes	146	62.7	Izah	97	41.6
Never	60	25.7	Bleach	41	17.6
Total	233	100	Others	7	3
			Total	233	100

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

40% dispose their refuse indiscriminately, out of which 30.0% burnt theirs within the residential environment thereby causing air pollution. 24.5% of the respondents dispose theirs in open spaces and drainages without minding the effect. The implications constitute breeding grounds for rodents, flies, mosquitoes, snake and harbour for other dangerous animals as well as cause serious degradation of the environment resulting in a myriad of health hazards (Plates 1 and 2).

In addition, water sources near such waste dumps easily become contaminated and can lead to disease epidemic such as cholera and Lassa fever among others (Table 5).

Furthermore, liquid wastes are poorly managed. Wastewater from bathrooms, laundries and kitchens are not properly disposed; hence, they constitute foul smelling water for breeding of mosquitoes and dirty ponds for pigs and ducks as shown in Plate 3. Most of the residents affirmed to treating malaria fever several times yearly. Figure 4 reveals that 44.2% of the respondents are of the perception that their environment is clean, while 15.9% admitted to having very dirty environment when asked to assess the environmental sanitation condition of their area. Further probe reveals that the respondents have fair understanding of the effects of poorly kept environment. Majority of the respondents believe that the AEPB is not covering their locality and that only the waste disposed along the Airport Road are removed weekly. The study further questioned the respondents on the role of AEPB of which 92% agreed to know that the agency collects money from the traders. The study probes deeper into the environmental health knowledge of the respondents, 55% of the respondents agreed that the environment is not healthy



**Plate 1.** Refuse littered around the study area. Source: Fieldwork, 2018.



**Plate 2.** Open drainage. Source: Fieldwork, 2018.

but required more personal and community efforts to clean it up. The respondents also agreed that drying and eating are carried out along the dirty environment as shown in Plate 4.

#### Conclusion

This study assessed the environmental sanitation practices and conditions of Kuchigworo and Garamajiji informal settlements along the airport road in Abuja, Nigeria. The study observed that well/boreholes were the major source of water supply and water was stored mostly using closed containers. Water system was found to be common in the areas. From the study, it can be established that the sanitary conditions of the study area is moderate although there were still some negative environmental practices like dumping of refuse indiscriminately, which causes pollution and exposure to diseases. In addition, the heaps of refuse that are seen commonly in the study area have a negative impact on the beauty of the city. The study further recommends the following to enhance sanitary conditions in the study area and even Nigeria at large:

(i) The first thing that needs urgent attention is in the area of public enlightenment on environmental and health education. Without grassroots environmental education and enlightenment, enforcement of environmental sanitation laws has very little prospect of success. There is therefore a need to educate the people about the danger of living in disheveled environment, particularly



**Plate 3.** Open drainage. Source: Fieldwork, 2018.

Table 5. Refuse disposal.

How often is waste collected	Frequency	(%)
Daily	57	24.5
Once a week	108	46.4
Others	68	29.1
Total	233	100
Method of disposal		
Burning/incinerating	70	30.0
Open spaces/roadside	57	24.5
Controlled tipping	65	27.9
Others	41	17.6
Total	233	100

Source: Fieldwork (2018).



Figure 4. Assessment of environmental sanitation condition by respondents. Source: Fieldwork (2018).



**Plate 4.** Food packs kept near an open drainage. Source: Fieldwork, 2018.

Nigeria, where effective and enforceable environmental policies are difficult to implement.

(ii) The government at all levels should continually review and update existing legislation with respect to urban planning, building standards, infrastructure and environmental regulations in order to make them more realistic, attainable and compatible with local conditions.

(iii) Regular collection of garbage by AEPB and other agencies.

(iv) Legislations should enforce a law concerning indiscriminate dumping of refuse at road-sides and nonparticipation in the regular community sanitation exercise. Defaulters should be made to face the full wrath of the law.

## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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