

Philosophical Perspectives on Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract. The import of the environment to mankind cannot be underrated, as it is the very structure around which life is built. As far back as the 6th century B.C., the early Greek philosophers had interested themselves with the nature of the environment and sought to find out its basic substance. For this reason, they were called physiologists and at other times, Natural Philosophers. They saw the environment as the foundation of human existence. Today, we can see the environment unleashing mayhem on man and development. Environmental sustainability is interwoven with development. Nigeria is plagued with a lot of environmental problems which are now threatening the socio-economic wellbeing of the nation as a result of neglect. The need to sustain our environment is of utmost importance to the existence of mankind and other forms of life. This paper holds that for environmental sustainability to be achieved, one would require training in Environmental Ethics. Environmental Ethics is a branch of Philosophy, concerned with the ethical relationship among all components of the environment. The paper therefore examined the causes of environmental deterioration in Nigeria and the role of Environmental Ethics in increasing the awareness that would protect the environment, for its sustainability.

Keywords: Philosophy, Environment, Environmental Philosophy, Environmental Ethics, Sustainability and Environmental Sustainability

1. Introduction

Life in the 21st century is dynamic and burdened with different challenges. This technologically driven age, introduced innovative methods which have dramatically improved our way of life and also had an adverse effect on the environment. It is pertinent to state that the environment is made up all the components of the ecosystem which include human

beings, other organisms and some phenomena. Unfortunately, human beings, through certain misconceptions about the environment have continued to plunder other components of the ecosystem thereby occasioning environmental crisis. The extent of such crisis in Nigeria is monumental and this is why philosophy through environmental ethics is help in arresting the situation in the country. The man-made environmental issues include global climate change, global warming, deforestation, bush burning, air pollution, noise pollution, heat pollution, water pollution, flooding and over population. These have become a threat to the health and existence of man, animals and plants.

Environmental degradation is now of global concern though the developed countries are effectively managing their own problems, the developing countries are down playing such a serious issue. The growing global concern for environmental sustainability and the reduction of environmental pollution, can be noted in the 2015 SDGs of the United Nations. Here the need to protect the planet's natural resources for its sustainability is brought to bear. Hence, the theme adopted is "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are:

- No Poverty
- Zero Hunger
- Good Health and wellbeing
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Clean water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean Energy
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Reduced Inequalities
- Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Climate Action
- Life Below the Sea
- Life On Land
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- Partnerships for the Goals

(www.unenvironment.org/resources/annual)

Nigeria is not left out in this global menace, as these increasing environmental issues have hindered social and economic development in the country. In view of the above, this paper will reveal the environmental issues that are threatening lives in Nigeria. It would also mention the contributions of Environmental Ethics in addressing the present state of environmental degradation in Nigerian environment for its sustainability. To achieve the aim of this paper, we will first clarify some concepts that are relevant to the subject at hand. This is followed by The Nigeria environment and its sustainability, Causes of environment problems in Nigeria, Sources of Environmental pollution in Nigeria, the benefits of Environmental Ethics to the Nigerian environment, Conclusion and recommendations.

2. Clarification of Concepts

2.1 The Concept of Philosophy

Philosophy as a discipline has no univocal definition. Etymologically, Philosophy is derived from two Greek words, “Philos” which means love and ‘Sophia’ which means wisdom. Philosophy is therefore the love of wisdom. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2001:872) defines Philosophy as “the study of nature and meaning of the universe and human life”. Omoregbe (2007:3) also defines Philosophy as “a rational search for answers to the basic questions about the ultimate meaning of reality as a whole and of human life in particular”. Philosophy is an activity of thoughts that seeks to develop ones analytical and creative skills. It is the quest of wisdom that uses its method of inquiry, to solve day to day problems that plague the very existence of humanity.

2.2 The Concept of Environment

The environment refers to our surrounding which includes living and non-living life forms like hills, mountains and plants. It is the responsibility of man to ensure that the environment is sustained. The Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (2001:389) defines the environment as ‘the conditions that affect the behaviour and development of sb/sth, the physical conditions that sb/sth exists in...’ While The

Business Dictionary defines environment as ‘The sum total of all surroundings of a living organism, including natural forces and other living things, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage’ ([www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition)>definition)

2.3 The Concept of Environmental Philosophy

Environmental Philosophy is a branch of Philosophy that concerns itself with the natural environment and the man’s activity in it. It is a philosophical basis for activities between the environmental issues and man. “Environmental Philosophy is a young field that brings together this traditional nurturing of wisdom with a specific interest in the environment...requires us to develop wisdom about the environment and that means, as above, discussing what is best for the environment, especially with respect to our own actions within the environment”.

(<http://pages.hmc.edu/beckman/environment/Phil-14>)

Environmental philosophy springs from the fact that Western philosophy played a major role in the creation of a dualistic mechanistic world view. A view of the world as made up of the human mind which thinks and which is superior to other components of the environment.

2.4 The Concept of Environmental Ethics

2.4.1 Ethics

Ethics is one of the core branches of Philosophy and it is derived from a Greek word ‘ethos’ which means custom, habit or character. It is the branch of Philosophy that concerns itself with moral values, right and wrong actions. Omoregbe (2006:3) defines ethics as “The branch of Philosophy which deals with the morality of human actions” According to Lacey (1976:60), Ethics is ‘an inquiry into how men ought to act in general, not as a means of a given end but as an end itself’.

2.4.2 Environmental Ethics

Environmental Ethics is the part of Environmental Philosophy that examines the moral relationship between humans and the environment. This goes beyond the traditional Ethics which focused on humans alone. It includes the non- human world, how to sustain the environment and the ethical relationship between humans and the environment. According to The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Environmental Ethics is ‘the discipline in Philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status

of, the environment and its non-human content' (<https://Plato.Stanford.edu/entries/ethic...>) Environmental ethics is the major aspect of environmental philosophy.

The main purpose of environmental ethics is to seek a deconstruction of the dualistic mechanistic conception of the world and to reconstruct a new ecological organic world view. To this end, environmental ethics focuses on a holistic understanding of the environment such that every component is recognized as indispensable for the overall wellbeing of the environment. Thus, an environmental ethicist like Taylor argues that environmental ethics is opposed to the human-centered view of the world, (2001 175). The human-centered view of the world anchors on the creation story as evident in holy books, which conceives the human being as a superior being that has to manipulate all other components of the environment even to achieve its selfish interests. Environmental ethicists argue that this human-centered view of the world, known as egocentrism, is the root of most of the environmental problems that confront man today. Consequently, to tackle any environmental problem, recourse must be taken to the domain of environmental philosophy where the application of environmental ethics gears towards resolving environmental problems.

2.5 The Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability is to have the predisposition to persist on an act for a long period of time. The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language (2004:1264) defines Sustain as 'To keep from sinking or falling, especially by bearing up from below; uphold; support.' The UN Commission on Economic Development in its 1987 Brundtland report defines sustainability as that which 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own goals'.

2.6 The Concept of Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is being able to interact with the environment without degrading its natural resources and this is the basis for human existence. It is actually the building block for development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is 'the maintenance of the factors and practices that contribute to the quality of environment on a long-term basis' (www.buisnessdictionary.com/definition)

3. The Nigerian Environment and its Sustainability

The deplorable state of the world's environment is of great concern to the developed and developing countries alike, as we depend on the natural environment not only for our livelihood but also for existence. This has prompted the developed countries to put in place measures to manage their environmental issues, while their developing counterparts are yet to come to terms with the significance of the environment to its people. Developing countries don't seem to realize the threat of environmental degradation to human existence and ultimately other life forms, if it is not addressed as a matter of urgency. Ironically, these environmental issues are primarily due to the activities of man to the environment thereby depleting the natural resources and endangering the ecosystem.

Human and material (natural) resources make up a country and environmental sustainability is fundamental to the development of any country as its natural resources underpins their economy. The environment is therefore, the foundation of all living and nonliving things. Man is solely responsible for its sustenance.

Nigeria is a Federal Republic in West Africa with a large landmass and population. It is also the most populous African country and this has earned her the title of the 'Giant of Africa'. Nigeria is endowed with numerous natural resources which include petroleum, coal, bitumen, gold, iron ore, zinc, clay, lead, tin and also agricultural resources. The benefits of these natural resources to mankind are numerous ranging from the food we eat, water we drink and use for our crops to the air, we breathe. For without the environment, there cannot be sustainable development. The human resources are expected to manage the natural resources in the environment but have rather, exploited the natural resources in the name of development.

As noted by Forrister (2016):

Countries in Africa feel the dangers of climate change, but I'm confident. They will also see the tremendous push that climate action can give to sustainable Development. With the right climate policy choices, and by working together, countries can spur investment that benefits people and the atmosphere. In fact, action on climate is action for sustainable development.

The need to sustain the environment for our existence has being an issue in Nigeria but sadly only on paper.

In 2007, the National Environmental Standards And Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act 2007 which replaced the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) Act of 2004 was signed into law. It is saddled with the responsibility to protect and develop the environment and its natural resources. ([www.nesrea.gov.ng>about-us](http://www.nesrea.gov.ng/about-us))

4. Causes of Environmental Problems in Nigeria

The Nigerian environment is affected daily by these four main elements namely urbanization, industrialization, poverty and overpopulation. Environmental problems are as a result of man's misuse of the resources provide by the environment. The effect of these four-pronged problem has negatively impacted the country and have also threatened the health and physical wellbeing of its citizens.

Urbanization is one of the elements that affect the Nigerian environment. The cities in Nigeria are observing an excessive rate of environmental degradation as a result of rural- urban migration, which is a constant influx of people from the rural areas to urban centers. The reason for this influx is to seek 'greener pastures' as development is mainly situated in urban areas and Nigeria is experiencing a high level of unemployment. This has led to an increased number of people in the urban areas with limited social services and infrastructure to meet the need of this growth. Urbanization is responsible for the accumulation of wastes in cities. As authorities in charge of cities face challenges with improper disposal of domestic and human wastes, as wastes are littered all over the city. These wastes end up clogging the underground drains and water channels which eventually aids flooding. Urban cities also have a high clustering of vehicles. These vehicles emit smoke and gases that form smog which contributes to air pollution.

In the Western world, cars are subjected to a biennial smog inspection to identify and impound vehicles emitting smoke into their environment. This has greatly reduced air pollution in their country. There is also the issue of housing for people who move to cities. People build makeshift shelters and structures just to live in the cities. Houses are built on water right of ways which now causes flooding in urban cities especially in the low lands like Port Harcourt and Lagos. In 2012, Nigeria experienced terrible flooding that claimed lives and property worth millions.

George (2014) observes as he says:

In 2012, NEMA said that a whopping seven million Nigerians were affected by the worst floods ever since in the past 40 years, the cost of material damage was estimated at 2.29trillion Naira. This does not take into account the amount of lives lost or persons injured during the flood.

All these issues, make the urban environment unhealthy and filthy. Environmental problems cannot be separated from development as it brings issues that affect our environment.

Industrialization is another cause of environmental decay in Nigeria. Industries are mainly sited in the cities and this makes people concentrate in the urban areas. These industries are indiscriminately sited next to residential and office areas. They emit high levels of toxins and dangerous industrial wastes that are hazardous to health. Industrial Areas are compelled to use generating sets to power their heavy equipment hereby constantly emitting carbon monoxide into the atmosphere. This is a major health threat to people living close to those industrial areas. Industrial wastes are also discharged into the ponds, streams or rivers hereby endangering the lives of humans who use the water and also marine life.

Oil is the mainstay of Nigeria and for years, oil production and exploitation has resulted to diverse environmental problems which also include flaring of gas at different oil flow stations in the Niger Delta, acid rain and oil spills. Since November 2016, the activities of illegal oil refineries and bunkering of petroleum products, in Rivers State has become of great concern to its inhabitants especially those in Port Harcourt. The city has being engulfed by what is called 'Black Soot' which is actually, particles of carbon from hydrocarbon substances. (www.vanguardngr.com>...). These practices of illegal refineries have led to many environmental and health problems to its inhabitants such as cancer and respiratory diseases.

Poverty also plays a negative role that affects the Nigerian environment. Poverty is defined as a 'Condition where people's basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are not being met' (www.buisnessdictionary.com>definition). Poverty and environmental degradation are intertwined as poverty causes environmental problems which in turn sustains more poverty. This is true about the areas where the poor reside, there is deteriorating living conditions like overcrowding, deforestation, poor sanitation, diseases and various forms of pollution. The Niger Delta regions are mainly rural communities that rely mostly on the environment for their food, shelter, fuel and their livelihood such as

crop production and fishing . In other words, unfriendly environmental practices are the major cause of economic losses in that region and cities with poorer people have a worse state of environmental degradation. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and material resources yet poverty persists in the midst of plenty. According to the World Poverty Clock, (July, 2018), poverty is on the rise as 44% of the 196,833,627 population are poor (www.worldpoverty.io). It further states that, 'According to our projections, Nigeria has already overtaken India as the country with the largest number of extreme poor in early 2018, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo could soon take over the second spot'. (ndlink.org)

As observed by Muhammad (2018), *However, the basic cause of poverty in Nigeria is the absence of an enabling environment that will free the people from the prison of Poverty, uplifting their living standard and provide ways to assist them, turn their dreams into reality...* (dailytrust.com.ng)

Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and oil is exploited from the Niger Delta regions of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is therefore the treasure of the nation's economy, it can now be described as 'Nigeria's face of poverty' even when it produces the mainstay of the economy that generates over 70% of government's annual revenue. Oil is now seen as the bane of this region. In 1956 at Olobiri which is in the present day Bayelsa State, oil was first discovered in Nigeria by Shell- BP and put the country in the league of oil producing countries (www.nnpcgroup.com>OilGasinNigeria). This region has ever since suffered greatly from oil exploration and its resultant effect on their environment especially as a region dependent on its environment for food and livelihood. Oil spillages damage vegetation and agricultural farm lands, pollute the rivers and streams, thereby depriving people of their food and livelihood. The environmental effects of oil pollution on the people of the Niger Delta region are immeasurable.

The last factor in this paper that affects the Nigerian environment is Overpopulation. Overpopulation is a major problem of developing countries especially African ones. Over population occurs when humans in a particular environment exceed the resources available to them. This would also exert pressure on their natural resources. Nigeria is the most populous African country and the seven in the world. It has a total land area of 983,213 square kilometers and its population is growing faster than the economy. According to

The National Population Commission (NPC), Nigeria has a growing population of 198 million people with increasing rural- urban migration. (dailypost.ng>News). It is pertinent to note that approximately 50% of Nigerians are urban dwellers (www.cia.gov).

As a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing nation with a growing population , it is no surprise that it is facing many environmental problems. Nigerian cities especially in the urban areas, are experiencing a high rate of unattended environmental problems caused mainly by development which has had adverse effects on the social, economic, health and wellbeing of the citizens.

According to Nigeria's 2004 National Policy on Population for sustainable Development which had an end date of 2015; *With a current population exceeding 170 million, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the seventh- largest country in the world and the most populous in Africa. Despite the introduction of policies and programmes over the last 30 years to address and Nigeria's rapid population growth and the challenges it poses for development, the country is projected to become the third-largest nation in the world by mid-century (United Nations Population Division, 2015)*

The urgent need to address environmental problems in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as a healthy environment is key for sustainable development.

5. Forms of Environmental Pollution in Nigeria

There are diverse environmental pollutions in Nigeria and they can be classified under the following; Oil pollution, Air pollution, Water pollution, Land pollution and Plastic pollution. These environmental issues are a threat to life of its citizen and need to be addressed urgently. It is pertinent to note that the environmental issues in Nigeria are mostly connected to its petroleum industry and the largest sector of the economy.

5.1 Oil Pollution

Oil pollution refers to the leakage from oil pipes into rivers, streams and farmlands. This can be due to poor maintenance or sabotage through vandalizing of oil pipe lines and storage tanks. Unfortunately, this adds up to thousands of barrels of oil spills every day.

With the discovery of oil in Nigeria in 1956 and years of exploitation and refining, it is no surprise

that the Nigerian environment has suffered a great deal of degradation especially in the Niger Delta regions of the country. The inhabitants of the Niger Delta regions, especially women and children experience a lot of hardship with the destruction of farmlands and livelihood. Other causes of oil pollution are from burning of toxic wastes, dumping of oil wastes into rivers and streams. This has not only threatened the lives of people in those communities but has also impoverished them. Oil pollution is the main cause of the ecological disaster in the country.

5.2 Air Pollution

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1990), defined air pollution as ‘limited to situation in which the outer ambient atmosphere contains materials in concentrations which are harmful to man and his environment’. It occurs when the quality of air is contaminated with the release of oxides which include sulphur, nitrogen and carbon. This form of pollution can be caused by man or even nature. Nature can sometimes cause pollutions, for instance in April 2010, when there was a volcanic eruption in Iceland that saturated the airspace of Europe with ash and lava. This eruption affected air travel and also a health hazard. (www.nationalgeographic.org/...cyclopedia/volcanic)

Nigeria is blessed with numerous industries that depend on their own source of power for production. These industries use power generating sets that emit poisonous gases into the air and are known to dump their solid wastes into the waterways. As stated earlier in this paper, Port Harcourt is currently engulfed with what is now referred to as ‘Black Soot’ According to Obi, the spokesman of PENGASSAN (2018),

The black soot settles on everything and finds its way into the corner of living rooms no matter how hard people try to stop it. Food items in Port Harcourt markets are as well not spared from getting mixed with this deadly soot that is ever present everywhere. (<https://www.vanguardngr.com>>...)

The increased usage of personal generators also worsens the quality of the atmosphere. With the epileptic supply of electricity from power grid, people are forced to use generating sets at home and business. In developed countries, power is provided and supplied from the national grid for personal and industrial use, this keeps their air clean. Cars also emit carbon monoxide that contaminate the air and is harmful to human health.

5.3 Water Pollution

Water pollution occurs when water sources like streams, rivers, oceans and lakes are contaminated and therefore harmful for consumption by any life form.

Water is an essential element for the survival of all living things. Streams, rivers and lakes are the main sources of water and its uses cannot be underrated. Water is required for drinking, farming, cooking, bathing and is even a source of livelihood for fishermen. The livelihood of fishermen is threatened when the water bodies are killed by contaminated water. It is disheartening to state that, harmful substances from oil spills and industrial wastes also contribute to this problem which is a health hazard and impoverishes people. Another act that contaminates water is when people dump their domestic wastes into canals and gutters near residential areas. This is common practice in developing countries especially in poor neighborhoods and gives good breeding ground for mosquitoes. Contaminated water aids the spread of water-borne diseases like typhoid fever, diarrhea, cholera, dysentery and eventually death particularly in the rural communities. In Lagos State, on the 16th of January 2017, 1,222 students of Queens College, suffered abdominal pain from drinking contaminated water and unfortunately two students died (www.buisnesspost.ng>2017/03/16).

As observed by Dr. Ewelike (2017), a public health specialist,

About 60 million Nigerians who lack access to safe water Are exposed to such water borne diseases as diarrhea, cholera, Dysentery and hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Some of these diseases Result in high mortality rate amongst the population. (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng>general>)

In the urban areas, due to the increasing population, lack of proper sewage and waste disposal systems, domestic and human wastes are dumped into waterways, streams and rivers when it rains. This causes flooding which occasionally leads to loss of lives and property. Nwachukwu (2018) advises further as he says ‘Stops dumping dirt/ refuse into the drainage system, this can cause blockage thus causing undeserved dangers. Avoid walking or driving during rainfall, especially near drainage’

5.3 Land Pollution

Land pollution occurs when man activities of man destroys earth’s surface. Land is man’s first contact with his environment and its significance to mankind cannot be overemphasize. Land is the foundation of man’s survival and wellbeing. It also caters for

animals and plants likewise. Man's first occupation is hinged on the use of the land for agriculture. Land pollution is another form of environmental pollution that degrades the land and this can be linked to oil exploitation in Nigeria through oil spills, gas flaring, flooding, the use of insecticides and pesticides.

Another form of land pollution is deforestation. A forest is a large area of land that has trees and trees play a crucial role in the life of man, as it is not only the home for animals, food for man but also acts as wind and storm breakers for villages. A forest acts as a shield for man and animals from the direct rays of the sun thereby reducing the effect of global warming. Deforestation is the process of felling trees for different purposes. With the increasing population and urbanization, there is now the need to cut down trees for farming, to build houses, industries, roads, for cooking fuel and much more. Deforestation contributes to land pollution as it causes soil erosion and infertility, desertification and aids flooding. It is pertinent to note that the removal of trees without replacing them can result in damage of the habitat of all living things.

Desertification also contributes to land pollution as it occurs when the desert encroaches on land which was once fertile. This can be induced by man or even nature and if not controlled can lead to famine and also extinction of living things.

5.4 Plastic Pollution

Plastic bottles, bags and containers are used to store water and food. They are convenient and portable for the end user but when not properly disposed, it becomes a form of pollution known as the plastic pollution. Plastic pollution is defined as 'the accumulation of the different types of plastic material on land, as well as in water bodies like rivers, oceans, canals, lakes, etc.' (<https://helpsavenature.com>>effe...) This form of pollution reflects also in other forms of pollution mentioned earlier in this article namely, oil, air, water and land. These containers do not decompose for years. According to Adesanya (2018) who says: *The effect of plastic pollution is enormous because plastic items are non-biodegradable; they cannot be broken down. Used plastic bottles that have decayed are source of health dangers to us. When they are indiscriminately disposed by burning which we see in most*

Cases, chemicals that are made up of plastics are contained in the fumes which could be inhaled. The chemicals contribute to health conditions such as lung cancer and asthma. (<https://punch.ng.com>>plastic-po...)

6. Environmental Ethics for Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

The environment is an important part of human existence as it comprises of, the air we breathe, the climate, weather, the food we eat and our physical surroundings. It is the core of human existence and should be treated as man's best friend. Hence, there is an urgent need to protect it for the benefit of mankind and others that depend on it. This should be made top priority in our country- Nigeria. In developed countries, a relationship between man and his environment is on the front burner while developing countries are less concerned but are even worse hit by the menace of environmental pollution. This has resulted in the deteriorating state of the environment which is now endangering the lives and existence of living things in the country. Human activities are primarily responsible for negatively affecting the environment and this has led to climate changes like global warming and all other forms of environmental pollution. With the growing environmental issues in Nigeria, there is the need to educate Nigerians on how to be environmentally accountable and responsible. The need to educate the Nigerian populace on the threats to human existence by polluting their environment is hereby emphasized. This is so because the actions taken against the environment is based on ignorance and a high level of literacy. Environmental education is therefore required for development and Environmental sustainability. The study of Environmental ethics is therefore needed to create an awareness of neglecting the environment.

Philosophy provides a good basis for training people on the present dangers of environmental problems and its effects to the future. The branch of Philosophy responsible for this is known as Environmental Ethics. Environmental Ethics is a branch of Environmental Philosophy and it is concerned with the environment and its sustainability.

In the 6th century B.C., which is the beginning of the quest for rational inquiry was ignited by early Greek philosophers who sought to find out the nature and origin of the world. They were called the 'Pre-Socratics' and their theories paved the way for use of

rational abilities as opposed to superstitions, setting aside the mythical approach to problem solving.

Philosophy is an academic and parental discipline, with no univocally acceptable definition. As a parental discipline, it contributes to every disciplines. Etymologically, it is derived from two Greek words 'Philos' or 'Philia' which means Love and 'Sophia' which means Wisdom. Philosophy is therefore the love of wisdom. It is a rational activity that is concerned with problems that affect mankind and attempts to proffer solutions to them.

Velasquez (1997) defines Philosophy as thus:
The word Philosophy comes from the Greek words, 'Philia' meaning to love, and 'Sophia' meaning wisdom. Philosophy is the love of wisdom about what it means to be a human being, what the fundamental nature of God and reality is, what the source and limits of our knowledge are and what is good and right in our lives and in our societies.

Traditionally, Philosophy is divided into five main branches namely; Aesthetics, Ethics, Epistemology, Metaphysics and Logic. Each branch handles a specific aspect of human development:

- Aesthetics is interested in the beauty of Art.
- Ethics is concerned with the moral aspect of man.
- Epistemology deals with every aspect of human knowledge.
- Metaphysics is responsible for the study of the universe and existence.
- Logic is the study of the methods and techniques used to distinguish good from bad reasoning

Ethics is a normative branch of Philosophy that is concerned with the moral values, right and wrong human actions or conduct. It questions what ought to be and is derived from a Greek word 'ethos' which means customs, habit or character. Omoregbe (2006) defines ethics as 'The branch of philosophy which deals with the morality of human actions'.

Environmental Ethics is a new subdivision of ethics that studies the relationship between man and his environment. It investigates the effect of man's moral relationships to the environment which is unlike the traditional Ethics which is concerned with only man and morality. Environmental Ethics emerged as a discipline on the first Earth Day which held on the 21st of March, 1970. The responsibility of Environmental Ethics is to proffer philosophical solutions to environmental issues especially with the increasing population. In other words, it would

provide an ethical perspective to environmental challenges that affects the whole community of life. Nigeria with its numerous environmental issues is in dire need for solutions to be provided by Environmental Ethics. The traditional Ethics was anthropocentric (human-centeredness) by nature excluding other living things in the planet even when he is degrading the environment as a result of his activities such as deforestation, industrialization, air, land, oil, water pollution and the need to consider others in the planet.

Environmental Ethics in its own part studies the relationship between humans and the environment and also tries to present how it can be relevant in the sustainability of the environment. Its approach is rather that of Ecocentrism. This means that it is the role of plants and animals in the society are also considered as an essential part of the environment. As a branch of philosophy, it tries to examine the moral justification of present state of affairs in the environment by asking questions like:

- What is the role of man in the environment?
- Is it proper for people to continue to cut trees for their needs without planting more just for their personal use?
- What is the effect of tree cutting to the environment?
- Why should humans continue to propagate its species?
- What environmental obligations do humans need to keep for future generation?
- How should humans best conserve the environment to secure and expand life?

According to Callicott, environmental philosophy should be environmental activism for the intrinsic value of nonhuman natural entities which are also components of the environment (1995: 28). The principle of intrinsic value presupposes that every component of the environment has intrinsic value known as 'its good'. That good is prima facie worthy of being preserved or promoted as an end in itself. Viewed in this perspective therefore, no component of the environment should be exploited or unreasonably explored for the purpose of satisfying human wants.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Environmental sustainability and development in Nigeria can only be possible when the numerous environmental issues are fixed through environmental education. This can be achieved with the study of environmental ethics.

This paper is of the view that the study of Environmental Ethics will improve the present state of pollution in Nigeria, thereby aiding environmental sustainability and development. These issues are of great concern and a threat not only development but also human existence. The need to educate people on the importance of the environment to their existence is paramount. There is the need to examine ourselves to know where we are, what we are doing wrong and how to make it right. As Socrates states 'An unexamined life is not worth living' (Plato's Apology 38a5-6). It recommends that environmental ethics should be included into the educational curriculum and taught at all the levels of education.

At the primary school level, the pupils should be introduced to their environment and its value. This early exposure would be the foundation to sustaining our environment.

At the secondary school level, the syllabus should include environmental ethics where the values and dangers of neglecting the environment should be emphasis.

At the tertiary level, Environmental Ethics should be made compulsory under the General Studies Programme

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