

Global Warming 2019: Municipal solid waste segregation and recycling in Port Harcourt Metropolis: An actively caring culture for sanitation and sustainable city development

Patricks-E Chinemerem

Abstract

Port Harcourt city is among the fastest growing and developing cities in Nigeria and West Africa. The city in the last ten years has witnessed a huge influx of rural-urban migration of people from different parts of the country in search of lucrative jobs and business. The city of Port Harcourt is strategic because it is the oil and gas industry hub playing host to major international oil and gas companies (IOCs). As a result of a rapidly increasing human and industrial activity in the city, the quantum of waste generated in the city from domestic residents, commercial and business/industrial residents and premises have astronomically doubled over the years. The problem of waste in Port Harcourt metropolis is not only exacerbated by increasing population and business/industrial activity but also by the absence of proper municipal waste segregation and recycling plants and points for solid wastes generated within the city. Another compounding problem is linked to environmental factors one of which is that Port Harcourt is a coastal city and is located in one of the environmentally sensitive regions of the country—the Niger Delta, which is characterized as an environmental sensitive area (ESA) because of its groundwater and aquifer conditions, sub-surface geology, meteorological factors and biodiversity richness and presence of wetlands and ecotourism sites—rivers, tributaries and waterfronts.

The fundamental objective and purpose of this work are to justify and bring to the fore how solid waste segregation and recycling in Port Harcourt metropolis can constitute a key basis for an actively caring culture for sanitation and sustainable city development that can be scaled up and replicated in other cities in West Africa with similar challenges. This work involved a qualitative and observation approach and focused group interview methodologies. Selected locations were mapped and visited to assess the waste management issues in such areas especially a mixture of densely populated and places with high industry and commercial activities were assessed. Focused group interviews were conducted among residents and personnel drawn from business and industry operators, the media, civil society organizations, waste management professionals and government regulatory agencies. The key findings from this study revealed that to achieve sanitation, hygiene and sustainable city development and improved quality of life and enhanced economic value for infrastructure especially real estate property and recreational areas as well as ill health reduction and mitigation of public health concerns and nuisance such as foul air (odor) will require an actively caring culture to achieve sanitation and must be driven by proper waste management like segregation and recycling.

This work is partly presented at 9th International Conference on Global Warming, Climate Change and Pollution Control & Recycling : Reduce, Reuse and Recycle December 5-6, 2018 | Vancouver, Canada