

Chapter 3

Environmental Policies for Emergency Management and Public Safety: Implementing Green Policy and Community Participation

Amidu Owolabi Ayeni
University of Lagos, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Policy refers to the commitment of people or organization to the laws, regulations, and other green mechanisms concerning environmental issues. Community participation has become important in government, policy makers, and environmentalists over last few decades, and as a result, it is now an established principle as it is widely used not only in academic literature but in policy-making documents, international discussions, as well as in local debates when considering issues dealing with decision-making to achieve sustainable development. Implementation of green policy and community participation programs through representatives—organization, groups of individuals—enhances the benefits of policies and program and adds value to policy as well as making the policy's results and responses more effective and stronger.

INTRODUCTION

Management of any programme and success requires the participation of various concern stakeholders. The stakeholders may include government, environmentalists, and scientists as well as communities and amongst others. In green policy, the role of communities and their participation requires the understanding of the environment, problems and appropriate mechanism to address the problems. Although, it should be noted that the wide gaps and weak relationships between government, policy/decision makers and grass roots have results to rejection of communities while in most they are not carried along in the planning and crucial national and/or state decisions. In addition, the relationships of various human facets - existing

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politics, socio-economic and cultural environment also form the lacuna. As a result, local communities have forced to be hostile in reaction and commitment to issues requires their efforts and knowledge.

In response to the above, this chapter considers implementation of green policy and community participation as an important agenda for achieving sustainable development particularly in the developing nations. The paper examines importance of local communities if actively involved in decision-making to facilitate the achievement of sustainable development. It argued that involvement of community in decision- making produces many important benefits. Finally, its underscores conditions under which green policy and community participation produce the greatest gains in effective citizen governance to guide policy makers towards sustainable development.

BACKGROUND

Over the years now, the need to understand community participation and community-based environmental management initiatives have been addressed different studies (Richardson, 2003, Roe, Nelson, Sandbrook, 2009; van Breugel, 2013; Wasilwa, 2015). Community participation is seen as a proven approach to address issues that have been long utilized in application environmental policy and decisions for sustainable development (Bass, Dalal-Clayton and Pretty 1995; Muhanna, 2006; Wasilwa, 2015). Any policy, decision and programs that fail to consider community participation in any environmental issues is attempting impossible solution Irvin and Stansbury, 1996; Ferreira, 1996; Nour, 2011). As a result of this statement, developing countries' poor communities often argued that environment is an expensive luxury due to lack of community opinion in policy and decisions (Nath, 2001; McCandless and Karbo, 2011; van Breugel, 2013; Happer and Philo, 2013).

Indigenous communities and/or traditional communities around the world have over the centuries developed a close unique connection with the environment – lands and waters around them for their livelihoods (Campese, et al., 2009). These connections have established various bound of participation in various communities. Community Participation is basically concerned with the involvement of individuals, groups and communities in the affairs of managing the environment they live in (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde, 2013; Aloni et al., 2015; Vanclay et al. 2015). Globally today, Community Participation in environmental issues is being underscored because of the realization of the necessity to involve the stakeholders in the conception of a lasting solution to environmental and human problems (Campese, et al., 2009; Aloni et al., 2015, Ayeni et al., 2016). Human activities intended to improve the socio-economic well-being of man have continue to contribute to the degradation of the environment, therefore, to address, the problems sustainably, major stakeholders in the environment must necessarily be involved (Costanza, et al., 2009; Aloni et al., 2015).

In alliance to the goal of Sustainable Development to create and maintain prosperous social, economic, and ecological systems, today, the participation of communities in managing their environment is obviously a global interest to incorporates communities in decision making that can sustainably influence environmental development (Bass et al., 1995; Aloni et al., 2015; Vanclay et al. 2015).

However, most developing country including Nigeria have long established laws and formal government structures to address serious environmental problems (Bell, 2002) which in turn affects sustainable development of such nation. Regulations and policies are the most common approach to environmental problem (Adelegan, 2005). Meanwhile experience from Nigeria environmental policies and implementation has showed that community has significant roles to play in the interaction of man

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