

# ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION, A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE AT GOVERNMENT GIRLS COMPREHENSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL, ALIERO, KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA.

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## **Abstract:**

**Background:** Environmental sanitation is the act and process of keeping the surrounding clean and safe for human habitation.

**Methodology:** Scientific publications were searched on environmental sanitation and summarized.

**Conclusion:** Universal precautions should be used whenever there may be occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious material to prevent contact with patients' blood or other potentially infectious material.

**Key Words:** Environment, Sanitation, Waste Disposal, Hygiene

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sanitation has generally been neglected in favour of water supply by governments, support agencies and even underserved communities<sup>1</sup>. Environmental sanitation includes solid, waste water, waste, excreta disposal, drainage and community hygiene contribute significantly to the continuing high rate of infant and child mortality from diarrhoeal diseases and also play a role in vector borne diseases<sup>1</sup>. Sanitation generally refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces. Inadequate sanitation is a major cause of disease worldwide and improving sanitation is known to have a significant beneficial impact on health both in households and across communities. Sanitation is the hygienic means of promoting health through prevention of human contact with the hazards of water. Hazards can be physical, microbiological, biological or chemical agents of diseases. Environmental sanitation includes issues like safe excreta disposal, medical waste management, waste water management, site drainage, personal hygiene facilities, vector and pest control and food hygiene<sup>2</sup>. Safe water and environmental sanitation services that include solid and liquid facilities, vector and pest control as well as food hygiene are vital for people's dignity and health and are especially important in ensuring the healthy development of children<sup>2</sup>.

The goal of environmental sanitation is to contribute to the improvement of quality of life and the achievement of social development<sup>3</sup>. To achieve these water and sanitation for all within a

framework that balances the needs of people with those of the environment in order to support healthy life on earth. For a healthy environment, people of course need not only these environmental sanitation components but also a safe and reliable water supply<sup>3</sup>. Holistic planning of the water supply and the environmental sanitation elements is essential and the present lack of synergism. Water supply is usually accorded priority in any attempt to provide services<sup>3</sup>. Sanitation has suffered from a lack of prioritization in development plans particularly when compared to water supply<sup>4</sup>.

## **IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION**

Environmental sanitation is important because it promotes health, prevents disease transmission, eliminates the breeding places of insects and rodents that may be carriers of diseases and improves the quality of life. Environmental sanitation needs the active participation of the community to make it successful. Environmental sanitation includes personal hygiene, household sanitation, community sanitation, school sanitation and water use.

Hygienic disposal of both human and manmade waste that does not endanger health should be the underlying objective of all sanitation programmes. The world's needs for basic sanitation services have greatly increased as a result of rapid population growth and higher expectations. Environmental sanitation includes safe guarding water quality, disposal of human excreta, disposal of waste water and garbage, insect and rodent control and safe food and handling practices.

## WATER QUALITY

Safe drinking water is water that is free from bacteriological and chemical contamination<sup>2</sup>. The quantity and quality of drinking water is linked to health, area where drinking water is collected should be kept clean. Excreta should not be passed around such area.

## REFUSE DISPOSAL

Garbage, trash and other insect breeding areas must be cleaned up always and burnt<sup>5</sup>. What cannot be burnt should be buried in a special pit far from living places and water supply<sup>5</sup>. This is also important for mosquito control; household refuse can cause a risk to public health by attracting flies, mosquito and rats and allowing them to breed. This may encourage the spread of diarrhoeal as well as other diseases. To remain healthy, every household need to get rid of its garbage properly and regularly. Everyone produces garbage from domestic activities which attracts insects and produces bad odour. Improper disposal of refuse increases the risk of insect and rodent borne diseases. Large amounts of dust can damage health. Uncontrolled accumulation of refuse is unhealthy and promotes an increase in rodent and insect borne disease. The accumulation of refuse is unpleasant to the sight.

## SAFE FOOD HANDLING

This is important to avoid contamination of food. The hands should be washed before touching any food.

## DISPOSAL OF EXCRETA

Wastes that can cause health problems are human and animal faeces, solid waste, domestic waste, water (sewage, silages), industrial and agricultural wastes, human excreta always contain large numbers of germs, some of which may cause diarrhoea when people become infected with diseases such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis-a, their excreta will contain large amounts of the germs which cause the disease<sup>6</sup>. Small amounts of excreta can carry enough germs to pass on a disease to someone else. When people defecate in the open, flies will feed on the excreta and can carry small amounts of the excreta away on their bodies and feet. When they touch food and excreta and the germs in the excreta are passed unto the food, which may later be eaten by another person. Some germs on food and in few hours their numbers can increase very quickly<sup>6</sup>. Where there are germs there is always a risk of disease. Disposing of excreta safely, isolating excreta from flies and

other insects and preventing faecal contamination of water supplies would greatly reduce the spread of diseases<sup>6</sup>. In many cultures, it is believed that children's faeces are harmless and do not cause disease. This is not true<sup>6</sup>. In some countries, used anal cleaning material and children faeces are thrown away with other household rubbish. This represents a significant risk to public health. It is better to throw the used paper and other cleaning material into the latrine or flush toilet that to store it in the house where it is a serious health risk. Nigeria and many developing countries have no central sewage collection and disposal system. In Nigeria, roughly 40% of the population does not have access to any form of toilet<sup>7</sup>. Their toilet is the bush or forest areas.

Safe disposal of excreta is of paramount importance for the health and also for the social and environmental effects. Inadequate and insanitary disposal infected human faeces leads to the contamination of the ground and water sources. Often it provides the sites and the opportunity for flies to lay their eggs, breed or feed on the exposed material and to carry infection. It also attracts domestic animals, rodents and other vectors which spread the faeces and with the potential for disease. Its odour and sight also creates a nuisance in the environment.

## CONCLUSION

Lack of environmental sanitation can cause water borne disease and attraction of insects such as flies, mosquitoes and rodents such as rats.

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