

ASSESSMENT OF INCOME GENERATION BY SCAVENGERS IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study assessment of the income generation by scavengers in Abuja Municipal area council was aimed at assessing the level of livelihood sustained by scavenging in the area. The methodology adopted was such that data were generated from questionnaires, interview, and observation methods. 120 copies of the questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The sample size was taken systematically from the four clusters of dumpsite in Karmo, Kuchingoro, Lugbe Federal Housing and Gosa according to the population encountered at each location at various points. Finally the results revealed that 33 percent of the respondents earned between ₦ 4,000 and ₦14, 000 monthly, 17 percent earned between ₦15, 000 and ₦25, 000 monthly, 8 percent earned between ₦26, 000 and ₦36, 000 monthly, 3 percent of them earned ₦37, 000 and above monthly, while 39 percent of the respondents could not recall how much they earned monthly. Therefore, the study concludes that the reluctance of Abuja Environmental Protection Board and the government of Abuja Municipal Area Council to fashion out concrete ways of integrating and assisting the scavengers to carry out their roles effectively and efficiently are antithetical to sound waste management in AMAC. This is because, for scavengers to effectively participate in waste management and earn better income in AMAC, the government must give them encouragement. It is finally recommendation the government should subsidise the costs of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) and educate the scavengers on why they should protect themselves to avoid health and environmental hazards arising from dumpsites environment; and this will go a long way in helping scavengers save more money.

Keywords: Subsidize, Personal Protective Equipments, Earned, Money.

INTRODUCTION

The problems of waste management is compounded by many factors including rapid population growth and industrialization. For Ogwuche and Yusuf, (2011), waste could be perceived as a global phenomenon that has attracted international attention, especially household solid waste. Waste could be solid organic substances that are biodegradable and there are wastes that are not biodegradable (for instance, plastics, bottles, and rubber). The generation of household solid waste has become an almost intractable problem in urban areas due to increasing population, high density, urbanization, industrialization, the efficiency of the collecting systems, and lack of political will on the part of the government. According to Amalu and Ajake (2014), in Nigeria, waste problem commenced with the rapid increase in urban growth resulting partly from population increase and more importantly with the increase in the number of people coming into the various cities in the country. In this view, there is no city in Nigeria that can boast of having competently addressed the concerns of filthiness and huge piles of wastes, instead the problem continues to assume dangerous dimensions. Ogbuene, Igwebuike and Agusiegbu (2013) observed that in Nigeria, waste density generally ranged from 280-370kg/m³, waste generation rate is 25 million tons annually and at a daily rate of 0.44-0.66kg/capital/day. Again, per capital rate of municipal solid waste production in Lagos was reported to range from about 0.021 kg/day/person. For Kadafa, Latifa, and Abdullah (2013), this is the equivalent to about 49 million kg waste per day (17.9 million metric tons/year) in Nigeria, with a population of 140 million as of 2006 census. According to Adewole (2009), in Nigeria, there is a steady increase in waste quantity and variety due to population growth and industrialization, while the basic solid waste management system based on collection, transportation, and disposal remains highly inefficient and ineffective especially in the urban centers. This has created huge problem for waste managers in the country.

Bakare (2016) observed that Nigeria generated 3.2 million tones of solid waste annually, out of which only 20 percent to 30 percent of it was collected. It is instructive to note that reckless disposal of solid waste has led to blockade of sewers and drainage networks, and chocking of water bodies. In addition, most of the wastes are generated by households and, in some cases, by local industries, artisans and traders, which litter the immediate environment. Improper collection and disposal of municipal solid wastes is leading to an environmental catastrophe as the most of the cities lack adequate budgetary provisions for the implementation of integrated waste management indicating a huge lack

of interest to develop the waste sector. According to Elenwo (2015), the management of solid waste has become one of the greatest challenges facing AMAC and environmental protection agency therein. The volume of solid wastes generated continues to increase at a faster rate than the ability of the solid waste management agency. The lack of ability of the agency to improve on the financial and technical resources needed to parallel the rate of generation is a huge concern. The deterioration of the urban environment in terms of irresponsibly dumped and accumulated solid wastes is most apparent in AMAC and has caused blighted environment therein. In AMAC, waste has become problematic because of its visibility at major roads in the municipality and the degradation of the environment. In most parts of the city, especially in slum settlements, it is a common site to find heaps of wastes, besides the wastes that are scattered in the gutters, street corners, and road sides. According to Environment Today (2014), a visit across major dumpsites in AMAC depicted a gory picture of neglect by government, which even encourages scavengers to rummage through the refuse unprotected. According to Adebola (2006), the inability of the government-owned waste management agency to adequately cope with the upsurge in the volume of municipal solid waste generated led to the creation of schism in the collection, transportation, recovery, recycling and disposal of solid waste in the municipality. The vacuum that was created by selective services and irregular management of solid wastes was filled by both formal and informal private sectors in solid waste management. It is instructive to note that while the government has recognized the roles of formal solid waste managers, unfortunately, nothing has been done by government to recognize the activities or roles of the scavengers (informal private sector) who are now major stakeholders in solid waste management in AMAC.

Flowing from the foregoing, Anumba (2014) observed that the scavengers did so much hard work with little pay. They made between ₦ 9,000 and ₦ 10,000, and at most, ₦ 12, 000 per month. However, it was pointed out that some of the scavengers earned up to ₦ 18, 000, which is minimum wage in the country. Again, for most of the scavengers, the dumpsite is not only a source of living, it is also a city within the mega city of AMAC, and it is their home. Most of them have makeshift habitations made poorly of plywood and corrugated metal and cardboard boxes. The shackled homes are furnished with useful materials found on the site. The shacks have no electricity or water, so they patronize water vendors or procure nylon every day. This situation is not acceptable in the contemporary world; and further suggested

huge abandonment by the relevant government in spite of the critical role of the scavengers in solid waste management in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

Abuja Municipal Area Council is in the heart of the Federal Capital of Nigeria which is located in the centre of Nigeria. It lies between latitude $8^{\circ} 40'$ and $9^{\circ} 20'$ North of the Equator and longitude $6^{\circ} 40'$ and $7^{\circ} 40'$ East of the Greenwich meridian. Abuja Municipal Area Council is situated on the eastern wing of the Federal Capital Territory. It is bounded on the East by Nasarawa State, on the West by Kuje Area Council, North-West by Gwagwalada and on the North by Bwari Area Council (Logbaby, 2015). Adewole (2009) observed that the Abuja FCT had a land mass of approximately 8000sq km of which the FCC occupied about 250sq km with the 2006 population census figure of 778,567 for Abuja Municipal Area Council. AMAC comprises of the Federal Capital City (FCC) which was divided into development phases, with each phase further divided into districts and cadastral zones; Also suburban districts of Nyanya, Jikwoyi, Lugbe, Chika, Kuchigworo, Karmo, Idu and Dei-Dei form part of AMAC

Reconnaissance Survey

During the reconnaissance survey various dump sites in the study area were identified and four main ones; where more scavenging activities took place located and marked for the study. These were the dump sites at Karmo, Kuchingoro, Lugbe Federal Housing and Gosa dumpsite. The latter being the central government approved dumpsite for the city. It also enabled the researcher to determine the most convenient time the research would be carried out and the number of research assistants needed for the study determined.

SOURCES AND TYPES OF DATA REQUIRED

Data for this work were generated from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources of Data

Primary data were generated from questionnaires, interview, and observation methods. For questionnaire, unstructured questionnaire method was adopted. 120 copies of the questionnaires were printed and administered to the respondents on a face-to-face basis. In addition, the work adopted non-participant observation. By this method the

researcher visited the dumpsites and observed the scavengers doing the scavenging activities.

Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary sources included publications such as books, works of other people in the related fields, journal articles related to waste generation, waste management and activities of scavengers, official government reports on waste generation, seminar papers and addresses presented during workshops related to topic of study. These were well acknowledged in the references.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The first thing the researcher did before field work was to employ three research assistants who could speak and understand Hausa very well. Two research assistants assisted in questionnaire administration while one research assistant, who is a university graduate, and versed in Hausa language, helped in the in-depth interview.

Questionnaire

Unstructured and open-ended questionnaire was used in collecting data from 120 respondents who were drawn from four dumpsites namely; Karmo, Kuchingoro, Lugbe Federal Housing and Gosa using face-to-face basis. Only Scavengers found in the dumpsites during time of visit were used as respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; sections A and B. Section A was used in collecting personal data of the respondents, while section B was used in collecting data necessary for the analysis of research.

Population of the Study

There is no demographic data on the population of scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council. However, Agunwamba (2003), opined that the number of scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council was not less than 6,800.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study was 120. This sample size was taken from the four clusters of dumpsite in Karmo, Kuchingoro, Lugbe Federal Housing and Gosa according to the population encountered at each location at various points (Table 1). All those encountered at the dumpsites at Karmo, Kuchingoro and Federal Housing were sampled except Gosa where 25 each were randomly sampled from scavenging and sorting groups.

Table 1: Sample Size

Dumpsite	Respondents
Karmo	19
Kuchingoro	29
Lugbe Federal Housing	30
Gosa	50
TOTAL	120

Source: Field Work (2017)

The research used the simple random sampling method of probability sampling. Only the scavengers seen at the dumpsites at time of visit were sampled. This method was adopted because scavengers are nomadic in nature hence no scavenger was restricted to one location. However, to avoid one scavenger being sampled twice, the choice of the dumpsites was such that none was less than 12km apart.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

This work adopted comparative data analysis method in analyzing data generated from the questionnaire. For Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2006), data generated from this method are compared with data generated from secondary sources. Textual/content analysis was employed in analyzing data generated from in-depth interview. Findings from questionnaire were presented in frequency tables and charts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Income Earned by Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

The level of income earned by the scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council was of importance to the researcher's objective.

Monthly Income of Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

Scavengers were asked to give the amount they earned through scavenging in a month. Data on the level of monthly income generated by scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Monthly Income of Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

Monthly Income of Scavengers	Frequency	Percentage
₦ 4,000- ₦ 14,000	40	33
₦ 15,000- ₦ 25,000	20	17
₦ 26,000- ₦ 36,000	9	8
₦ 37,000 & above	4	3
Don't Know	47	39
Total	120	100

Source: Field Work (2016)

Table 2 shows that 33 percent of the respondents earned between ₦4,000 and ₦14,000 monthly, 17 percent earned between ₦15,000 and ₦25,000 monthly, 8 percent earned between ₦26,000 and ₦36,000 monthly, 3 percent of them earned ₦37,000 and above monthly, while 39 percent of the respondents could not recall how much they earned monthly. Further information from in-depth interview revealed that those that earned above ₦25,000 per month belong to the secondary level of scavengers who buy from the primary scavengers. Table 3 shows the average monthly earning scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Table 3: Average Monthly Income of Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

Monthly Income of Scavengers	Minimum	maximum	Average	Frequency	Total Amount
₦4,000- ₦14,000	4,000.00	14,000.00	9,000.00	40	360,000.00
₦15,000- ₦25,000	15,000.00	25,000.00	20,000.00	20	400,000.00
₦26,000- ₦36,000	26,000.00	36,000.00	31,000.00	9	279,000.00
₦37,000 & above	37,000.00	37,000.00	37,000.00	4	148,000.00
Don't Know					
Total				73	1,187,000.00
			Average Monthly Income		₦ 16,260.27

Source: Field Work (2016)

From table 3 the average monthly income of scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council is ₦16,260.27. This is lower than the Federal government minimum wage of Nigeria which stands at ₦18,000. Magaji and Dakyes (2011) observed that the monthly income of scavengers ranged from ₦14,000 to ₦24,000 per month. Nzeadibe (2009) opined that over a six-day work-week, an average waste picker could earn about ₦4,500 weekly translating to ₦18,000 per month. For Adejero (2016) the take-home pay of some of the scavengers in Abuja was equal or more than the salaries of some graduates. From table 2, 50 percent of the scavengers earned ₦25,000 and below. This percentage is however clouded by the finding that 39 percent could not recall how much they earned in a month. This prompted further investigation as to how much they earned in a day.

Daily Income of Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

The respondents were asked if they earned up to ₦800 in a day. Data generated from this question is presented in Fig. 1

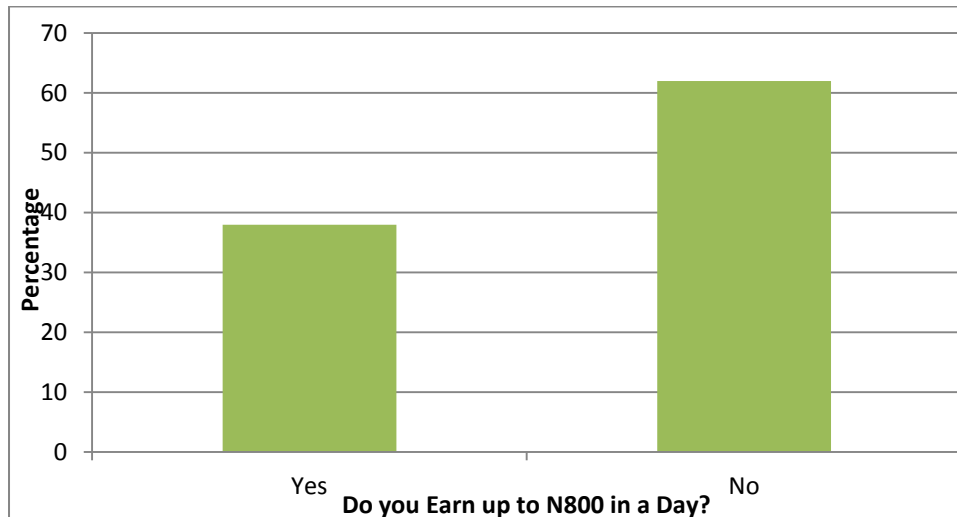


Fig 1: Daily Income of Scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council

Source: Field Work (2016)

Fig. 1 shows that 38 percent of the respondents earned up to ₦ 800 per day, while 62 percent did not earn up to ₦ 800 per day. Further information from in-depth interview revealed that the daily earning of a scavenger depended on how 'strong' he was and probably how lucky he could be in sourcing highly valuable 'waste' materials such as gold necklaces or rings lost by the owners. However the idea of getting such precious metal was rare. Nzeadibe (2009) opined that although the earnings of waste scavengers and waste dealers in Nsukka may be variable, interviews with scavengers indicated that they earned an average of ₦750 daily or about ₦4, 500 per week.

Muktar, (2014) maintained that Scavengers are poor relatives to the rest of the society, their incomes are low. He opined that a lot of factors have contributed in determining the income of youths in scavenging, and they include; hours of work, age of scavengers and the location of dumps. In higher income areas like the government reserve areas (GRA), scavengers found more useful materials in dumps, this is due to the fact that households located in higher income areas do not care to collect useful materials from their waste before discharge, by and large their consumption pattern and nature of the products consumed is another contributing factor.

Sustainability of Scavengers' Income in Abuja Municipal Area Council

The issue of sustainability is the main focus of this research and so the act of scavenging as a means of livelihood highly depends of how much it can offer the scavengers in view of the responsibility of keeping body and soul together. The respondents were therefore asked if their

earnings were enough to sustain them and their families. Data on the sustainability of scavenger's income is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Sustainability of Scavenger's Income in Abuja Municipal Area Council

Income Enough To Sustain Family	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	37
No	75	63
Total	120	100

Source: Field Work (2016)

Table 4 shows that 37 percent of the scavengers were of the opinion that their income could sustain them with their families while 63 percent said their incomes from scavenging could not sustain them with their families. Muktar (2014) opined that in Kano State unemployed youths engaged in scavenging activities to earn income for their survival and that of their families. Anumba (2014) further observed that the scavengers' villages, especially the one at Mabuchi is more like a ghetto town, where they had even television viewing centers for football lovers, play centers that dispensed tea and noodles, amongst others.

When the data from tables 2 and 4 are juxtaposed with data from Fig. 1, it is seen that more than average of the scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council do not earn up to ₦800 per day which implies that only about 38% of them actually earned up to ₦19,200 or thereabout per month; an amount that easily translates to slightly above minimum wage in the country. The researcher observed that a great number of the scavengers were malnourished. They were equally seen preparing food in a dirty environment (Personal Observation, 2016). Given the present recession and economic downturn in the country where a bag rice goes for N20,000 Added New, (2016) and the condition of living of these scavengers at their settlements one cannot but conclude that the present earning where less than average number of scavengers in Abuja Municipal Area Council earn N19,200 or less cannot sustain them with their families.

CONCLUSION

Scavengers perform critical role in waste management in AMAC. The reluctance of Abuja Environmental Protection Board and the government of Abuja Municipal Area Council to fashion out concrete ways of integrating and assisting the scavengers to carry out their roles effectively and efficiently are antithetical to sound waste management in AMAC. This is because, for scavengers to effectively participate in waste

management and earn better income in AMAC, the government must give them encouragement.

RECOMMENDATION

The government should subsidize the costs of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) and educate the scavengers on why they should protect themselves to avoid health and environmental hazards arising from dumpsites environment; and this will go a long way in helping scavengers save more money.

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