

## **Content and Hermeneutical Analysis of Selected Newspapers' Reportage of Environmental Issues in Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *There has been growing concern about the environment and the need to engage sustainable environmental behavior in Nigeria. It is irrefutable that since the mass media provide much of the relevant knowledge for public knowledge, they (the mass media) determine to a large extent the kind, and amount of, as well as frequency of environmental information that reaches the public which may in turn serve as basis for increased public action concerning environmental issues and matters. Apparently, media reportage of environmental issues is inadequate in extant literature. Thus; it is very important to ascertain how environmental issues which may have implications for climatic changes have been reported by the media, given the surveillance role that the media are expected to play in a democratic dispensation. It is on this backdrop that this study was carried out to investigate the reportage of environmental issues in Nigeria by selected newspapers. The study adopted content analysis method of mass communication research and dialectical hermeneutics method of critical-cultural research in analyzing sampled editions of selected newspapers. The newspapers that were selected for the study were nationally circulated and they were Daily Trust, Guardian, Punch and This Day. Systematic and purposive sampling methods were used to select a total of 480 editions of all the selected newspapers within a period of two years, 1999 and 2000. Consequently, 520 journalistic issues and editorial items in the selected newspapers were distilled from the newspapers and subjected to content analysis and hermeneutical interpretation so as to unfold manifest and latent reportage of environmental issues in Nigeria by the newspapers within the period of the study. Four environmental issues were devised as content categories to address the research problem and they were, flood, erosion, pollution and deforestation. Straight news stories, feature stories and opinions and columns were used as the editorial items and units of analyzing the content categories. Consequently, it was discovered in the study that the selected newspapers reported environmental issues in Nigeria considerably, and erosion and flood related matters received the highest reportage of all the environmental issues. It is not surprising that erosion/flood was considered most important by the selected newspapers within the period of study, given the amount of global attention on the environmental issue of erosion and flood. Also, the selected newspapers mostly used feature stories to report on the environmental issues. Thus, the selected newspapers were able to describe the environmental issues extensively and put them (the issues) in perspectives that were germane to understanding of the issues by the readers. It was also discovered that the newspapers devoted significant space to the reportage of the environmental issues, by measure of length and paragraphs of the stories. However, the selected newspapers did not give the issues considerable and enough prominence, by measure of front page and back page placements and big headline point sizes. The study concludes that the selected newspapers were socially responsible in their reportage of the environmental issues. It is recommended that the media in Nigeria should pay more attention to environmental issues. The print media, most particularly newspaper houses should set more agenda for public discussion in respect of environmental issues in Nigeria by giving more prominence by way of placements of stories on environmental matters, on front page and other premium pages. This is because how agenda for public discussion is set in respect of salient issues of development such as the environment is determined by how reportage of the issue is rich in prominence, depth of treatment and headline point sizes.*

**Keywords:** *Newspaper, Reportage, Environment*

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### **I. Background To The Study**

The roles of the mass media in the society include surveillance, interpretation, linkage, transmission of values and entertainment. Dominick (2002:34). Apparently in agreement, Mu'azu (2002:47) explains that, in its surveillance function, the press plays the role of an observer, which is a necessary component for enforcing economic, political, cultural and even moral stability" in the polity. In his commentary on the role of the media, Odunewu (1995:7) writes that it is common knowledge that the mass media play a formidable role in shaping and influencing the course of events in any society". He adds that "in performing this function, they no longer contend merely with describing the unfolding of events; they strive to provide insight and illumination on the interplay of forces....." In this role, the media highlight aspects of society – events, people and issues which

they gather as information and report as news. Unah (1995:29) however, describes the press as the “institutions of communication or information collection and dissemination available in and accessible to the state and it is taken for granted that the electronic media (radio and television) are subsumable under the press”. However, emphasis in this research will be placed on the extent and nature of coverage given by the print media (Newspaper). Bittner (2005:22) says that newspapers are a major force in forming public opinion and affecting national and international efforts toward economic progress and global understanding”. He enthuses that “today, the newspaper industry has become the largest in the world”. Buttressing this point, Aliagan (2006:44) states that “the newspaper carries out several vital functions in the society. These include storing and disseminating information, contributing to social progress through sponsorship of community aspirations, promoting culture, and educating people, providing a forum for cross-fertilization of knowledge and ideas, entertaining and unifying people with common goals”.

Evidence provided from evaluative studies by environmental experts shows gross deficiencies in the reportorial patterns of environmental issues in the Nigerian news media. Okunlola's (1996:1-10) analysis on “Reporting the Environment: The Nigerian Print Media Experience” shows that environmental concerns are neither prominent nor considered as major issues that sell a newspaper in the contemporary Nigerian context. Employing the “leadstory” as the garment that sells a paper and ultimately contributes substantially to determining its public affairs issues thrust, Okunlola, a Guardian newspaper's Housing and Environment editor, reviews the issues which dominated cover pages of two newspapers: the Guardian and the Daily Times over a period of 12 months. The result shows that the two single subjects which dominated the cover pages of the two newspapers were business and economy-related stories and political news.

Some of the reasons adduced by Okunlola for low reportage of environmental news in the Nigerian print media include, for example, the absence of specialized training on environmental issues, non-availability of relevant information and statistics, the novelty of the field, characteristically slow and painstaking nature of the development of environmental stories and the fundamental problem of identifying good story ideas (Okunlola, 1996:2-4).

Akpati (1996:1-2) a director at the Nigerian Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research, provides further insight into the character of environmental reporting in the Nigerian print media. He notes that while environmental issues made more headlines in 1995 than ever before, most of the newspaper reports were not only “poorly packaged and presented but also lacked accuracy in the causal information disseminated” (1996:3) ostensibly because the reporters did not understand the phenomenon they were describing. Akpati notes, for example, that while tidal waves caused by seismic activities, the incident was variously and inaccurately characterized in the media (Bakare, 1995:12; Bello et al 1995:3) as earthquakes and submarine volcanism.

Similarly, the 1994 reported earthquake in Imo state and volcanic eruption in Benue State and Cross River State in 1987, all turned out to be mere landslides (Akpati, 1987:2) Akpati further observed that environmental news reporting in the Nigerian print media suffers chronically from sensational headlines (Uwejamomere and Sayo, 1991:1) which do not relate to the stories.

Uyo (1996:1-4) examines the departmentalization and by line of five national newspapers and two national news magazines in Nigeria. He discovers that of the five national newspapers in the “convenience” sample, only two had columns with the label “Environment” and these were even “stoked”, viz: “Environment/Energy” and “Safety and Environment”. The following were found to be the most common special subject/area columns: “Aviation”, “Arts”, “Business”, “Banking and Finance”, “Economy,” “Education”, “Estate Guide”, “Labour”, “Law”, “Media”, “Marketing and Advertising”, “Sports”, “Travel and Tourism”, etc.

Uyo thus concludes that the fact that there is no reporter with the tag “Environmental reporter” implies that human resources are not being deliberately, regularly and purposefully harnessed to cover the subject area.

Several conclusions can be derived from the above characterization and reportorial patterns of environmental issues in the Nigerian news media, in relation to the status of environmental journalism within the nation's global news making efforts. These include, for example, the realization that: Environmental journalism is yet to be properly institutionalized in Nigeria as a distinct and legitimate component of public affairs preoccupation, in spite of the country's participation and involvement in most or major international conferences, seminars and conventions on global environmental control measures to deal with the twin problems of environmental degradation and development in the global system; Certain media organizational factors and institutionalization peculiar to the Nigerian operational circumstances, ostensibly affect the environmental issues reportorial coverage in the country's media system; Policies, at both the national and specific media organizational levels that are essential to bringing environmental issues and concerns to the centre-stage of national plans on developmental strategies, media formations and editorial decision-making and practice, as well as in the general public awareness and consciousness, are perhaps, poorly conceptualized and not systematically linked in an information and communication flow system with the objective of raising public awareness and promoting understanding of the intimate relationships between environmental protection and development,

among the different components of the system. The practice of environmental journalism in Nigeria is so far largely a non-specialized field of reportorial activities (which it should not be).

## **II. Statement Of Problem**

With the growing concern about the environment and the need to engage sustainable environmental behavior, and since the mass media provides much of the relevant knowledge for public knowledge, it is agreeable that the mass media determines to a certain extent the kind and amount of as well as frequency of environmental information that reaches the public which may in turn serve as basis for increase public action concerning environmental issues and concern. It is on this backdrop that this study tends to ascertain the extent of selected newspaper reportage of environmental issues in Nigeria because the reportage of these issues can determine the extent of degradation on our environment. This is because the way at which the press reports an environmental issue is the same way the audience would view and interpret it. Also, press coverage of environmental issues could allow the audience (Government, political leaders, environmentalist Nigerian citizens, among others) to know the level of suffering those affected by environmental degradation are facing. Furthermore, this study will attempt to provide valid answers to the problem and provide recommendations that would address the problem of press coverage of environmental issues in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

In line with the stated research problem, this study seeks to answer the following questions;

1. To what extent did the selected Newspapers carry environmental stories?
2. In what proportions were journalistic genres used for the coverage of the environmental stories?
3. Does the coverage of environmental stories vary in extent, categories, prominence and depth of treatment?
4. How socially responsible was the reportage of environmental issues by selected newspapers?

### **Purpose and Significance of Study**

This study tends to ascertain whether the 'selected Newspapers' in Nigeria, within the period of review gave considerable attention to the environment in terms of frequency and prominence of environmental news. The study is also to determine which of the selected environmental issues received the highest coverage and editorial attention and why. It also tends to provide relevant data that would guide environmental groups, agencies as well as government and the media in formulating environmental education policy frameworks using the mass media. The study hopes to underscore the very importance of the mass media towards environmental education, awareness and advocacy. Lastly it tends to present relevant platform for studying the capability and effectiveness of the mass media in setting agenda for environmentalism. This study to a large extent establishes the imperative roles and fundamental objectives of the mass media in the campaign for environmental sustainability through education and awareness with the motive of assisting governments and policy makers as well as environmental groups in channeling efforts and resources towards generating increased public awareness about the environment. Environmental sustainability is listed as the 7th item of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and this underscores its importance on the global development agenda.

Furthermore, this study will serve as a communiqué for newspaper organizations as well as other media vehicles in Nigeria to increase their space, time and prominence as well as adopt investigative and interpretative approaches towards environmental reports, as this will help encourage advance public and policy discussions on key environmental issues to the extent of motivating policies, financial and political actions towards sustaining the environment.

The responsibility of Government towards the Environment is enormous. This study will also be beneficial to journalists and reporters on the environment beat whose responsibility as first gatekeepers it is to determine newsworthiness of environmental stories, and to Environmental Editors whose final decision determines which environmental news is published.

## **III. Scope Of Study**

This study hopes to find out how selected newspapers have reported environmental issues in Nigeria. The study focused on eight environmental issues that appear prevalent and problematic in Nigeria. They are: Pollution (air, water and land), Global warming/Climates changes, Deforestation/Desert encroachment and Erosion. The selected newspapers for the study were: *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Thisday* and *Daily Trust* in Nigeria for a period of two years, between January 2009 and January 2011. These newspapers were purposively selected for the study because of their national spread and circulation on the one hand, and extensive coverage of local and national issues in Nigeria, on the other hand.

The *Guardian* newspaper is one of the oldest newspapers in Nigeria with a slogan "CONSCIENCE, NURTURED BY TRUTH". Established in 1983 by Chief Alex Ibru, the Newspaper has got a good reputation and her faithful followers believe that she has the most reliable information about news events in Nigeria. It

covers a variety of news events while at the same time being moderate in reporting them.

The *Punch* is a private national newspaper which is based in Lagos. The paper gives a national in-depth coverage of news, issues and events; respected across the nation. The proprietor is Chief Olu Aboderin. It has made significant impact on the political and cultural scenes in Nigeria. It has been rated the mostly widely read Nigerian newspaper in Nigeria by the NigerianDailyNewspaper.com. The news coverage includes environment and other cogent issues.

*Thisday* newspaper is published by Leaders & Company LTD. The proprietor is Nduka Obaigbena. The newspaper was established on January 22 1995 and it immediately established a foothold in the newspaper market. Within the same year of its launch, the newspaper won the newspaper of the year award. It has consistently maintained high standard in news dissemination and has proven to be one of the reputable Nigerian newspapers. It covers Nigerian breaking news, with in-depth reports on politics, health, technology environment, among others.

*Daily Trust* newspaper is a private national newspaper based in Abuja; the seat of power and the proprietor hails from the North-West of Nigeria. The newspaper gives fair coverage of environmental news stories and often reflective of news from the Northern part of the country.

#### **IV. Review Of Literature And Theoretical Framework**

Environmental issues are not peculiar to one zone or area in Nigeria. Each geo-political zone in Nigeria is faced with its own environmental issues. Owolabi (2010:35) explains that in Nigeria there are six geo-political zones and each are faced with their different kind of environmental issues and the kind of environmental issue faced is determined by the inhabitants, ecosystem, and vegetation of such environment. He also points out that there are two broad kinds of environmental issues (environmental pollution and environmental degradation). Owolabi (2010:37) concentrates on the different environmental issues that have occurred in Nigeria. He also takes a close look at the damages caused, what should be done, environmentalism etc. It is in this respect that he described what environmentalism is, environmentalism is an attempt to balance relations between humanity and their broader organismic and biogeochemical milieu in such a way that all the components are accorded a proper degree of respect. His work focuses on the level of devastation environmental issues have caused Nigeria. Enlightening us more on the nature of environmental issues, Owolabi observed that environmental degradations such as erosion, deforestation, and desertification can either be caused naturally in form of land, sea and deserts like tornado (turbulent wind), storm; or it can also be caused by man in form of industrial pollution, disposal of toxic materials, deforestation etc. buttressing this point, Moffat and Linden (1995:67) restates that in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, ranging from erosion to pollution (water, land and air) and this is caused by the Oil producing companies situated in that region. This oil producing companies spill crude oil on lands and water thereby polluting and degrading the environments. Apparently in agreement, Akpokodje (2007: 76) states that Nigeria have recorded a good number of environmental issues. Citing the Niger Delta region, he pinpointed the flare gas, oil spillage, and land exploration for oil as the pollutants and agents of pollution. He highlighted that other environmental degradation such as erosion has affected the eastern parts of Nigeria; same also goes for desertification which affects the northern Nigerian. Amplifying this point Egboka (2005:68) documents that Many of Nigeria's environmental issues are those typical of developing states. Excessive cultivation has resulted in loss of soil fertility. Increased cutting of timber has made inroads into forest resources, exceeding re plantings. By 1985, deforestation claimed 1,544 square miles of the nation's forest land. Between 1983 and 1993 alone, Nigeria lost 20% of its forest and woodland areas. Oil spills, the burning of toxic wastes and urban air pollution are problems in more developed areas. In the early 1990s, Nigeria was among the 50 nations with the world's highest levels of carbon dioxide emissions, which totaled 96.5 million metric tons, a per capita level of 0.84 metric tons. Water pollution is also a problem due to improper handling of sewage. Nigeria has 221 cubic kilometers of renewable water resources. 54% is used for farming activity and 15% for industrial purposes. Safe drinking water is available to 78% of urban dwellers and 49% of the rural population. Egboka (2005:78) states that Nigeria budgeted the following amount annually on environmentalism:

Year	Amount
1999	N2.500 billion
2000	N1.238 billion
2001	N 0.761billion
2002	N1.180 billion
2003	N 2.024 billion
2004	N0.910 billion
2005	N 3.279 billion

This study also takes a closer look at some environment issues which have been affecting Nigeria for years.

### **Environmental Pollution**

According to Moffat and Linden (1995:24), Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into an environment that causes instability, disorder, harm or discomfort to the physical systems or living organisms. Pollution can take the form of chemical substances, or energy, such as noise, heat, or light energy. Pollutants, the elements of pollution, can be foreign substances or energies, or naturally occurring; when naturally occurring, they are considered contaminants when they exceed natural levels. Sometimes the term pollution is extended to include any substance when it occurs at such unnaturally high concentration within a system that it endangers the stability of that system. (ThisDay April 3, 2009)

Moffat and Linden (1995:58) also documented that major forms of pollution are:

**Air Pollution:** The release of chemicals and particulates into the atmosphere. Common air pollutants include carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons and nitrogen oxides produced by industry and motor vehicles. Photochemical ozone and smog are created as nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons react to sunlight.

**Water Pollution:** The release of waste products and contaminants into river drainage systems, leaching into groundwater, liquid spills, wastewater discharges, eutrophication and littering.

**Soil Contamination:** This occurs when chemicals are released by spill or underground leakage. Among the most significant soil contaminants are hydrocarbons, heavy metals, herbicides and chlorinated hydrocarbons.

**Noise Pollution:** This encompasses roadway noise, aircraft noise, industrial noise as well as high-intensity sonar.

This environmental issue is very rampant in Nigeria. Study of Akinfewa (2001) in Ujubuonu (2008:73) the petroleum industry contributes a substantial quota to Nigeria's environmental pollution. Between 1976 and 1999, more than 2,676 separate oil pipeline spill incidents were reported in the country. Equipment malfunctioning, corrosion of aged pipelines, spillages on peoples land and also on water, explosion of pipeline etc. Perhaps the most intractable of the petroleum industry related pollution is gas flaring, the stoppage of which has continued to remain elusive despite numerous attempts at regulation. As a by-product of oil production, Nigeria flares more gas than any other country in the world, as close to 80% of the associated gas produced from Nigeria's oil fields are flared. Global estimates also show that flaring of Nigeria's gas contributes significantly to the world's carbon dioxide emission. This kind of environmental issue is very dominant in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. Vegetation in the Niger River Delta consists of extensive mangrove forests, brackish swamp forests, and rainforests. But after consistent natural gas flaring, oil spillages, explosions of oil pipelines etc, the Niger delta is slowly but constantly losing its vegetation. The loss of mangrove forests is not only degrading life for plants and animals, but for humans as well. These systems are highly valued by the indigenous people living in the affected areas. Mangrove forests have been a major source of wood for the people of the Niger delta (Guardian June 23, 2010)

### **Global Warming/Climate Change**

Holdren (2000:41) states that Climate Change is the greatest long-term threat faced by humanity. It could cause more human and financial suffering than the two world wars and the great depression put together. All countries will be affected, but the poorest countries in Africa will be hit hardest. Secondly, the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of action. In agreement with the view, Stern (2003) pointed out that Climate change will affect the basic elements of life for people around the world-access to water, food production, health, and the environment. Hundreds of millions of people could suffer hunger, water shortages and coastal flooding as the world warms further more. It is generally agreed that Climate change will not be effectively managed until individuals and communities recognize that their behaviour can make a difference, thus the essence of education geared towards behaviour change utilizing the mass media. Stern then described climate change as the single human activity that is most likely to have a large impact on the climate is the burning of "fossil fuels" such as coal, oil and gas. These fuels contain carbon. Burning them makes carbon dioxide gas. Since the early 1800s, when people began burning large amounts of coal and oil, the amount of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere has increased by nearly 30%, and average global temperature appears to have risen between 10 and 20 °F (Fahrenheit).

Global Warming and Climate change is one of the greatest environmental treat facing mankind in the recent years. Scientific evidences indicate that the climate is changing and the earth is warming up, and there is now overwhelming scientific consensus that it is happening and it is mostly human-induced. With global warming on the increase and species and their habitats on the decrease, chances for ecosystems to adapt naturally are diminishing. Part of the implication in recent years shows increasing temperatures in various regions, and increasing extremities in weather patterns. (Punch, February 16, 2008)

In Nigeria, there have been constant changes of weather especially in the south southern and south western parts of Nigeria. These changes that have been occurring in Nigeria weather are: the gradual loss of the

mangrove forest in the Niger delta; the then overflow of Lagos bar beach; the increase of the intensity of the sun in the southern Nigeria. These are as a result of the industrial pollution of industries, carbon monoxide coming out of cars, mining and exploration of oil from land etc. (Thisday March 13, 2010)

### **Erosion/ Flood**

Erosion is the carrying away or displacement of solids (sediment, soil, rock and other particles) usually by the agents of currents such as wind, water, or ice by downward or down-slope movement in response to gravity or by living organisms. Erosion is a noticeable intrinsic natural process but in many places it is increased by human land use. Poor land use practices include deforestation, overgrazing, unmanaged construction activity and road-building. Land that is used for the production of agricultural crops generally experiences a significant greater rate of erosion than that of land under natural vegetation. This is particularly true of tillage is used, which reduces vegetation cover on the surface of the soil and disturbs both soil structure and plant roots that would otherwise hold the soil in place. However, improved land use practices can limit erosion, using techniques such as terrace-building, conservation tillage practices, and tree planting. (Guardian August 17, 2009) Amplifying this point, Ogbondah (2006:52) posits that a certain amount of erosion is natural. However, excessive erosion does cause problems, such as receiving water sedimentation, ecosystem damage and outright loss of soil. The rate of erosion has been known to depend on many factors. Climatic factor include the amount and intensity of precipitation, the average temperature, as well as the typical temperature range, and seasonality, the wind speed, storm frequency. The geologic factors include the sediment or rock type, its porosity and permeability, the slope (gradient) of the land, and if the rocks are tilted, faulted, folded, or weathered. Other factors include ground cover from vegetation or lack thereof, the type of organisms inhabiting the area, and the land use.

In Nigeria, gully erosion has had and will continue to have destructive impacts in and around southeast of Nigeria in the absence of immediate corrective and preventive measures. Cases of displaced numerous villagers in the Southeast of Nigeria due to widespread of erosion problems abound with equally untold human agony. The agony that started with a gradual loss of farming land for economic earnings of the rural inhabitants exacerbated when proud rural dwellers abandoned their homes for life as refugees. The problems of severe erosion in these areas are widespread and it is rapidly obliterating the ecological and economic life of many areas in the Southeast of Nigeria. (Newswatch, November 21, 2001) In agreement with this view, Ogbondah (2006:59) stated that the South-eastern Nigeria is a densely-forested region with a kind of a rolling, hilly terrain. But this lush, green land could soon become an arid badland that is unsuitable for cultivation, dangerous for human habitation, and well on the way to becoming a parcel of useless land.

### **Deforestation/Desertification**

Deforestation is the conversion of forested areas to non-forested land, for uses such as: pasture, urban use, logging purposes, and can result in arid land and wastelands. The removal or destruction of significant areas of forest cover has resulted in an altered environment with reduced biodiversity. Deforestation results from removal of trees without sufficient reforestation, and result s in declines in habitat and biodiversity, wood for fuel and industrial use, and quality of life. Forests disappear naturally as a result of broad climate change, fire, hurricanes or other disturbances, however most deforestation in the past 40,000 years has been anthropogenic. Human induced deforestation may be accidental such as in the case of forests adversely affected by acid rain. Improperly applied logging, fuel wood collection, fire management of grazing can also lead to unintentional deforestation. (Punch, March 26, 2008)

Deforestation is the continuous removal or destruction of significant areas of forest cover has resulted in a highly degraded environment with attendant reduction in biodiversity. It also causes soil erosion and in marginal lands can lead to desertification. (Daily trust, March 8, 2009)

Nigeria probably has the world's highest deforestation rate of primary forests today, having lost more than half of its primary forests in the last five years. United Nations Environmental Programme, (UNEP) in 2006 estimated that annual deforestation in Nigeria covers 663,000ha with an annual national deforestation rate of 0.76%. Deforestation rate in the southwest geopolitical zone is as high as 1.36% which is double the national average. Data on vegetation and land use changes between 1976 and 1995 reveals that the area covered by undisturbed forests in Nigeria decreased by 53.5% from 25,951sqkm in 1976 to just 12,114sqkm in 1991.

The major driving factor for deforestation in Nigeria today is the rapidly growing population with attendant higher demand for agricultural land, livestock production and fuel wood. Unfortunately, these demands will continue to increase with the population if nothing drastic is done. The persistence of the age-old practice of shifting cultivation ("slash-and-burn") will also continue to drive this threat as farmers will continue to move, plundering our forests as the soil fertility in the farms decline. The dependence on fuelwood for cooking by rural dwellers and urban poor further fuels deforestation while uncontrolled and indiscriminate fire by farmers and hunters has also consumed much of our forest cover.

With the increasing global demand for tropical hardwoods, many hardwood species are being recklessly exploited from large areas of natural forests and sold in both local and international markets leading to an uncontrolled decimation of our forest resources. In Ondo State for example, more than 44 percent of the 3,075sqklm forest reserve has been lost in the last 30 years due to a combination of activities mentioned above. (Guardian February 27, 2009)

On the other hand, desertification is the losses of vegetative cover and plant diversity that are attributable in some part to human activity as well as the element of irreversibility. Some of the indicators of desertification are Decrease in soil depth; Decrease in soil organic matter, Decrease in soil fertility, Soil crust formation. Appearance/increase in severity of dust sandstorms formation and movement, Decline in quality and quantity of ground and surface water. In Nigeria, between 50% and 75% of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara and Yobe States are under threats of desertification. These ten states, with a population of about 27 million people, account for about 38% of the country's total land area. In these areas, population pressure, resulting in overgrazing, over exploitation for fuel wood of marginal lands and aggravated drought due to global warming has accelerated the rate of desertification. (Punch, August 28, 2009)

### **Destitution**

Destitution can be seen as an act of being homeless and living on the streets, begging for resource to survive. The increase in number of lunatics in some areas in Nigeria of late is a pointer to the fact that government's policies to bring the menace under control over the years have not yielded results. Many of the lunatics and destitutes, who apparently had been ditched by their families, are supposed to be in confinement at government psychiatric hospitals or in homes, but they flood the streets owing to the society's failure to show interest in them. The development, according to investigations is coming amidst allegations that over 3,105 beggars and lunatics were deported to their states of origin by the Lagos State government recently. This was said to have angered the then government of Oyo State, some citizens of which a good number of the deported were said to have been. Also, the development was said to have become sources of worry to residents who said in some cases, when they (lunatics) were chased away, they usually managed to return. (Punch February 13 2009)

### **Environmental Education, Mass Media and National Development**

Critical to the realization of any novel idea of relevance and practical translation is the matter of creating and raising its awareness. In the domain of environmental issues, environmental education plays a key role in sensitizing people of the need and significance of any such programs, which are carried out to address environmental problems confronting them. Environmental education increases public consciousness and knowledge of environmental issues and challenges. People profit, through environmental education, by gaining an understanding of how their individual actions affect the environment, acquiring skills that they can use to evaluate various sides of issues and becoming better equipped to make informed decisions. Environmental education also gives people a deeper understanding of the environment, inspiring them to take personal responsibility of its conservation and restoration (Ugboaja 1977:45). Communication scholars agree that Environmental education helps bring forth the traditional solution to address the modern environmental crisis by discovering and pioneering the right environmental attitude. According to Ugboajah "communication is very central to direct change and all analysis of development, be it environmental, health or agriculture must ultimately wait on communication process."

Moemeka, (1983) in his contribution to the workshop organized by the Federal Ministry of Environment in Nigeria with theme Environmental Awareness for Media Practitioners under the topic Mass Media and Environmental Education, observed thus "Environmental Education in the face of environmental problems is a very crucial one, 'Therefore environmental education should be incorporated into the whole system of formal education at all levels to provide the necessary knowledge, understanding, values and skills needed by the general public as well as occupational groups for their participation towards devising solutions to environmental question.'" Moemeka's observation borrows from the submission of the Inter-Governmental Conference on Environmental Education held in Tbilisi in 1977 which resolved that there should be an all out educational program on environmental problems. And the mass media has proved capable in leading that campaign which as in its root a development agenda. According to (Wilbur 1964, Rogers 1966 & Moemeka 1981) the role of mass media in fostering national development vis a vis creating awareness and education towards solving development challenges, like environmental issues, by instigating the right and most sustainable behaviour and attitude through change campaign has been widely acknowledged. Thus the mass media has been integrated as an instrument of national development.

The advancement in communication technology according to McLuhan (1982) has revolutionized the function of mass media to serve wider coverage at a faster pace worldwide and has reduced the world to a simple single entity referred to in McLuhans's words as the global village. This has provided an enabling

environment for media in the new era to achieve its ultimate aim of reaching to a very large audience. Mass communication, therefore; plays a crucial role in connecting the world to an individual, and provides opportunity for the individual to communicate with a wider audience thereby making the process of development easier. More so, one of the greatest concerns of many communication scholars is not so much the effect of mass media on people in general, but the potential function of mass media for bringing desirable social change and for achieving the developmental goals of nations. Several scholars asset the state on the dynamics of development and the role of mass media in avhi8eving developmental goals, Lerner (1958) emphasized the relationship between communication, urbanization, and modernization by considering tat urbanization is an important step towards enhancing media exposure, which in turn, increases political and economic participation. Hagen (1962) also emphasizes the need for modernization as a prerequisite for development by expanding the mass media because he believed that the traditional values, as opposed to innovative personalities of more industrialized nations, are a setback to progress in the third world. This has, perhaps, inspired UNESCO in the sixties to set apart the underdeveloped countries on the basis of not fulfilling certain minimum standards for media structure and thereby emphasizing the need for expansion of media facilities cited by (Yadava, 1994). Lowery and De Fleur (1988) argue that development, the process of modernization, and the growth of mass communication are closely linked. According to them, modernization is needed to trigger the culture of consumerism, which can be effectively achieved by the expansion of mass media communication. This is accompanied by a bandwagon of cultural change, creating a major shift from traditional values to modern ways of life.

Other, Rogers (1976), have, from very early on, understood the essence of wholesome development, taking into consideration both material and social advancement, he also highlights, the fact that the goal of development can be county specific, depending on the priority of needs.

The role of mass media has been redefined to place a new emphasis on development communication where media can be used to provide social and educational opportunities, such as family planning or environmental campaigns. Communication scholars have advocated that for making best use of communication for development, it is necessary to first clearly define the development objectives, and then accordingly set explicit communication objectives, and specific communication tasks and inputs to achieve the development objectives in a most cot-effective manner (Rogers 1963 & 1995). In the light of the new paradigm of development, the integrated environmental planning concept is a compatible approach towards conservation which views the environment as the most crucial factor to mankind's survival- a notion that characterizes the environment as an entity possessing delicate qualities that are worthy of preserving.

The preservation of the country's natural environment is not only because of its connectedness with social and cultural values but is also due to strong economical and ecological reasons that call for the environmental intactness (Osuntokun 1997:62) Environmental education is one of the tools to help meet the aims of conservation. The media could take up a crucial role by providing technical information about relevant environmental problems and possibilities, and about appropriate innovations (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). In an approach to create conservation education strategy, mostly in developing countries like Nigeria and others in Africa, the use of various forms of mass media, such as newspaper, radio, television, cinema, (Nollywood Films), etc., is highly recommended to reach out to the masses effectively as there constitute major instrument of knowledge generation, awareness, behaviour modification and attitudinal change. Reaching out to the public is essential to ensure sustainable development and environmental management, since the livelihood of people and the environment are symbiotically linked. To this end, the need for public awareness and participation has been regarded as imperative in environmental sustainability. Thus, it is important to inculcate a predisposition towards environmentalism through the mass media.

The mass-media are key actors in the identification and interpretation of environmental issues (Schoenfeld et al., 1979; Spector and Kitsuse, 1977). Environmental findings constitute a specialized mode of knowledge that is almost always packaged in professional language. Scientists generally employ a lexicon of caution and speak in a language of probability, which usually does not translate smoothly into the general language style that is valued in the press. In other words, the very language scientists employ plays into scientific uncertainty as a salient theme in media coverage (Weingarten et al., 2000). Therefore, environmental scientific findings usually require translation into more colloquial terms in order for its to be comprehensible for public consumption.

There are existing studies on public attitude towards environmental debates in the media most of which suggest that public awareness and consciousness about the environment started during the 1960s and reached and initial peak around the 1970s but slide during the mid and late 70s (Kessel, 1985; Young, 1990). Recent studies indicated that public concern and as well as a global attention on the environment has been on rapid increase since the media 1980s. in the same vein, there is an increase in research on media coverage of environmental issues in recent years as environmental subjects became interesting subject in media discussion (Stocking and Leonard 1990). Furthermore, various studies have attempted to establish the link between public



opinion as well as awareness about the environment and mass media coverage of environmental issues. In Funhouse's (1973) study which sort to gauge the relationship between the media prominence of certain issues and their prominence in public polls. He found a strong correlation. On the whole, the rank order of issues in media coverage and the importance ascribed to these issues in public polls, including environmental issues which equally matched.

Lowe and Rudig in another wide spread collection and review of data on public opinion and attitude in environmental matters observed that there is a longitudinal and more comprehensive surveys have shown a relative stability as well as ubiquity of environmental concern. They suggested that the fluctuations registered by more superficial opinion polls may merely reflect 'the immediately prevailing preoccupations of the mass media' (Ludig and Lowe, 1986).

Because of the diversity of environmental publics as the term environmental issues and media coverage related to both media genre and issues – topic, it is difficult to segment public opinion on environmental issues awareness even as the concept of general public's does not apply to environmental knowledge and awareness but every environmental issues applies to a define segment of the population. Researchers have over the years documented studies on the diversity of environmental publics. For instance, Van Liere and Dunlap (1980) have argued, on the bases of their attempt to segment to distinguish common demographic trends among publics concerned about the environment, that researchers should focus attention on specific environmental issues as air pollution, global warming, population control, ozone depletion together into global measures of environmental concern.

Many studies on environmental awareness use results of opinion surveys as a proxy for level of environmental attitude. Although there is a difference between opinion and attitude as according to Worcester (1996) "...Opinions; the ripples on the surface of the public's consciousness, shallow and easily changed; attitudes; the currents below the surface, deeper and stronger..." many analysis on attitudes are drawn from the results of opinion surveys. Considering this wide use of opinion survey results, basic trends on public opinion on environment have been reviewed by scholars. The public opinion survey on environment is generally categorized into time series and cross-national perspectives.

This survey monitors the countries' attitudes to the environment. There are also opinion surveys carried out during 1960-70s when industrial pollution was a serious problem. Many studies reveal the relationship between the concern and age. It says that in General, younger generation tends to be more concerned about environmental quality than older generation. The earliest of this a study, as it was stated in the Mohai and Twight (1987), which discovered the dominant relationship between age and environmental concern. The extensive literature survey of Van Liere and Dunlap (1980) also stated 'age' as a dominant factor in determining the degree of environmental concern. In these studies, attitudinal changes, due to the ageing process, or "age-effect", are explained on the basis of changing views of individual as his/her role in the society changes with ageing. Other studies tried to explore the relationships between gender and environmental concern. It is generally believed that women are more concerned about environment than men because "women are potentially more environmentalist than men due to biospheric orientation" (Diamond & Orenstein, 1990).the most important point for discussions about the roles of the mass media as it concerns public awareness and concern about the environment is the fact that the media serves particular sources of mass information about critical [issues like the environment (Murch, 1971) Klapper 1960) noted that media influence in environmental education and awareness are based on the argument that on a wide range of environmental issues, the public will have few sources other than the mass media. Following this strong point, several studies have established a link between agenda setting effects as regards media coverage and attention and public awareness of environmental awareness and action (Brousius and Kiplinger, 1990). Further research has established weak but positive correlation between media prominence of key environmental issues and the relative importance assigned those issues by the public. All these underscore the importance of the mass media in setting agenda for environmental debates and actions.

### **Nigerian Press and Environmental Reporting**

Tracing the origin of the press in Nigeria, Aliagan (2006:16) comments that in Nigeria, the history of the press began with the publication of the Iwe Irohin in 1859; published, according to Daramola(2006:12) by Anglican missionary, Reverend Henry Townsend in Abeokuta. Uche(1986:93) says that in a dispatch to the Church Missionary Society in England, out of excitement over this unique accomplishment in a predominantly illiterate society, he(Townsend) noted: "I have set on foot a Yoruba newspaper.....My objective is to get the people to read....to beget the habit of seeking information by reading". Daramola(2006:12) notes that the paper thrived well and was a force to reckon with during the period. However, Aliagan (2006:16) observes that the paper was purely an evangelical organ, concentrating on reporting on church news, championing the causes such as campaign against slave trade and propagation of European lifestyle and standard, it later began to dabble into report of political news, a development which embroiled it in the political upheaval which engulfed Abeokuta

during the last three years of its existence.

Since then, this single act has triggered off so many Newspapers in Nigeria. Ugbonnah(2006:11) posits that Nigerian press have grown strong and wide enough to be socially responsible in taking care of their environment and protecting it from degrading. He therefore summarized the roles the media should play in protecting their environment. Especially in the Niger Delta where the bulk of Nigeria's oil is extracted – cannot be over emphasised. The on-going crisis in the Niger Delta – partly posited on ecological despoliation – even underscores the need for environmental protection as well as the role the press can play in environmental safety. The Nigerian press should be lauded for the part it has played in this respect. Be it as it may, however, its coverage of environmental pollution and ecological degradation amounts to fire brigade journalism.

This is because the press has covered pollution with an attitude whereby it responds to oil spillage, oil pipeline explosion, flooding, erosion, indiscriminate dumping of industrial, human and toxic wastes, etc. after these disasters may have occurred. It is not that the press should not report these disasters after they may have occurred. It should from time to time initiate independent investigative projects to unearth nefarious activities that could result in potential pollution.

It was because of sheer neglect of a noble role in nation building that the press was for example, unable to expose the dumping of toxic wastes on the tiny Koko fishing port for several months in 1988 until Nigerian students in Italy alerted the nation about it. Effective press monitoring of the environment would expose potential acts of vandalism and other nefarious activities that lead to pollution. Therefore, the press needs to sharpen its surveillance of activities of multinational oil corporations to unearth and report potential environmental hazards. It should also extend its investigative tentacles to the federal, state and local governments, environmental protection agencies, white-collar criminals and oil communities to ensure compliance with environmental laws.

Even though environmental pollution occurs largely as a result of drilling activities of foreign oil companies, the problem is exacerbated by the lifestyles of local communities. For example, Nigerians defecate on the streets, streams, soccer fields, open gutters, etc. They dispose refuse indiscriminately on the waterways. In addition, many communities in the delta and elsewhere use the dynamite as a fishing tool to increase the day's catch. The effect of this fishing practice in the plundering, degradation and destruction of the aquatic ecology is quite obvious. It is enormous. That is why the press should expand its investigation of environmental pollution beyond the activities of multinational oil companies.

A plethora of problems, however, militate against the ability of the press to cover the environment effectively, especially in the Niger Delta. One is lack of accessible roads. Many a time, the speedboat or helicopter is the only means of transportation to a site where spillage has occurred. As Nigerian publishers do not own their own helicopters and speedboats, reporters (dangerously) rely on secondary sources of information for accounts of oil spillage and other forms of pollution. Lack of access roads in the Niger Delta therefore constitutes a major problem in media coverage of environmental pollution in the region. That is why the construction of access roads in the region as demanded by the indigenes will not only help stem the tidal Niger Delta crisis, it will make the region more accessible.

Lack of laws that guarantee access to government information further constraints the ability of the press to cover the environment effectively. The Official Secrets Act of 1962, Defamatory and Offensive Publication Act (1966), Printing Press Regulations Act (1964), Section 58 of the Criminal Code Act of 1958, and the Newspapers (Amendment) Act of 1964 altogether enforce secrecy in the conduct of public affairs in the country. These laws block free access to governmental information, including details of the partnership between the state and multinational oil corporations. For example, the Official Secrets Act permits public officials to shroud their activities in secrecy and to maintain close control over the dissemination of (diverse) information. The law makes it a criminal offence for public officials – whether they are clerks, typists, janitors, chauffeurs, messengers, secretaries or those at the top echelon of the civil service – to pass information to unauthorised persons, including journalists. In other words, the legal climate under which journalists operate in Nigeria militates against effective media coverage of the environment.

Therefore, there is the need for an urgent review of the entire legal framework with a view to creating an enabling policy for journalists' right of access to governmental information. The review process should proceed in two ways. The first should consist of the abrogation of anachronistic (colonial) laws that are no longer relevant in view of democratic changes now taking place in the country. The second should consist of the enactment of legal policies that will help create an enabling climate for press freedom. In particular, the national assembly should facilitate the enactment into law of the bill on the right of access to government information.

Further, he recommends the establishment of environmental journalism curricula in our mass communication programmes. Nigerian universities do not offer curricula on environmental reporting. Environmental journalism curriculum has become necessary today in view of the impact and magnitude of environmental pollution on the nation's economy and livelihood in many communities.

Pedagogy on environmental reporting course(s) should focus beyond the techniques for describing

ecological despoliation. Its centrality should emphasise techniques for critical analyses of the economic, political, social and cultural impact of environmental pollution. The pedagogy should aim to equip environmental reporters with the ability to critically analyse the effects of environmental pollution and ecological despoliation on the livelihood, lifestyles and economies of peasant communities. How much does the peasant farmer or fisherman for example, lose annually as a result of the extinction of species of crustaceans and organisms that help in the maintenance and balance of the aquatic ecology? The skills for reporting this type of data are among those that can be taught in an environmental journalism curriculum.

The inclusion of environmental news reporting among the categories for journalistic awards can be important in improving media coverage of pollution. It is hard to make an argument that press coverage of environmental issues is due to any reporter's sheer interest in environmental preservation and safety. Press reportage on the environment can be understood within the context of the overall media coverage of the on-going Niger Delta crisis, the struggle over resource control and ethnic conflicts in oil communities. Inclusion of environmental reporting – as a category of awards – during the annual awards for journalistic excellence will encourage more writers to take special interest in environmental reporting. Increase journalistic interest in environmental reporting will help improve the quality of news reports and analyses of environmental pollution in the country.

## **V. Methodology**

The research problem was investigated using content analysis and textual analysis method to collect and analyze relevant data from the selected newspapers, Content Analysis is usually designed to produce objective, measurable and verifiable account of the manifest content of messages. The method is also being used as a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication. While According to Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology - a data-gathering process - for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live. Textual analysis is useful for researchers working in cultural studies and media studies.

A combination of these methods helps in describing communication content, comparing communication contents to the real world as well as assessing the media representation and coverage of particular issues in society, which is by extension what this study seeks to do by assessing the selected newspapers' coverage of Environmental news in Nigeria and comparing the awareness to the level of environmental consciousness and activism suggested by the newspaper reportage. Content Analysis and textual analysis reduce the chance of collecting irrelevant data as well as increase the possibility of justifiable statement regarding the research problem based on data interpreted. Content Analysis is one of mass communication's vital contributions to social inquiry.

### **Population of Study**

The population of the study consisted of all the editions of the selected Newspapers within the period of study, January 2009 to January 2010. The sample size for the study was 520 editions of all the four newspapers. Systematic and purposive sampling techniques were used to select editions of the newspapers into the sample. Using the techniques, selections were made of the editions of the newspapers on the respective and specific days of the week in which environmental issues were published.

### **Content Categories**

The content categories devised for the study were:

#### **Environmental stories**

1. Erosion/Flood
2. Pollution
3. Desertification/Deforestation
4. Climate change/Global warming
5. Destitution

These categories were analysed with the following units:

#### **Newspaper Identity**

1. Guardian newspaper
2. Punch newspaper
3. Thisday newspaper
4. Daily trust newspaper

**Type of Story**

1. News story
2. Feature story
3. Opinion article
4. Editorials

**Placement of Story**

1. Front page
2. Inside page
3. Centre page
4. Back page

**Depth of Story**

1. 1-5 paragraphs
2. 6-10 paragraphs
3. 11-15 paragraphs
4. 16 and above paragraphs

**VI. Discussion of Findings**

In order to provide answers to the research questions raised in the study, some of the data collected were computer analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) format while some others were qualitatively analyzed using dialectical hermeneutics. The findings are hereby presented and discussed with a view to drawing inferences and making conclusion from the study.

**Table 1**

	Frequency	Percent
Erosion/Flood	235	45.2
Pollution	107	20.6
Deforestation/Desertification	57	11.0
Climate change/Global warming	102	19.6
Destitution/Beggar	19	3.7
Total	520	100.0

Table 1 analyses the fequency of environmental issue stories reported by the selected newspapers. Within the space of january 2009 to january 2010, 520 stories were published on environmental issues in selected newspapers. 235 stories represented with 45.2% were on erosion/flood. 107 stories represented with 20.6% were on pollution (land, water and air). 57 stories represented with 11% were on deforestation/ desertification. 102 stories represented with 19.6% were on climate change/global warming. 19 stories represented with 3.7% were on destitution. This explains that eroision/flood which usually occur in the eastern and western parts of Nigeria frequently received the highest attention from the selected dalies that was analysed under the period of review; followed by pollution which usually occur in the southern and western parts of Nigerian. Destitution received the lowest attention from the the selected dalies.

**Table 2**

	Frequency	Percent
Guardian Newspaper	189	36.3
Punch Newspaper	121	23.3
Thisday Newspaper	135	26.0
Daily trust newspaper	75	14.4
Total	520	100.0

Table 2 shows the number of environmental issue stories that each of the selected newspapers published within the period of review. Out of 520 stories published on environmental issues on the selected dalies, Guardian published 189 stories which was represented with 36.3%, punch published 121 stories, this is represented with 23.3%, Thisday published 135 stories, this is represented with 26%, daily trust published 75 stories represented with 14.4%. This means that of the four selected newspapers that was content analysed, Guardian newspaper, published the highest number of environmental issue stories under the period of review, this is subsequently followed by Thisday newspaper, then Punch newspaper and Daily trust published the least

number of environmental issue stories within the period under review.

**Table 3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Straight News	108	20.8	20.8	89.4
Features Stories	357	68.7	68.7	68.7
Opinion Articles	24	4.6	4.6	94.0
Editorial	31	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	520	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the different genres of journalistic piece were used to report environmental stories in the selected newspaper. Amongst these are: Straight news, Feature stories, Opinion articles and Editorials. 108 news stories represented with 20.8% reported on environmental issues 357 feature stories represented with 68.7% reported on environmental stories. 24 opinion articles represented with 4.6% reported on environmental stories while 31 editorials represented with 6% reported on environmental stories. This explains that in the selected dailies that were content analysed, feature stories genre was mostly used to carry environmental issues stories. These was followed by straight news formats, them editorials and lastly opinion article.

**Table 4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Front Page	23	4.4	4.4	4.4
Inside Page	450	86.5	86.5	91.0
Centre page	42	8.1	8.1	99.0
Back page	5	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	520	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 illustrates the numbers and percentages of the placement of environmental issues story by the selected newspapers. Out of a possible 520 environmental issues stories published by the selected newspapers, 450 environmental stories represented with 86.5% were published on the inside page of the selected newspapers. 42 environmental stories represented with 8.1% were published on the centre pages of the selected newspapers. 23 environmental stories represented with 4.4% were published on the front pages of the selected newspapers, while 5 environmental stories represented with 1% were published on the back pages of the selected newspapers. This explains the fact that selected newspapers published most of their environmental stories on the inside pages of their publication, followed by centre page but with a very wide gap. Back page stories, the least, constituted only a marginal percentage of total reports of environmental issues stories by the selected newspapers.

**Table 5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5 Paragraphs	99	19.0	19.0	19.0
6-10 Paragraphs	222	42.7	42.7	61.7
11-15 Paragraphs	132	25.4	25.4	87.1
16 and above Paragraphs	67	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	520	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the numbers and percentage of the depth of the environmental issues stories that were content analysed in the selected newspapers. The data analysed showed that 222 represented with 42.7% environmental issues stories published by the selected newspapers were ranging from 6-10 paragraphs. 132 represented with 25.4 stories were ranging from 11-15 paragraphs. 99 represented with 19% stories were ranging from 1-5 paragraphs while 62 represented with 12% stories were ranging from 16 and above paragraphs.

**Table 6**

		Erosion/ Flood	Pollution	Deforestation /Desertificati on	Climate change/Global warming	Destitutio n/Begger	
Guardian Newspaper	Count	97	34	13	41	4	189
	% within VAR00002	51.3%	18.0%	6.9%	21.7%	2.1%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	41.3%	31.8%	22.8%	40.2%	21.1%	36.3%
	% of Total	18.7%	6.5%	2.5%	7.9%	.8%	36.3%
Punch Newspaper	Count	54	32	7	21	7	121
	% within VAR00002	44.6%	26.4%	5.8%	17.4%	5.8%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	23.0%	29.9%	12.3%	20.6%	36.8%	23.3%
	% of Total	10.4%	6.2%	1.3%	4.0%	1.3%	23.3%
Thisday Newspaper	Count	64	29	13	29	3	135
	% within VAR00002	47.4%	21.5%	9.6%	21.5%	4.2%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	27.2%	27.1%	22.8%	28.4%	17.4%	26.0%
	% of Total	12.3%	5.6%	2.5%	5.6%	.0%	26.0%
Daily trust newspaper	Count	20	12	24	11	5	75
	% within VAR00002	26.7%	16.0%	32.0%	14.7%	8.7%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	8.5%	11.2%	42.1%	10.8%	38.1%	14.4%
	% of Total	3.8%	2.3%	4.6%	2.1%	1.5%	14.4%
Total	Count	235	107	57	102	19	520
	% within VAR00002	45.2%	20.6%	11.0%	19.6%	3.7%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	45.2%	20.6%	11.0%	19.6%	3.7%	100.0%

**GUARDIAN**

51.3% of stories by the Guardian newspaper were on erosion / flood, 18% were on environmental pollution, 6.9% were on deforestation /desertification 21.7% of its stories were on Global warming or climate change while 2.1% were on begging and destitution. Essentially, then, majority of its stories were on flooding/erosion, followed by global warning and environmental pollution. Thus, the newspaper could be said to pay attention most to issues boding on flooding and erosion.

**Punch**

44.6% of stories by the punch were on erosion or flooding, 26.4% were on environmental pollution while 5.8% were on deforestation/desertification. Furthermore, 17.4% of its stories were on climate change or global warning while 5.8% were on destitution. Those results show that the punch newspaper also paid more attention to issues concerned with flooding/erosion more than any other issues

**Thisday**

Similarly, Thisday newspaper published of stories on flooding and erosion than any other issue. 47.4% of all its stories were either on flooding or erosion, 21.5% where on climate change. The newspaper did not publish any story on destitution. These results indicate that Thisday newspaper like the above two, also gave prominence to flooding and erosion stories by way of frequency of reports.

**Daily Trust**

The situation was different in the case of the Daily trust newspaper as majority of its stories were on desertification/deforestation. 32% of its stores were on desertification, 26.7% were on flooding or erosion, 15% were on environmental pollution while 14.7% and 10.7% respectively were on global warming and destitution. These results' show that, the Daily Trust newspaper also had by far the greatest percentage of stories on deforestation and destitution compared to the other newspaper. These findings are significant, given that desertification and destitution are prominent issues in northern Nigeria which the Daily trust newspaper serves. This may be explained therefore by the newspaper's proximity to the northern region, hence its consideration of issues nearer to it as being more important.

In all, the Guardian newspaper dedicated the greatest percentage of stories (51.3%) to issues on flooding and erosion while Daily trust dedicated the least percentage of its stories (compared to the other newspapers) to floods/erosion. Considering these results against the fact that the Guardian may be seen as having greater proximity to the South (south-south spectrally), and that the other newspapers excluding Daily trust are predominantly Southern Nigerian in base and operations it can be deduced, that their proximity to the South (where erosion and flooding are more frequent,) greatly influenced their nature of coverage and the level of importance they attached to the various environmental issues.

On the other hand the Daily trust newspaper had the highest percentage of stories on desertification and destitution compared to the other newspapers by a rather wide margin (especially in the case of desertification). This also buttresses the importance of proximity (physical or psychological) of a media organization to an area to the coverage pattern of the news media of issues emanating from there.

Generally however, all the newspapers also published significant percentage of stories on climate change and environmental pollution, although this varied slightly from paper to paper. In all, the greatest percentage of stories (45.2%) were on erosion/floods environmental pollution and global warning (20.6% and 19.6% respectively) while stories on destitution, contributed only a negligible percentage. Thus, erosion/flooding environmental pollution and global warming were given prominent coverage by the newspapers by way of frequency of reports.

Table 7

		VAR00001					Total
		Erosion/Flood	Pollution	Deforestation/De sertification	Climate change/Global warming	Destitution/Begg er	
Features Stories	Count	188	75	44	40	10	357
	% within VAR00003	52.7%	21.0%	12.3%	11.2%	2.8%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	80.0%	70.1%	77.2%	39.2%	52.6%	68.7%
	% of Total	36.2%	14.4%	8.5%	7.7%	1.9%	68.7%
News Stories	Count	26	20	13	43	6	108
	% within VAR00003	24.1%	18.5%	12.0%	39.8%	5.6%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	11.1%	18.7%	22.8%	42.2%	31.6%	20.8%
	% of Total	5.0%	3.8%	2.5%	8.3%	1.2%	20.8%
Opinion Articles	Count	6	6	0	10	2	24
	% within VAR00003	25.0%	25.0%	.0%	41.7%	8.3%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	2.6%	5.6%	.0%	9.8%	10.5%	4.6%
	% of Total	1.2%	1.2%	.0%	1.9%	.4%	4.6%
Editorial	Count	15	6	0	9	1	31
	% within VAR00003	48.4%	19.4%	.0%	29.0%	3.2%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	6.4%	5.6%	.0%	8.8%	5.3%	6.0%
	% of Total	2.9%	1.2%	.0%	1.7%	.2%	6.0%
Total	Count	235	107	57	102	19	520
	% within VAR00003	45.2%	20.6%	11.0%	19.6%	3.7%	100.0%
	% within VAR00001	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	45.2%	20.6%	11.0%	19.6%	3.7%	100.0%

## VII. Features

80% of all stories on erosion/flooding were in feature format, 70.1% of reports on pollution were also in feature news' format. Furthermore, 77.2% of desertification stores were features while 39.2% and 52.6% of stories on Global warming and destitution were in feature format. These results suggest that features were mainly used in reporting the various environmental issues. This was however more emphasized in reporting of erosion/floods, desertification and pollution. It could also be deduced that these issues were therefore mainly examined from a human interest, point of view.

### Hard News

11.1% of flooding /erosion stories were in hard news format, pollution (18.7%) desertification (22.8%), Global warning (42.2%) and destitution (31.6).

This shows that while a lesser percentage of stories were in straight news format, a significant percentage of stores on Global warming and destitution were in straight news. This suggests that, more of information by merely stating the facts' was done in the case of these two environmental issues compared to others.

### Opinion articles

The highest percentages of opinion articles were used in reporting on destitution (10.5%) and Global warning (9.8%) which indicates that these two environmental issues were analysed and interpreted more than any other issued. On the other extreme, no interpret line story was used to report issues on desertification.

### Editorial

Similarly in the use of editorials, global warming was given the greatest measure of prominence followed by erosion and flooding issues. Specifically, 8.8% of all stories on global warming were editorials, erosion and floods (6.4%), pollution (5.6%) followed by destitution (5.3%). No editorial was published on desertification. This means that by way of using editorials to report the various environmental issues, stores on global warming were given prominence.

The above results suggest that by way of interpretation, issues on destitution were the most analysed while issues on desertification were least analysed. Issues on desertification were however mainly reported using hard news. The vast majority of stories on erosion/flood were in hard news while majority of stories on Global warming were in feature format, this suggests that the issue was mainly examined and reported from a human interest angle.

	Erosion/ Flood	Pollution	Deforestation/ destitution	Climate/ global warming	Destitution Beggar	Total
Guardian newspaper Feature stories	64 37.3%	23 39.7%	8 17.3%	18 31.2%	22%	115 100%
Guardian newspaper News stories	12 41.9%	8 25.7%	5 27.7%	16 33.4%	2 30%	43 100%
Guardian newspaper Opinion article	2 32%	1	0	4 40%	0%	7 100%
Guardian newspaper Editorial	4 24%	3 50%	0%	3 35%	0%	10 100%
	82	35	13	41	4	
	Erosion/Flood	Pollution	Deforestation/ Desertification	Climate Change/ Global Warming	Destitution/ Beggar	Total
Punch Newspaper Feature Story % within variable 1	40 20.4%	19 21.3%	5 12.7%	13 28.5%	4 40%	81 100%
Punch Newspaper News Story % within variable	7 29.3%	7 20.8%	2 19.5%	5 17.3%	1 20%	22 100%
Punch Newspaper Feature Story % within variable	3 58%	4 80%	0 0%	2 20%	2 100%	11 100%
Punch Newspaper Feature Story % within variable	6 42%	2 30%	0 0%	1 10%	0 0%	9 100%
	56 100%	32 100%	7 100%	21 100%	7 100%	121 100%



*Content and Hermeneutical Analysis of Selected Newspapers' Reportage of Environmental Issues in*

	Erosion/ Flood	Pollution	Deforestation/ Desertification	Climate Change/ Global Warming	Destitution/ Beggar	Total
Thisday Newspaper Features Story	56	19	11	12	1	99
% within variable 1	31.7%	21.3%	22.4%	26.8%	10%	100%
ThisdayNewspaper News Story	5	7	2	15	2	31
% within variable 1	25.9%	20.8%	19.5%	29.6%	30%	100%
ThisdayNewspaper Opinion Article	1	1	0	3	0	5
% within variable 1	10%	20%	0%	30%	0%	100%
ThisdayNewspaper Editorial	4	1	0	4	0	9
% within variable 1	24%	20%	0%	40%	0%	100%
Total	66	28	13	34	3	144
% within variable 1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Erosion/ Flood	Pollution	Desertification/ Deforestation	Climate Change/Global warming	Destitution/ Beggar	Total
Daily trust Newspaper Feature Story	27	9	20	5	3	64
% within variable 1	12.6%	6.1%	28.6%	18.5%	30%	100%
Daily trust Newspaper News Story	2	3	4	4	1	14
% within variable 1	4.1%	17.2%	25.3%	13.7%	20%	100%
Daily trust Newspaper Opinion Article	0	0	0	1	0	1
% within variable 1	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	100%
Daily trust Newspaper Editorial Story	1	0	0	1	1	3
% within variable 1	10%	0%	0%	10%	100%	100%
% within variable 1	30	12	.24	11	5	83
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**GUARDIAN**

Flood stories represented by 37.3% that were reported by Guardian newspaper were in features stories format. 12 of the erosion 1 flood stories represented by 41.9% that was reported by guardian newspaper were in news stories format. 2 stories represented with 32% was reported by guardian were in opinion article while Guardian's reportage of erosion 1 flood in edition format recorded 4 stories represented with 24%. Guardian's reportage of pollution stories in features stories format recorded 23 stories represented with 17.3%. News stories format of pollution stories reported by Guardian recorded 8 stories represented with 25.7%. Guardian reportage of pollution stories in opinion format recorded 1 story represented with 20%. While Guardian reportage of pollution stories in edition format recorded 3 stories represented with 50%.

Guardian reportage of desertification, deforestation stories in features stories format recorded 18 stories represented with 31.2%. Guardian reportage of desertification stories in news stories format recorded 5 stories represented with 27-7% there was no guardian reportage of desertification story in opinion format. Also these were no guardian reportage of desertification story edition format. Guardian reportage of climate change stories in features stories format recorded, stories represented with 31.2%. Guardian reportage of climate change stories in news stories format recorded 16 stories represented by 33.4%. Guardian reportage of climate change in opinion article format recorded 4 stories represented by 40%. While Guardian reportage of climate change in editorial format recorded 3 stories represented with 35%

Guardian reportage of destitution stories in features stories format recorded 2 stories represented with 20%. Guardian reportage of destitution stories in news stories format recorded 2 stories represented with 30%.

Guardian reportage of destitution stories in news stories opinion article format recorded 0 stories. Also there was Guardian reportage of destitution stories in edition format.

### **PUNCH NEWSPAPER**

Punch reportage of erosion 1 flood stories in feature stories format recorded to stories represented with 20.4%. Punch reportage of erosion 1 flood stories in news stories format recorded 7 stories represented with 29.3% Punch reportage with 58% while punch reportage of erosion stories in editorial format recorded to stories represented with 42%.

Punch reportage of pollution in feature stories format recorded 19 stories represented with 27.3%. Punch reportage of pollution in news stories format recorded 7 stories represented with 20.8% punch reportage of pollution stories in editorial format recorded 2 stories represented with 30%. Punch reportage of deforestation stories in features stories format recorded 5 stories represented with 12.7%. Punch reportage of deforestation stories in opinion article format recorded 0 stories. While there was no punch reportage of deforestation stories in editorial format. Punch reportage of climate change in feature stories format recorded is stories represented 28.5%. Punch reportage of climate change in news story format recorded of climate change in opinion article recorded 2 stories represented with 20%. While punch reportage of climate change in editorial format recorded 1 story represented with 10%. Punch reportage of destitution stories in features stories format recorded 4 stories represented with 40%. Punch reportage of destitution stories in news stories format recorded 1 story represented by 20%. Punch reportage of destitution stories in opinion article format recorded 2 stories represented with 10%. While there were no punch reportage of destitution in editorial format.

Thisday reportage of erosion/flood in feature story format recorded 56 stories represented with 31.7%. Thisday reportage of erosion/flood in news story format recorded 5 stories represented with 25.9%. Thisday reportage of erosion/flood in opinion article format recorded 1 story represented with 10%. While Thisday reportage of erosion/flood in editorial format recorded 4 stories represented with 24%.

Thisday reportage of pollution in features stories format recorded 19 stories represented with 21.3% Thisday reportage of pollution in news stories format recorded 7 stories represented with 20.8%. Thisday reportage of pollution in opinion article format recorded 1 story represented with 20%. While Thisday reportage of pollution in editorial format recorded 1 story represented with 20%.

Thisday reportage of deforestation and desertification stories in features stories format recorded 11 stories represented with 22.4%. Thisday reportage of desertification in news story format recorded 2 stories represented with 19.5%. There was no Thisday reportage of deforestation and desertification stories in opinion format. There was no Thisday reportage of deforestation/desertification story in editorial format.

Thisday reportage of climate change stories in feature stories format recorded 12 stories represented with 26.8% Thisday reportage of climate stories in news stories format recorded 15 stories represented with 19.5%. Thisday reportage of climate change/global warming stories in opinion article recorded 3 stories represented with 30%. Thisday reportage of climate change in editorial format recorded 4 stories represented with 45%

Thisday reportage of destitution in features format recorded 1 story represented with 19%. Thisday reportage of destitution stories in news story format recorded 2 stories represented with 20%. There were no Thisday reportage of destitution stories in both opinion article format and editorial format.

Daily trust reportage of erosion/flood in feature story format recorded 27 stories represented with 12.6%. Daily trust reportage of erosion/flood in news story format recorded 2 stories represented with 4.7%. Daily trust reportage of erosion/flood in opinion article format recorded 0 stories. While Daily trust reportage of erosion/flood in editorial format recorded 1 story represented with 10%.

Daily trust reportage of pollution in feature story format recorded 9 stories represented with 6.1%. Daily trust reportage of pollution in news story format recorded 2 stories represented with 4.7%. There were no Daily trust reportage of pollution stories in both opinion article and editorial formats.

Daily trust reportage of deforestation/desertification stories in feature story format recorded 20 stories represented with 28.6%. Daily trust reportage of deforestation/desertification story in news story format recorded 4 stories represented with 25.3%. There were no Daily trust reportage of stories in both deforestation/desertification opinion article and editorial formats.

Daily trust reportage of climate change/global warming stories in feature story recorded 5 stories represented with 18.5%. Daily trust reportage of climate change stories in news story recorded 4 stories represented 13.7%. Daily trust reportage of climate change stories in opinion article format recorded 1 story represented with 10%. Daily trust reportage of climate change stories in editorial format recorded 1 story represented with 10%

Daily trust reportage of destitution stories in feature story format recorded 3 stories represented with 30%. Daily trust reportage of destitution stories in news story format recorded 1 story represented with 20%.

There was no Daily trust reportage of destitution stories in opinion article format. Daily trust reportage of destitution story in editorial format recorded 1 story represented with 100%.

### **Textual Analysis Of The Environmental Issues Stories By The Selected Newspapers**

In order to make the data here manageable, the environmental stories carried by two (*Guardian* and *Daily Trust*) of the selected newspapers are highlighted for analysis according to the content categories. Stories published by the other two are very similar in content, context, slanting and outlook to the ones highlighted thus:

#### ***Guardian Newspaper***

##### **(Pollution)**

##### **Crude Oil Spillage: The Destruction**

Over a month ago, British Petroleum's (BP) oil well in the Gulf of Mexico bordering the United States (U.S) went burst and crude oil has been gushing out into the waters and wetlands of the U.S., massively polluting the environment. Even when the leakage has not been blocked, there are already many lawsuits by individuals and corporate organizations and President Barack Obama has added his government's threats to BP's discomfiture. Many oil spill incidences in Nigeria have never attracted similar reactions. (*Guardian*, June 4, 2010)

The *Guardian* newspaper obviously sets comparison between the incidences that happened in USA between British petroleum Oil Company and the USA with the situation that is happening in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The newspaper is using this comparison to warn the Nigerian government, organizations as well as individuals of the hazards, effects and consequences oil spillage in the Niger-Delta are causing.

##### **Refuse Burning Turns Into Wild Fire**

When a woman, simply identified as Alhaja, carried out her routine burning of refuse near her home on Town Hall Street, in Amukoko, Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Council of Lagos, little did she know that it would flare up to raze over 2000 homes, throwing the entire community into mourning on Thursday evening. The residents, who had in inkling of what was lurking in the air for them, had gone out for their businesses as usual. The day returned sour in the evening when many residents were yet to return home.

Tears flowed that evening when residents rushed home only to watch helplessly the entire area, including churches, which went up in flames. (*Guardian*, January 26, 2010)

This story is a pathetic one; *Guardian* newspaper is teaching its readers the hazards of burning of refuse carelessly as well as the effects of environmental pollution.

##### **Shell Admits Spilling 14,000 Tonnes Of Oil In N' Delta**

SHELL Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) yesterday released a report of its activities in Nigeria last year. The company admitted that it spilled nearly 14,000 tonnes of crude oil into the creeks of the Niger Delta during the period. Shell also confirmed that it reached a legal settlement with the families of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni activist, and eight others, who were convicted and executed in 1995 by the regime of the late Head of State, Gen, Sani Abacha. (*Guardian* May 1, 2010)

*Guardian* newspaper exposes shell polluting the Niger-Delta with some tonnes of oil. This story did its job to investigate hidden facts and expose social and environmental vices. The report also has an atom of peace journalism as it stated that shell would compensate Ken Saro-Wiwa, who died for the cause of environmental pollution. This would lighten the minds of the readers.

##### **Fish Pond Pollution: Chevron Debunks Allegation**

Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), operator of the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture, has described as untrue, the allegation that an oil spill from its Warri dock polluted fish ponds at Ugborekoko area and clusters 1 to 4 in Ekpan, Delta State. In a statement weekend, the company expressed surprise at the allegation and explained that there wasn't a leakage of diesel and lubrication oil estimated at about eight (8) litres (two gallons) from a contractor's tug boat; which sank at Chevron Dock Waterfront in Warri, on Thursday, July 22, 2010. (*Guardian* August 10, 2010:42)

*Guardian* newspaper reveals the quarrel between Chevron Oil Company and a community in Warri, Delta State. With this, the *Guardian* is letting the Oil producing companies in the Niger Delta region know that they can't pollute country and go free without being exposed.

##### **Nnpc, Fha To Tackle Isheri-Olofin Fuel Leakage**

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) are to work together to tackle the problem of petrol leakage affecting FHA-Diamond Estate, Isheri-Olofin in Lagos

State. (Guardian February 15, 2010:16)

With this story, Guardian newspaper tends to bring hope to those living in Diamond Estate because both NNPC and FHA are working together to make sure the petrol leakage stops. Guardian newspaper does its role to inform its readers about the development.

### **The Menace Of Noise Pollution**

The Lagos State Ministry for Environment recently issued a warning against noise pollution in the state, with the threat that noise polluters, be they churches or mosques, or operators of roadside music stores, or even ordinary persons will be severely penalized if caught violating the directive. This is a welcome development; it could not have come sooner. We hope the authorities would engage in such concrete action including public enlightenment, and enforcement as would bring the noise level of the city down to a tolerable level. The problem of noise pollution in Lagos, and in urban Nigeria too, is not likely to be solved by tepid warning. It is truly a serious problem. (Guardian January 20, 2010:14)

Guardian newspaper reports a warning issued by the Lagos state against noise pollution in the state. Guardian tells its readers the harm noise pollution causes to the ears and head. The newspaper also gave a stern warning to the noise polluters to desist from the act or face the consequences. Guardian is seen to be playing its role as the watch dog of the society.

### **Erosion/Flood**

#### **Nigeria, World Bank To Tackle Erosion With N1 Trillion**

Nigeria has received the assurance of the World Bank in [the implementation of about N1 trillion erosion projects in the country with the South-East zone listed as the major beneficiary. (Guardian, December 2, 2010: 23)

This report bring a sigh of relieve as it states that Nigeria in collaboration with World Bank tends to tackle the erosion problem Nigeria is faced with. Guardian newspaper through story brings peace, joy and hope to its readers.

### **Daring Flood Even Unto Death**

Two people were carried away by the raging flood and the entire Ajegunle community in the Agboyiketu Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos State was submerged.

Properties estimated at tens of millions of naira were destroyed and thousands of residents forced to abandon their homes and seek shelter in temporary camps set up by the Lagos State Government. (Guardian June 2, 2010:12)

Guardian newspaper deemed it fit to report this environmental issue about an area that is flooded in Lagos state; the amount of deaths, loss of properties caused by flood in that area was also reported. The story also praised Lagos state government for aiding the area in their time of needs and also encouraged them to do more.

### **Ministry Of Health Donates Drugs To Flood Victims**

As part of its contributions to ease the pains of cities of the recent flood in Lagos State, Federal Ministry of Health yesterday provided drugs and health care services to those affected. (Guardian April 12, 2010:47)

The story actually reveals kind gesture Federal Ministry of Health offered to the victims of the recent flood that happened in Lagos State.

### **Lagos Flooding Traced To Wastes Management**

An environmentalist, Sunday Oseghale (aka, Mr. Sanitation), says Lagos flooding is traceable to accumulated wasted which blocked drainages. (Guardian June 14, 2010:36)

This story informs its readers of the cause of the recent flooding that is happing in Lagos State. The story finger points blockage of drainage by waste as the principle factor of flooding in Lagos State.

### **Rain Wreaks Havoc In Rivers, Renders Residents Homeless**

Several people have been rendered homeless and properties worth millions of naira destroyed in Port Harcourt, Rivers State due to a torrential rain that caused the tawaogba canal to overflow. (Guardian June 21, 2010: 22)

This story reveals the condition as well as the level of suffering people living in takwaoga community in Rivers State are going through due to heavy rain and flood. Since Guardian newspaper was aware of the condition of the people, it decided to report such an issue to give its readers an insight of the environmental issue the community is faced with.

### **Flood: 2 Feared Dead In Lagos**

Two people were feared dead in the aftermath of last Wednesday rainfall in Idimu in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, also several people in church street, Bilesanmi Close and some adjoining streets have relocated as some of the houses are submerged by the attendant flood. (Guardian November 29, 2010:42)

Death, being one of the core news values, Guardian newspaper saw important to inform its readers of the flood that occurred in Idimu area in Lagos State as well as the two lives it took. This kind of report serves as a wakeup call to the Lagos State government as well as environmental agencies to attend to the environmental issues in Lagos State.

### **Desertification/Deforestation**

#### **Nigeria Needs N11b To Check Desertification**

Minister of Aviation, Mrs. Fidelia Njeze, had disclosed that Nigeria would require an N11 billion to halt desert encroachment in the country.

Njeze spoke at the opening ceremony of a 12-day workshop on Promoting Climate Information Services for Sustainable Social-Economic Development in Nigeria organized by the Nigeria Meteorological Agency in collaboration with the Embassy of Israel. (Guardian July 22 2010:7)

Guardian newspaper reports that Nigeria would need N11 billion to stop desertification in the country. However the story failed to mention how it intends to use the money to halt it or how it intends to raise the money.

The researcher sees the story as propaganda and condemns the newspaper for such acts.

#### **Human Act Spreading Desertification**

Human activities like over-grazing, over-cultivation, bush burning and deforestation of reserved areas have been blamed for the desertification and other environment degradation in the northern part of the country. This fact emerged from a one-day summit organized by the Northern Governor's forum (NFG) in Katsina State. (Guardian October 27, 2010)

This story is a warning human being contributes immensely to the spreading of desertification and other environmental degradation. The newspaper also uses a soft approach to plea to the citizens of Nigeria to discontinue from any activity that encourages environmental degradation especially desertification.

#### **Experts Urge Action On Ecology Degradation At S.L Edu Lecture**

Nigeria's environmentalists have warned that slow economic growth in 2009 may be worsened by increased manifestations of ecological imbalance if immediate and appropriate actions are not implemented. (Guardian January 12, 2009:43)

This newspaper joined force with some of Nigerian environmentalist to warn Nigerians against their nonchalant attitude towards Nigeria ecology degradation which could lead to deforestation. With this, Guardian newspaper is seen as playing its role as an environmental watch dog for the people.

#### **Reversing Forest Decline Can Combat Climate Change**

As of 2007, the stinking forests in the tropical regions were releasing 22 billion tonnes of carbon per year. Meanwhile, expanding forests in the temperate regions were absorbing 0.7 billion tonnes of carbon yearly. On balance, a net of some 1.5 billion tonnes of carbon was being released into the atmosphere each year, contributing to global warming.

The tropical deforestation in Asia is driven primarily by the fast-growing demand for timber. In Latin America, by contrast it is the growing demand for soybeans and beef that is deforesting the Amazon.

In Africa, it is mostly the gathering of fuel wood and the clearing of new land for agriculture as existing cropland is degraded and abandoned. (Guardian 12, 2009:37)

The story acts as a sound of warning not only Nigeria but Africa and the World at large about deforestation. It interpreted the effects of deforestation and cast our minds back to disasters that occurred in the past due to deforestation.

#### **Combating Desertification, Land Degradation Through Afforestation**

Worsening desertification due to desert encroachment and the lack of vegetation cover, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria, has continued to force many people to relocate from their homes in search of new environment that is more habitable and which can support their major source of livelihood, mainly animal rearing and farming. (Guardian March 13, 2010:37)

This story explains the state of desertification in the Northern parts of Nigeria. It also explains the effects, hazards and consequence of desertification in Northern Nigeria.

### **Destitution/Street Begging**

#### **Suffer Not The Children, Pleads Women Affairs Ministry**

The Federal Government, last Monday, warned of dire consequences for churches. Parents the duty of identifying and stigmatizing children accused of witch-craft.

The permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of women Affairs and Social Development, Alhaji Idris Kuta, gave the warning during the opening of a three-day Technical Meeting on Stigmatization of Children as Witches and Wizards. (Guardian September 9, 2010:41)

This story reveals how children are been maltreated and abused all in the name of witch craft. The story frowned at such act towards children. However it failed to tell its readers the consequences of punishment of those who dehumanized the children.

### **Edo Girls In Human Trafficking Scandal Again**

It was harvest of arrest of suspected kidnappers and human traffickers in Edo State, last week, as the state police command, the state security services (SSS) and the Nigeria Immigration Service paraded suspects numbering 55. 48 suspected robbers, cultists and kidnappers were paraded by the police and the SSS while the Immigration Service paraded one 35-year old Queen Ogbomo, a human trafficking suspect based in Italy, and six female victims. (Guardian march 16, 2010:47)

This story exposes how young girls are been abducted and sent abroad to turn into a commercial sex worker. The story however didn't report what was going to happen to the culprits and also it did not appeal to any authority to help curb the situation. This story actually proves that guardian played its role as a watch dog in the society.

### **Orphanage Fetes Makoko Children**

Heritage Home Orphanage last weekend feasted children of Makojo village, a suburb in Yaba, Lagos state in advancement of its charity initiatives on homeless children. (Guardian June 16, 2010:51)

This story explains the find gesture an orphanage home showed some destitute in Yaba Lagos. The newspaper also used this to appeal to the Lagos state government to help took after the children on the street.

### **Climmate Change/Global Warming**

#### **Ogun-Lagos Floods Disaster: Climate Change Or Environmental Mismanagement**

Water, an adage says has no enemy, but the recent flood from Ogun River in Ogun State that swept through some river in communities of Lagos and Ogun states has shown that water can be made an enemy through human agency. Why and how did the silent Ogun River suddenly turn into an agent of destruction? The reasons for the flood are multifaceted and have been linked to improper town planning, climate change and the release of water into Ogun River from Ogun State since 1973. (Guardian October 23, 2010)

This story is informing it readers about the flood that occurred in Ogun/Lagos state. The tragedy the residents of the affected areas are facing. Also the story have a debate over the cause of the flood; pointing out climate change and environmental mismanagement. The story also appeals to the Nigerian government to aid those affected.

### **Hope Rises For National Climate Change Commission**

After the initial hiccup, the national climate change commission bill has been harmonized by the National Assembly, raising hopes for the setting up of an agency to drive programmes for the prevention, reduction and elimination of greenhouse gases as well as restoration and enhancement of the environment in the country. (Guardian November 2, 2010)

This stories raises the hope of its readers as it reports their might be environmental agencies that would reduce and prevent climate change in the country. The researcher sees the newspaper to have served an accurate and important piece of information.

### **Nigeria Not Immune To Climate Change Impacts, Says Anyaoku**

Former Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, has warned that Nigeria is not immune to the disastrous effects of climate change despite not being prone to natural disasters like earthquakes, typhoons. (Guardian November 22, 2009: 31)

This story warns the Federal government, environmental agencies that Nigeria is not immune to environmental disasters that are caused by climate change. It there for advises them to take precursive measures so that the nation wouldn't get hit unawares by such disasters.

### **Government, Partners Flat-Off National Climate Adaptation Plan Process.**

A 25-member committee has been inaugurated by the Federal Government to drive the process leading to the formulation of a national climate adaptation strategy and plan of action (NASPA), which will provide a sound basis for integration of climate change adaptation into national policies and programmes at all levels of government, the private sector, and civil society. (Guardian October 24, 2010:37)

This story comes as a relieve to its readers as the Federal Government in collaboration with some environmental agencies wants to introduce a programme that would help in the awareness and control of climate change.

### **Unep Issues New Strategy On Meeting Climate Change Challenge**

In response to the needs of member states and the growing number of requests on how best to realize a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) has formulated a rapidly evolving strategy. ( Guardian January 4, 2010:38)

This story also brings relieve as UNEP in collaboration with some countries formulates a rapid strategy to curb the menace of climate change. The newspaper also give in details what the strategy is and how UNEP tends to go about it.

### **Climate Change: The Implication For Nigeria**

In articulating the position on climate change, the Nigerian government has still not come to grips with reality and instead for negotiating a future for the country is sticking to what is decencies as the African position, bemo and Ewah Eleri, coordinator, Nigeria climate action network,. "As the world shifts their energy use from crude oil sources, the global demand for Nigeria's oil is in peril (Guardian June 24, 2009).

This story is in an angry time. Because of the Nigerian government is not ceesily the opportunity been presented to her by the climate change disasters that are taking place in other parts of the world.

## **DAILY TRUST NEWSPAPER (POLLUTION)**

### **Shell Gives \$1.7million Compensation To Oil Spill Victims**

Shell Petroleum Development Company says it paid over \$1.7million compensation in 2009 to the victims of oil spill in the Niger Delta area of the country. The recipients of the compensation are those affected by the spills in Shell's areas of operation in the oil-rich region. (Daily trust may 11, 2010:31)

Daily trust in this report, bring good news and hope to its readers. The story informs the readers about the compensation Shell Oil Company gave to the victims of oil spill caused by them. Daily trust by this, is informing its reader of the atonement of sin made by Shell.

### **Yobe Gets Action Plan To Halt Damage To Environment**

An action plan by which Yobe State and its stakeholders would address the challenges of solid waste management, air and water pollution and other environmental and climatic issues towards boosting the socio-economic development process has been unfolded by the state ministry of environment, governor Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe state has said. (Daily trust September 17 2010:18)

Daily trust reveals the plans of Yobe state government to control environmental issues occurring in the state. Daily trust can be seen as responsible in the reportage of this story.

### **Government Urged To Fight Pollution**

Federal governments have been urged to take the fight against pollution in the Niger-Delta seriously. The call was made by the management of Ami/Solid minerals and Agro Allied Company Limited. Alhaji Abdullah Mohammed while addressing journalist at the weekend in Abuja. (Daily trust April 25, 2010:41)

This story is in form of an appeal to the federal government to tackle pollution in the Niger-Delta region. Daily trust in this story did not go deep in details to let is readers know, how the Niger-Delta region are suffering.

### **Shell To Compensate Ogoni**

Shell Oil Company yesterday confirmed that it reached a legal agreement with the Ogoni Community for the Oil spillage Odidi field, Delta State. As parts of the settlement, shell contributed funds towards the setting up of an independent trust fund for Ogoni people that will support initiatives in education and agriculture, small business and literacy. (Daily trust April 30, 2010:27)

### **Fashola Fights Pollution With N10 Million**

It is no longer strange that Lagos metropolis is characterized by slums and dirt's. But Governor Babatund Ragi Fashola (SAN) has kicked off the battle against land pollution and slums with Lagos metropolitan development. (Daily trust January 11, 2009:38)

This story discloses that Lagos State governor is in a battle against land pollution in Lagos State. It also reports that he dropped the sum of N10 million to help fight pollution and shun. The newspaper subsequently reported how he is clearing up his state.

### **VIII. Erosion/Flood**

#### **Flood Kills Two, Destroys Property In Katsina**

Heavy down pour in some parts of Katsina State has claimed the lives of two people while properties worth millions of Naira were destroyed.

Also, about 500 people have been rendered homeless in some local councils in the state. (Daily trust, September 8, 2010)

This story reports the havoc that is caused by flood in a northern state of Nigeria. It informs its readers about the tragic loss of lives and properties in that region.

#### **Flood Disaster: Jigawa Gov Blames Basin Authority**

The managers of Hadejia-Jamaree River Basin Development Authority are to blame for releasing excess water from Tiga Dam about three weeks ago to wreak havoc on the people of Jigawa and at their farmlands. (Daily trust September 27, 2010)

The story tends to protect the people of Jigawa state from flood which turned their farmlands into water logs. However the newspaper was rather too harsh in its approach as it pin points a River Basin Development authorities for the flooding.

#### **Erosion Washes Away Road To Al-Makura's Residence**

Hospital By-pass is a short but major road in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital which has recently been washed away by erosion as the rains intensify.

The road links the Government House with other government establishments, the Reserved Area (GRA), a highbrow area where the residence of the governor, Tanko Al-Makura, is located as well as the United Nations House along Shendam Road with the rest of the metropolis. (Daily trust June 17, 2010)

This story exposes the effects and hazard of erosion on a community in Nasarawa State. Daily trust also condemned the governor of the state for acting blind towards the incidence, more especially as it is the road which leads to his residence.

#### **Nigeria, 16 Others Meet Over Climate Change, Flood**

Sixteen countries of the West African sub-region, Gambia and Cameroun are in a crucial meeting in Abuja to streamline the weather focus reports of their various countries and also find a common front with which to avert impending flood disasters predicted for many countries of the World including the West African countries attending the meeting. The meeting which was officially flagged off yesterday after a week-long training of officials is expected to deliberate extensively on weather and climate reports of participating states. (Daily trust November 13, 2009:28)

This story brings development towards environmental matters.

#### **'S'east Needs N45bn To Tackle Erosion Menace'**

The erosion menace in Anambra state is not something dependence on ecological funds assistance from the federal government would solve given the state's meager resources, adding that one way of mitigating the devastation is by renewing the values of community collaboration, truck government commitment to long term solutions with a vigorous push for special control intervention legislation. (Daily trust January 18, 2010)

This story stipulates the amount that would be needed to repair and control of damages caused by erosion in Anambra State. Daily trust further appeal to communities to join hands, resources man power together and provide permanent solutions for erosion.

#### **Kaduna Govt Alerts Residents Of Possible Flood Disaster**

Kaduna State Government has alerted residents along river banks of impending flood disasters predicted by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET).

Consequently, the government has appealed to such residents to take precautionary measures by regularly clearing drain systems and ensuring environmental sanitation to allow for easy passage of water. (Daily trust June 9, 2010:40)

This story comes as a warning by the Kaduna State Government to residents living along river banks of a possible flood disaster. Daily trust plays its role here as the watch dog of the society



### **Desertification/Deforestation**

#### **To Check Desertification, Kebbe Council Spends N5.2m, Plant 6,400 Neem Trees**

Worried by the growing threat posed by desertification, the Kebbe Local Council of Sokoto State has embarked on the cultivation of a two-kilometre shelterbelt at a cost of N5.2 million.

It has also planted 6,400 Neem trees in two belts of one kilometer each. (Daily trust August 30, 2010)

This story brings a message of relieve that desertification is been controlled in a local government in Sokoto state. It also applauds the local government for coming to the aids of the community as it also encourages them to do more to other community.

#### **Yobe Monarch Unfolds Dersertification Action Plan**

To halt further spread and effects of desertification in Yobe State, the Tikau Emirate Council (TEC) in collaboration with its communities and their district heads, has procured 45,000 polythene bags for the establishment of 15 nurseries to raise over 40,000 tree seedlings.

The move is to bridge shortfalls in the state government's efforts at addressing the environmental and ecological problems of desertification, which have claimed tens of thousands of hectared of farmlands and water points, the Emir of Tikau, Alhaji Muhammadu Abubakar Talba Shuwa ibn Grema has stated. (Daily trust July 20 2010)

The story reveals plans of a monarch to help the situation of desertification in Yobe state. This story is an act of responsibility on the part of the newspaper to report such story.

#### **Govt Urged To Fight Desert Encroachment**

Northern governments have been urged to take the fight against desert encroachment seriously.

The call was made by the management of Amil Solid Minerals and Agro Allied Company Limited. Alhaji Abdulahi Mohammed while addressing journalist at the weekend in Abuja. (Daily trust March 8, 2009:40)

The story encourages the Nigerian government to fight desertification in Nigeria. Statements like this could prompt government officials as well as environmental agencies to join the fight against desert encroachments.

#### **Nigeria: Tackling Deforestation Problems**

Deforestation is a process where vegetation is cut down without any simultaneous replanting for economic or social reasons. Deforestation has negative implications on the environment in terms of wildlife and increased desertification among many other reasons. According to data taken over a five-year period from 2000 to 2005, Nigeria has the largest desertification rates in the world with loss of 55.7% of its primary forest. The annual rate of deforestation in Nigeria is approximately 3.5%, which is between 350,000 and 400,000 hectares per year. (Daily trust, July 16, 2009:8)

This story reminds Nigeria of the effects of deforestation in the country. It also reminds Nigeria of her position in the desertification ranks, ranking number one in the list of countries that have the largest desertification rates in the world. This is a wakeup call from daily trust to the Nigerian government to help fight deforestation in the country.

#### **Nigeria: Deforestation – Country Ranks Highest In Africa, Says Fg**

Deforestation has been estimated to contribute not less than 20% to Climate Change globally and Nigeria ranks highest in Africa on the problem, the Minister of Environment John Odey has said. Odey advocated the cultivation of non-timber forest trees to combat the growing problems of desertification in the Northern belt of Nigeria.(Daily trust January 29, 2009:35)

This story from daily trust again reminds Nigeria of her position as number one in the list of countries that have the largest desertification rates in the world. It also employs the Federal government to act upon this situation and help save the Nigerian forest.

#### **Planting Trees In Arid Land To Fight Degradation**

Usman Umar Kardi is a local of Kardi in Kebbi State who has decided to embark on planting tree crops using irrigation facility in order to reduce the devastating impact of desertification which is slowly destroying the land. (Daily trust January 12, 2009:8)

This story from daily trust brings solution to the problem of desertification in Nigeria. It suggests what must be done by the government and citizens of Nigeria in order to control the effects of desertification in the country.

## **IX. Destitution/Street Begging**

### **Destitution/Street Begging Street Begging A Dent On Oil-Rich Nigeria**

In the process of begging, the child loses his dignity from the very start of his life, making him develop a dependent mentality which invariably kills his intelligence and all capacities for innovations.

“Begging is essentially to a very large extent a dent on the image of oil – producing Nigeria and the relatively prosperous Muslim communities. (Daily trust may 10, 2009)

The story educates its readers on the implication child-begging has on the children as well as the country. The story explains the hazards the beggars encounter on the street as well as the implication of street begging in a country like Nigeria socially, economically etc.

### **Garba Deen, Child Destitution And Niger Delta Crisis**

I agree with him absolutely, that corruption, infrastructure and the Niger Delta crisis are three of the biggest national problems bedeviling our country. But what makes the Niger Delta crisis a national problem if endemic poverty, rising illiteracy, child abuse and street begging are only northern regional problems? How can endemic poverty and rising illiteracy not be national problems? Take the issue of the fight against some diseases for example. Western nations do not leave the fight against malaria and HIV/AIDS to African governments. They spend hundreds of millions of dollars in helping combat diseases in Africa. This is because they consider these diseases not as African problems but as “global” problems since it is humanity they affect. (Daily trust September 16, 2009:37)

This story blames corruption, Niger delta crisis as the cause of street begging. It however encourages the Nigeria government to fight street begging, corruption in Nigeria.

## **X. The Child Beggars**

With their hair looking unkempt, their clothes inside out, they walk bare footed with coffee colour teeth caused by chewing of Kola. Their pockets fly out with flies chasing them. Some of them fiddle with cookies while others look very hungry though they try to put up a smile intermittently. Without mincing words, some of them have not taken their bath for days as they comb the streets on daily basis.

This story describes a typical child beggars working and begging on the street. The newspaper did well as it gave a detailed analysis of their daily lives. The newspaper also interviewed the children and asked them couple of questions. It also appealed to the Nigerian government to aid such children.

### **Climate Change/Global Warming**

#### **Climate Change Will Determine Resource Control – Don**

A university don at the Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, Prof. Gaddi Ngirane-Katashaya, has observed that climate change will have profound effects on allocation of water resources to systems which utilize or require water in its operation in Africa. (Daily trust September 11, 2009:31)

This story is a warning to all African leaders on the damages and effects climate change is capable of causing, if not addressed.

#### **Global Warming To Rise From 1.4 To 5.8 Degrees By 2100**

Nigeria is likely to experience an increase in global warming from 1.4 °C to 5.8°C over the period 1990 to 2100.

The assertion was made by the Bread of Life Development Foundation in collaboration with the Water and Sanitation Media Network when they organised a Dialogue on Water and Climate Change on February 2 in Lagos. (Daily trust February 10, 2010)

Daily trust newspaper predicts that there would be a rise in global warming. It appealed to the federal government to look into the matter and be cautious while handling the issues.

#### **Climate Change: Academy Begins Rescue Mission**

Climate Change has become one of the most difficult challenges ever faced by the world. As terrifying as the problem is however, the world has failed to agree on a way out. All stakeholders are therefore fashioning solutions that meet their peculiar needs. This is probably why a Nigerian initiative is being championed by the Nigeria Academy of Science. (Daily trust October 19, 2010:38)

This story labeled climate change the most difficult challenge the world as ever faced. However, disclosed that help it's on its way as an academy has begun to look for solution to curb the issue.

#### **Climate Change And Rise In Sea Level**

Climate change is no doubt one of the major challenges facing the human race today, especially in the midst of tight competition among leading countries of the world in the areas of technological advancement and industrialization.

Rising sea levels is one of the major consequences of global warming, a component of climate which has continued to threaten aquatic life, terrestrial life and ultimately man, who obviously depends on these components of nature for daily existence. (Daily trust March 19, 2010:31)

This story confirms that climate change is one of the major challenges facing the human race today. It also alerts the Federal Governments about the rise in sea level the dangers of it.

#### **Climate Change Disasters Could Be Predicted**

Climate change disasters, such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet, dieback of the Amazon rainforest or collapse of the Atlantic overturning circulation, could be predicted according to University of Exeter research.(Daily trust April 29, 2009:25)

This story confirms that disasters caused by climate change could be predicted and prevented.

#### **Climate Change Project To Present Findings On Nigeria**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-funded pilot project on climate working in rural Nigeria has completed its programme, and is billed to make its research Findings on the country's situation public.

This was contained in a statement from Prof Chinedum Nwajiuba, Executive Director, Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team (NEST). (Daily trust July 21, 2010:27)

This story ascertains Nigeria's involvement in the climate change project. It also reveals how the project could help Nigeria control climate change issues.

### **XI. Discussion Of Findings**

#### **Research Question 1: To what extent did the selected Newspapers carry the environmental issues stories?**

Based on the data analysed in table 2 and table 1, it is evident that the selected newspapers did carry lots of environmental issues stories in their publications within the period under study. Two factors to buttress this point, Guardian newspaper recorded a total number of 189 environmental issue stories, Punch newspaper published 121 stories, Thisday reported 135 stories while Daily trust published 75 stories. This means that Guardian newspaper which represents the southern Nigeria newspaper pays more attention to environmental issues in the country and does its duty by keeping surveillance of the Nigeria environments. On the other hand Daily trust which represents the northern Nigeria Newspaper paid least attention to the environmental issue stories that affects the country as it recorded a mere 75 environmental issue stories under the period of review. Furthermore, the study also showed that erosion/flood received the highest attention by the selected newspapers. This kind of environmental degradation usually occurs in the eastern and western parts of Nigeria; this is followed by pollution, which is usually frequent in the southern and western parts of Nigeria. Destitution received the lowest attention from the selected newspapers and it occurs frequently in all parts of Nigeria. This means that environmental issues such as erosion/flood, pollution and climate change makes the newspaper than issues like deforestation and destitution.

#### **Research Question 2: In what proportions are journalistic genres used for the coverage of the environmental stories?**

The question is directed toward examining how the various journalistic genres were used by the selected newspapers for the reportage of environmental issues within the period under study.

Data presented in table 3 showed that the selected newspapers mostly adopted the feature story genre when reporting on environmental issues. The feature story genre recorded 357 stories, the straight news genre recorded 108 stories, editorials genre recorded 31 while opinion article recorded the least amount of stories with 24 stories. This clearly shows that the selected newspapers mostly rely on feature story genre to report on environmental issues. Thus this allows the selected newspapers enough time and space to accurately report in details the effects and consequences of the environmental issues they are reporting. Also there are no rooms for bias or injection of opinion in this genre of reporting the selected newspaper mostly used.

#### **Research Question 3: Does the coverage of environmental stories vary in extent, categories, prominence and depth of treatment?**

Placement of story is one of the methods through which the print media perform the agenda setting role, hence, the location of a story goes a long way in determining the measure of importance attached to it by the publisher and the audience as well.

In terms of placement of story, it is normally expected that majority of stories should be on the inside pages since the front and back pages provide very limited space and are only used to feature the most important and captivating news items. However, the front page, back page and editorials are quite known as prominence determinant in the placement of story.

Table 4 explains that 450 environmental stories were placed on the inside pages of the selected newspapers. 42 stories were published on the centre pages of the selected dailies. 23 stories were placed on the front pages of the newspapers while a mere 5 stories appeared on the back pages of the newspapers. This shows

that the selected newspapers actually published lots of environmental issues stories but they did not consider such stories important enough for prominent placements.

## **XII. Depth Of Stories**

This refers to the length of a news story and this was measured in paragraphs. The depth is an important attribute and confers a certain degree of importance on an issue, considering that increased length often entails more extensive or in depth treatment of an issue or event unlike obtained in short stories where space may only permit inclusion of the very necessary details with no description, explanation or interpretation. Table 5 illustrated those environmental issues stories ranging from 6-10 paragraphs were the highest recorded with 222 stories. Followed by environmental issues stories ranging from 11-15 paragraphs recording 132 stories. Stories ranging from 1-5 paragraphs recorded 99 stories while stories ranging from 16 and above recorded 16 stories.

Examining this, the selected newspapers published lots of environmental stories that are lengthy. This enables the newspaper to report lots of detailed account about the environmental issues that would aid the readers understand and comprehend the messages the newspapers intended to pass across. This also confirms that the newspaper to a certain degree sees reportage of environmental issues stories as important and relevant.

### **Research Question 4: How socially responsible was the reportage of the environmental issues stories by selected newspapers?**

Based on the study, it is suffice to say the selected newspapers were socially responsible in their reportage of environmental issues. From the hermeneutical interpretation of the contents of the newspapers, all the newspapers used mild approach in appealing to the government at all levels and the public at large to come to the aid of the victims of environmental issues.

Also it was evident the selected newspapers played their key roles, which are to Inform, educate keep surveillance. The selected newspapers reported lots of environmental issues stories and in the stories they explained and interpreted the suffering of the victims, as well as called for actions and gestures to solve identified problems

## **XIII. Summary And Conclusion**

The mass media remain the most viable forces in creating awareness, raising consciousness and improving public knowledge on broad social political and environmental issues. This study was carried out to determine the press coverage of environmental issues in Nigeria. Firstly, the selected newspapers consider the reportage of environmental issues stories critical to public information thus has paid considerable attention to the various issues under the content category. It is not surprising that erosion/flood was considered most important by the selected newspapers within the period of study as it received the highest coverage. This is particularly evident, given the amount global attention on the environmental issue of erosion/flood. The findings justifiably established that the selected newspapers did cover lots of environmental issues in their publications. It was also pointed out that erosion/flood received the highest press coverage of all the environmental issues.

Also the selected newspapers, though published lots of environmental issues stories, but did not consider such stories important enough for prominent placement in their publications. However, the selected newspapers published lots environmental issues stories that were lengthy and deep in paragraphs..More so, the selected newspapers mostly used the feature article genre to report on environmental issues. Thus this allows the selected newspapers enough time and space to accurately report extensively the effect and consequences of the environmental issue they are reporting.. Lastly it was evident that the selected newspapers were socially responsible in their reportage of environmental issues.

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