

*Original Paper*

Assessment of Level of Local Community Awareness of the  
Activities of State Institutions in Environmental Protection in  
Taraba State, Nigeria

Oruonye, E. D.<sup>1\*</sup>, Bashir Mohammed Babanyaya<sup>2</sup> & Ngamdu, M. B.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Geography, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

*Understanding local community awareness of the activities of state institutions in environmental protection is an important step for successful implementation of sustainable environmental protection policies in the state. It is against this background that this study examines local community awareness of the activities of State Institutions in environmental protection in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Primary and secondary data were used. 376 questionnaires were administered to local community members in the state. The findings of the study reveal low performance of the State institutions which was mostly in the area of distribution of alternative source of domestic energy (gas and cooking stoves), planting and distribution of tree seedlings. The study findings also reveal low involvement of the local communities especially those in the rural areas. This resulted in the low level of local community awareness of the activities of the state institutions on environmental protection in the state. Based on the findings, the study recommended adequate funding of the state institutions, involvement of local communities in the activities of state institutions and increasing research in awareness studies in the state.*

**Keywords**

*environmental protection, environmental awareness, local community, state institutions and taraba state*

**1. Introduction**

The environment is a very important life support system to humans all over the world. The environment and its associated resources provide people the necessary conditions and means of livelihood (Ichite,

2017). This makes it necessary for every responsible government to ensure that the inter-relationships between citizens and their natural environment is adequately maintained at all time. This healthy relationship will guaranty that the necessary resources from the environment are readily available in the right conditions and quantity for the continuous survival of generations of citizens as well as their development at present and in the future.

At the global level, environmental issues have become a significant threat to security at all levels. This has led to increased vulnerability to conflict due to increased resource scarcity; stress on society as a result of poverty and inequality; and an increase in the rate of humanitarian crises. At the same time, a US governmental report elevated environmental issues to the forefront of the security agenda by identifying climate change as “potentially the greatest challenge to global stability and security, and therefore to national security” (CNA Corp, 2007).

In most developed countries, this new idea of security is reflected in policy and institutional frameworks on environment. The integration of environmental security concerns in such frameworks significantly account for enhanced environmental performance according to available indices, since these were first introduced in 2002, as a method of quantifying and numerically marking the environmental performance of state policies (Ichite, 2017). Moreover, almost all of the top performing countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland among others, have achieved high level of progress and economic development unparalleled in the world as a result of well entrenched policy on environmental protection.

The basis of Finland’s effective environmental protection policies is found in wide-ranging and detailed environmental data and high levels of technological skills (Environmental Protection in Finland, ND). Overtime, Finland has been ranked among the top 10 countries according to Environmental Performance Index, a method of quantifying and numerically marking the environmental performance of a state’s policies since 2002 (Ichite, 2017).

Unfortunately, most developing countries, where over 70 per cent of the populations are dependent on environmental resources for livelihood, display very poor indices on environmental performance. Most of these poor countries lack the necessary measurements of environmental performance due to low levels of technology and indifference towards the environment. This is exacerbated by the fact that these developing countries are already saddled with heavy burdens of environmental degradation both from anthropogenic as well as natural causes. Furthermore, policies and institutions on the environment, where they exist, treat environmental challenges with daunting levity, except where such challenges have occasioned the securitization of the environmental resources, after violent conflicts must have taken place.

Nigeria, with a nominal GDP per capita of US\$2,640, faces myriads of challenges from the environment with dire implications for human security, yet policies and institutional frameworks on environment remain comatose (Ichite, 2017). Environmental degradation in different parts of the country appears to coincide with an upsurge of violent conflicts in and from those places especially

over the last two decades. Examples include the Niger Delta, North West and the Northeast regions.

In most developing countries, Nigeria and Taraba State inclusive, the livelihood of over 80 per cent of the human population are dependent on renewable natural resources, while national development depends on the exploitation of the natural resources found in the environment, especially the nonrenewable resources like petroleum according to Phil-Eze (2009).

In Nigeria, Policy and institutional framework on environmental protection may be said to have started receiving attention with the incidence of the dumping of the 3,880 tons of toxic and hazardous wastes at the port town of Koko, Delta State, South-South Nigeria, in 1988. The incident created much public awareness and encouraged the formulation of policy and establishment of relevant institutions to protect the environment. Following the Koko toxic waste incidence, the Ministry of Environment was created, with the relevant departments and agencies pulled out from other ministries, especially the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing which hitherto had catered for environmental issues (Ichite, 2017). The Local Government Councils were also integrated into the activities of the new ministry, in various capacities and at different levels. Besides the ministry, the Federal State Environmental Protection Agency (TASEPA) was created in the same year 1988, with the State Environmental Protection Agencies much later in the states in accordance with Nigeria's Federal structure. The original mandate of FEPA was the protection and development of the environment in general and environmental technology, including initiation of policy in relation to environment and technology (Ichite, 2017). Nigeria currently has ample legislation on almost all aspects of her environment, which has been documented by several authors, including Ajomo and Adewale (1994), Akande (1994), Akinjide (1997), Ikhide (2007), Okorodudu-Fubara (1998) and Atsegbua et al. (2004).

Nigeria is currently recording an increase in environmental threats to human security. These are being occasioned, not only by the scarcity and degradation of environmental resources, but also by environmental disasters, from both natural as well as anthropogenic causes. Deforestation, drought, flood, desert encroachment, desertification and other consequences of climatic changes are combining to increase environmental stress beyond the coping capacities and resilience of rural communities across Nigeria.

In the face of these environmental stressors, Nigeria has articulated policies as well as institutions, constituting a formidable framework for protecting the environment in Nigeria. A National policy on the Environment, a National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change, a National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), a Federal Ministry of Environment, a defunct Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), A Special Climate Change Unit transformed into the Department of Climate Change in a full-fledged Federal Ministry of Environment, as well as Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, a myriad of apt laws on environmental protection, both at national and state levels, among others. However, despite the existence of all these institutional frameworks, there continues to prevail, an inept response to environmental problems and lack of ingenuity in constructive resolution of conflicts whose root cause

are closely associated with environmental problems (Ichite, 2017).

The 1999 National Policy on the Environment recognized the need to enlighten various levels of society on the linkages between environment and development, in order to secure the involvement of the citizenry and assure its commitment to the principle of sustainable development. The policy equally recognized the need to enlighten various levels of society on the linkages between environment and development, in order to secure the involvement of the citizenry and assure its commitment to the principle of sustainable development. Some of the actions contained in the policy to achieve this include ensuring public input in the definition of environmental policy objectives; engaging the media; promoting environmental studies at all levels of the educational system; and supporting the role of cognate NGOs, professional associations and other civic groups.

Taraba State with internally generated revenue of less than N7b per annum faces myriads of challenges from the environment with dire implications for human security, yet policies and institutional frameworks on environmental protection have not received the required attention. The State has recently witnessed an increase in environmental threats to human security. These are being occasioned, not only by the scarcity and degradation of environmental resources, but also by environmental disasters, ranging from both natural as well as anthropogenic causes such as deforestation, dry spell, flooding and other consequences of climatic changes which are combining to increase environmental stress beyond the coping capacities and resilience of rural communities across the state. These communities are progressively being rendered vulnerable not only to environmental stressors, but also to its immediate consequences including violent conflicts over scarce resources (i.e., farmers and herders conflict), in addition to forced migration into urban areas with its attendant challenges.

In line with the above, Taraba State Ministry of Environment and its agency, Taraba State Environmental Protection Agency (TASEPA) were created and charged with the statutory responsibility for the protection of the environment in Taraba State. This includes management of wildlife, monitoring of hazardous and radioactive materials, control of illegal mining activities, establishment and maintenance of forest plantations, raising of seedlings, planting and weeding, solid minerals exploration and exploitation, management of air, water and soil quality against pollution and degradation among others. In spite of the numerous policies, institutions and legislations for protecting the environment for sustainable development in the state, recent development has shown that the state has remained poor and plagued by a plethora of environmental problems.

The major difficulties that the State and country faces are not only the lack of legal and economic framework for environmental protection, but also lack of participation among the general public in pro-environmental behaviours. Understanding local community awareness of the activities of state institutions in environmental protection is an important step for successful implementation of sustainable environmental protection policies in the state. It is against this background that this study examines local community perception of the activities of State Institutions in environmental protection in Taraba State, Nigeria.

### *1.1 Overview of the State Institutions on Environmental Protection in Taraba State*

With the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Taraba State Ministry of Environment was also established in the year 2000 with the aim of formulating and implementing government policies on environment. The Ministry had 4 departments, namely; administrative, finance and supply, planning, research and statistics (DPRS) and forestry and wildlife. The Ministry has one agency, Taraba State Environmental Protection Agency (TASEPA) under it.

The functions of the Ministry of Environment include;

- 1) Control and management of wildlife.
- 2) Environmental Protection.
- 3) Monitoring of Hazardous and Radioactive Materials in the Environment.
- 4) Control of mining its illegal activities in the State.
- 5) Establishment and maintenance of forest plantations.
- 6) Raising of seedlings, planting and weeding.
- 7) Solid minerals exploration and exploitation.
- 8) Management of air, water and soil quality against pollution and degradation.

The Taraba Environmental Protection Agency (TEPA) is an Agency under the Ministry of Environment which was established and empowered by Taraba State Edict of 1994. The Agency has the statutory responsibilities for the protection, conservation and monitoring of the state environment through environmental surveillance and regulation activities that impact negatively on the state environment in order to maintain a balance natural endowment and to achieve sustainable development of the state. In order to achieve its objectives, the agency undertakes the following activities;

- 1) Preparation of comprehensive State Environmental Action Plans (SEAPs) for the state. The action plan encapsulates all the anticipated action or activities that will be carried out over a period of time to protect the environment from pollution and degradation.
- 2) Enactment of state laws, regulations and guidelines on environment for the prevention of pollution and degradation of the environment.
- 3) Implementing National and International Environmental policies and programs, law, protocols and treaties.
- 4) Developing/improving environmental sciences and technology on environmental management, for example, the development of modern techniques and procedures for waste management (solid, liquid and gaseous).
- 5) Developing guidelines and procedures for implementing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Audit (EA).
- 6) The agency is expected to carry out environmental surveillance and regulating the activities that impact on the environment through human activities like deforestation, industrialization, waste management among others.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted survey research design. Primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data used include journals, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, proceedings from relevant seminars as well as workshops, internet resources, discourse and pronouncements by government officials of the relevant institutions on the environment, as well as associated information from local and international news bulletins. The primary data include field observation, interview schedule and use of questionnaires. Interviews was held with officials of the Taraba State Ministry of Environment and its agency, Taraba State Environmental Protection Agency (TASEPA). Questionnaires were administered to local community members in the sampled wards and LGAs.

For convenience, the study adopted the state delimitation of 3 senatorial districts. The population of this study includes 10,497 local community members aged 35 and above drawn from two LGAs each from Northern, Central and Southern Senatorial districts of the state. The reason for settling for population of people of 35 years and above is to ensure the quality and integrity of the information collected. These LGAs are Ardokola, Zing (Taraba North), Bali, Gassol (Taraba Central), Wukari, Ibi (Taraba South) Senatorial districts respectively.

In each selected LGA, 3 political wards were purposively selected based on security convenience. In each political ward, 21 questionnaires were administered to randomly selected respondents who are adult members of the community. In total, 63 questionnaires were administered in each LGA, 126 questionnaires in each senatorial district and 378 questionnaires were administered in the study area. However, 2 questionnaires were not completely filled, so only 376 complete questionnaires were used in the final analysis of the study. The data generated from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while content analysis was used to analyze information generated from the interviews. The result of the findings of the study were presented using tables, frequencies and percentages.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The result of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study area is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

|   | Demographic Characteristics | Respondent | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | Age                         |            |                |
|   | 35 – 40                     | 205        | 54.5           |
|   | 41 – 45                     | 116        | 30.9           |
|   | 46 – 50                     | 51         | 13.6           |

|                             |            |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| 50 +                        | 4          | 1.1        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>376</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>2 Sex</b>                |            |            |
| Male                        | 279        | 74.2       |
| Female                      | 97         | 25.8       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>376</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>3 Qualifications</b>     |            |            |
| SSCE/WASSCE                 | 128        | 34.0       |
| Diploma/NCE                 | 138        | 36.7       |
| Degree / HND                | 100        | 26.6       |
| Masters Degree / PGD        | 10         | 2.7        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>376</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>4 Working Experience</b> |            |            |
| 0 – 10 years                | 113        | 30.1       |
| 11 – 20 years               | 106        | 28.2       |
| 21 – 30 years               | 101        | 26.9       |
| 31 years and above          | 56         | 14.8       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>376</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

The findings of the study in Table 1 shows that 34.0% of the respondents have secondary school certificate qualification (SSCE/WASSCE), 36.7% have Diploma/NCE, 26.6% Degree/HND and 2.7% are Master degree/PGD holders. In terms of gender, the results in Table 1 shows that 74.2% of the respondents are male and 25.8% are female. Table 1 also reveals that 54.5% of the respondents are within the ages of 35-40 years, 30.9% are between 41 -45 years, 13.6% between 46 -50 years, and 1.1% are above 51 years respectively. The findings of the study in Table 1 also revealed that 30.1% have 0-10years working experience, 28.2% have 11-20 years, 26.9% have 21-30 years and 14.8% have above 31 years working experience.

### *3.2 Local Community Perception of the Activities of State Institutions on Environmental Protection*

The finding of the study on project intervention by state institutions on environmental protection as observed by only members of the community outside the staff of state institutions is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Local Community Perception of the activities of State Institutions**

| <b>Perception of the activities of State Institutions by Respondents</b> |  |                  |                       |
|--|--|------------------|-----------------------|
|  |  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
| <b>1</b>   | <b>Are you aware of any project intervention by State Institution in your community?</b>   |                  |                       |
|  | Yes  | 220              | 58.5                  |
|  | No   | 156              | 41.5                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>376</b>       | <b>100</b>            |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>Are there means of regular information dissemination on environmental protection?</b>   |                  |                       |
|  | Yes  | 97               | 25.8                  |
|  | No   | 279              | 74.2                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>376</b>       | <b>100</b>            |
| <b>3.</b>  | <b>Are you aware of any prosecution made by state institution on environmental protection?</b>   |                  |                       |
|  | Yes  | 53               | 14.1                  |
|  | No   | 323              | 85.9                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>376</b>       | <b>100</b>            |
| <b>4.</b>  | <b>Are there provision of waste bins made available for waste disposal in your community?</b>  |                  |                       |
|  | Yes  | 98               | 26.1                  |
|  | No   | 278              | 73.9                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>376</b>       | <b>100</b>            |
| <b>5.</b>  | <b>Was there effort made by community members to draw attention of state institutions on environmental problems in your community?</b> |                  |                       |
|  | Yes  | 154              | 41.0                  |
|  | No   | 222              | 59.0                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>376</b>       | <b>100</b>            |

Source: Fieldwork 2022.

The result of the findings of the study in Table 2 reveals that 58.5% of the respondents claimed to be aware of the existence of some environmental protection project interventions by the state institutions of environmental protection in their various communities while 41.5% claimed that they are not aware of any project intervention by the state institutions in their respective communities.

The finding of the study on means of regular information by state institutions on environmental protection to the community members in Table 2 reveals that 74.2% of the respondents are not aware of



the existence of any means of regular information on environmental protection from the state institutions, while 25.8% of the respondents claimed to be aware of the existence of such means of regular information on environmental protection in their communities.

With regards to prosecution of offenders or violators of environmental laws and regulation by state institutions, the findings of the study in Table 2 revealed that 85.9% of the respondents claimed that they are not aware of any prosecution of violators by the state institutions on environmental protection in their communities, while 14.1% of the respondents claimed to be aware of some prosecutions made by the state institutions on environmental violations.

In terms of provision of facilities for effective sanitation and disposal of waste, the finding of the study in Table 2 also reveal that 73.9% of the respondents claimed that they do not have any provision for waste collection and disposal in their communities, while 26.1% claimed to have waste collection and disposal containers provided for them in their communities by the state institutions on environmental protection.

The finding of the study on effort made by the communities' members in drawing the attention of state institutions on environmental protection in Table 2 revealed that 59.0% of the respondents claimed that they have not drawn the attention of the state institutions on the environmental challenges faced by their respective communities, while 41.0% of the respondents claimed to have made some efforts in drawing the attention of the state institutions on the environmental challenges being faced in their respective communities.

#### **4. Discussion of Results**

The officials of the state institution on environmental protection claimed that project intervention has to do with different activities been carried out by the state government through its institutions in order to protect and promote the wellbeing of the environment. These activities include the distribution of alternative sources of domestic energy sources to reduce pressure on fuel wood and tree planting among others. In an interview, the state institution officials claimed that they have distributed 10,025 cooking gas as part of their efforts to curtail excessive deforestation in the state. In an effort to minimize the level of over reliance on fuel wood, the Taraba State Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the National Park Service also distributed about 850 portable gas cylinders\burners, 90 improved firewood stoves and 75 charcoal stoves all in April, 2021 to less privileged households across the state (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Cooking Gas Cylinder Distributed to Local Communities**

Another important project intervention is the tree planting and distribution of tree seedlings in collaboration with some non-governmental organizations and institutions in the state. Between the years 2020 and 2021, the state ministry of environment in collaboration with OXFAM planted 100,000 seedlings of palm oil, mango, orange, moringa and eucalyptus among other species in six selected LGAs in the state (Takum, Wukari, Kurmi, Donga, Ardo Kola and Zing LGAs) (Figure 2).





**Figure 2. Tree Seedlings that Were Distributed to 6 LGAs in Taraba State**

Although there is no sustained program with regards to the tree planting exercise due to lack of funding from government, the state ministry of environment directed all its divisional forestry officers across the state to raise seedlings for onward planting in the forest reserves and plantations within the state.

Although the result of the findings revealed that 74% of the respondents claimed that they are not aware of the existence of means of information in their communities, it has been observed that the provision of information to local communities may form an important part of environmental management because it induces participation of people and through this involvement of people can ensure policy continuity and make implementation possible at the most cost-effective manner. Thus, local communities awareness of the activities of government and its institutions can play crucial role in making environmental policy more successful.

This information would aid in the development of awareness of needs, responsibility, trust, and collective action among individual local community members, as well as the formulation of trust in government and acceptance of policy initiatives (Michiko, 2000). The provision of accurate environmental information enables citizens to make informed consumption decisions and to penalize those who violate environmental laws and regulations. According to Michiko (2000), public awareness

was never considered as a tool for promoting environmental policy until recently. However, this tool is crucial and has the potential to be a powerful tool in the field of environmental protection. Nonetheless, there are few studies on environmental awareness in developing countries, and those that do exist lack a policy-oriented perspective. As a result, it is critical that empirical research on environmental awareness be conducted in developing countries in order to: first, collect basic data, second, justify the method's validity, and third, integrate the findings into the environmental policy-making process (Michiko, 2000).

Findings of the study reveals that available records from the state judiciary shows that from the time of the state creation to date (2021), the state institutions have only been able to make about 287 prosecutions of forestry related offences. So many seizures of timber sawing machines were made but statistics of the number of such seizures are not available. According to the State Director of Forestry, virtually all the forest reserves in the state have been encroached upon through settlement occupation, grazing and farming activities. This clearly demonstrated the poor capacity of the state institutions to effectively enforce environmental protection regulations in the state. However, between 2017 to 2018, 14 companies were arrested, prosecuted and one convicted for environmentally related offences as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Enforcement of Environmental Regulations in the State**

| S/N | Date       | Number of arrests | Number of prosecutions | Number of conviction | Number of Number that pays fine |
|-----|------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1   | 12-07-2017 | 8                 | 8                      | Nil                  | Nil                             |
| 2   | 19-11-2017 | 4                 | 4                      | Nil                  | Nil                             |
| 3   | 11-12-2018 | 14                | 14                     | 1                    | 1                               |

*Source:* Mobile Environmental Court (Upper area Court) Jalingo 2021.

The study findings also reveal that some of the fines and penalties of environmental regulation offences are already obsolete and overtaking by the inflationary trends in the country. There is need to review the existing laws and regulations and enact new ones to meet up with increasing environmental challenges in the state and economic reality of the day.

The funding of the activities of an organization or agency is a clear demonstration of political will towards a course of action. The budgetary allocation of the state to the Ministry of environment and its institution, TASEPA as well as the recurrent and capital expenditure between 2000 to 2021 are presented in Table 4. The Table reveals that despite the revenue generation of the state institutions on environmental protection, not much has been invested in the sector.

**Table 4. Taraba State Budget Allocation to Ministry of Environment From 2000-2021**

| Year | Taraba state budget allocation | Budget allocation to Ministry of Environment | Percentage of budget (%) | Approved Recurrent Expenditure | Approved Capital Expenditure for Envir. Protectn |
|------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 2000 | 1,349,984,295                  | No Allocation                                | -                        | NA                             | NA   |
| 2001 | 2,423,289,128                  | 115,885,015                                  | 4.78                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2002 | 6,228,281,297                  | 79,023,860                                   | 0.13                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2003 | 12,129,963,189                 | 111,600,000                                  | 0.92                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2004 | 21,593,421,875                 | 601,600,000                                  | 2.78                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2005 | 24,129,234,120                 | 603,600,000                                  | 0.24                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2006 | 24,231,108,740                 | 86,354,660                                   | 0.35                     | ₦6,000,000.00                  | NA   |
| 2007 | 31,934,660,280                 | 59,702,140                                   | 0.18                     | ₦6,000,000.00                  | NA   |
| 2008 | 37,560,261,475                 | 569,951,605                                  | 1.51                     | ₦10,000,000.00                 | NA   |
| 2009 | ₦48,968,486,645.00             | 282,935,345                                  | 0.62                     | NA                             | ₦50,000,000.00                                   |
| 2010 | ₦64,144,351,808.00             | ₦1,204,057,530.00                            | 1.88                     | ₦205,057,530.00                | ₦999,000,000.00                                  |
| 2011 | 70,298,282,182.00              | 298,709,585                                  | 0.42                     | NA                             | NA   |
| 2012 | ₦73,852,442,531.00             | NA   | NA                       | ₦15,000,000.00                 | ₦115,000,000.00                                  |
| 2013 | ₦73,415,972,736.00             | ₦60,000,000.00                               | 0.08                     | ₦15,000,000.00                 | ₦124,500,000.00                                  |
| 2014 | ₦83,355,337,529.00             | ₦1,005,113,859.00                            | 1.21                     | NA                             | ₦277,166,330.00                                  |
| 2015 | ₦97,319,103,027.00             | ₦950,113,859.00                              | 0.98                     | NA                             | ₦870,124,699.00                                  |
| 2016 | ₦100,785,000,000.00            | ₦1,111,083,394.00                            | 1.10                     | ₦1,890,587,100.00              | ₦948,435,921.00                                  |
| 2017 | ₦110,168,983,942.00            | NA   | NA                       | ₦1,325,421,422.00              | ₦1,033,795,154.88                                |
| 2018 | 146,073,726,882.10             | 34,352,440                                   | 1.32                     | ₦411,709,349.98                | ₦289,500,000.00                                  |
| 2019 | 146,073,726,882.10             | 1,780,735,468                                | 1.2                      | ₦312,013,191.48                | ₦315,555,000.00                                  |
| 2020 | 176,616,318,475.00             | 654,500,000.00                               | 0.52                     | NA                             | ₦949,009,950.00                                  |
| 2021 | 139,460,435,961.80             | 2,119,9240,071                               | 1.52                     | NA                             | NA   |

*Source:* Compiled from Taraba State Planning Commission Jalingo.

NA: Not Available

There is a huge gap between the budgetary allocation and the actual amount released or expended in the sector. For example, in 2016, ₦1,890,587,100.00 was actually approved for recurrent expenditure for the Ministry of Environment, but the actual expenditure was ₦183,770,015.00. In 2016 also, ₦27,428,140.00 was actually approved for recurrent expenditure for the Taraba State Environmental Protection Agency, but the actual expenditure was ₦13,734,265.00. The information in Table 4 revealed that it was only in the years 2001, 2013, and 2014 that the Ministry received up to 4% of the state budgetary allocation. The lowest allocation was in 2002 (0.13%), 2016 (0.10%) and 2007 (0.18%).

The picture above is not far from what is obtainable at the Federal level. This goes to show the low level of attention paid to environmental issues over the years.

According to Ichite (2017), the 1999 National Policy on the Environment recognized the fact that environmental protection and natural resource conservation require huge financial investments. It also noted that the costs of in-action will rise exponentially with increasing pressure on the environment and natural resources. Strategies outlined in the policy for achieving environmental financing include ensuring adequate annual budgetary provision for implementation of the National Policy on Environment, particularly, the amelioration of major environmental problems; accessing the 2 per cent ecological fund; establishing a fund to be financed by at least 3 per cent of the federation account, for the restoration, rehabilitation and development of the degraded mine lands in all solid minerals producing areas; take full advantage of bilateral and multilateral technical and financial assistance in environmental protection and ensure maximum benefits from the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the conventions and protocols ratified by Nigeria; and mobilizing additional finance through the imposition of taxes, fines and charges, where appropriate, on activities that deplete natural resources or degrade the environment (Ichite, 2017). Taraba state government must follow suit.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study has examined the level of local community awareness of the activities of state institutions in environmental protection in Taraba State, Nigeria. Findings of the study reveals that there is a general low public environmental awareness of the existence of most environmental laws, standards and regulations especially on forest reserves, grazing reserves, game reserves, and related legislation in the state as a result of poor enlightenment campaign and non-involvement of local communities in the activities of the state institutions on environmental protection. The poor funding of the state institutions activities resulted in the low performance of the institutions which culminated into the low level of local community awareness of the state institutions.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations;

- 1) Adequate funding of the sector because environmental protection and natural resource conservation require huge financial investments in order to achieve meaningful result.
- 2) There is need for the state institutions to increase the public awareness of their activities and enlighten local communities on environmental rules and regulations in the state and their communities, the responsibility, trust, and collective action required of individual local community members and penalties for violation of environmental laws and regulations.
- 3) There is need to increase empirical research on environmental awareness in the state. This will help to collect basic data, justify the method's validity, and integrate the findings into the environmental policy-making process of the state.



4) There is need review some of the environmental protection laws in the state that are obsolete, especially the fines and penalties of environmental law violation to represent the present economic reality.

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