

Eco-Poetry as A Valuable Tool for Tackling Soot Pollution in Nigeria

Okon E Okon¹, Evelyn I Orji², Aganyi A Ojong³, Beatrice O Ewa⁴ and Benjamin Anabaraonye^{5*}

¹Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Institute of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

³Department of Environmental Education, Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

⁴Nnamdi Azikiwe University Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

⁵Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: Benjamin Anabaraonye, Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts, Nigeria.

Received: February 27, 2025; Accepted: March 05, 2025; Published: March 13, 2025

Citation: Okon E Okon, Evelyn I Orji, Aganyi A Ojong, Beatrice O Ewa, Benjamin Anabaraonye (2025) Eco-Poetry as a valuable tool for tackling soot pollution in Nigeria. *J Eped Comed*, 11(1): 1-4.

Abstract

Poetry has always been associated with intensity of emotions expressed in literary form with a sense of rhythm and beauty. The role of poetry in climate change education thereby enhancing climate resilience in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Through our literature review and participant observation, This study identifies soot pollution as an environmental menace which negatively affects climate change, public health and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. It further identifies eco-poetry as a valuable tool for tackling soot pollution in Nigeria. This study also highlights the psychological benefits of poetry on individuals, communities and institutions in Nigeria. It further explores how poetry is being used innovatively in climate change education in Nigeria to achieve the sustainable development goals. This paper is therefore very significant as it explores new opportunities, practices and benefits in the innovative use of eco-poetry for climate change education and enhancing environmental health through tackling soot pollution in Nigeria.

Keywords: Awareness Creation, Climate Change, Eco-poetry, Education, Soot Pollution, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Soot pollution is one of those environmental menace in Nigeria which exerts negative impacts on the environment. Soot pollution is one of the most complex environmental problems in Rivers State, Nigeria [1]. The enormous amount of soot in Rivers State, Nigeria, has turned into an issue of urgent concern for both the economy and public health. To put it simply, soot is a by-product of burning fossil fuels, including smoke from cars and oil refineries [1]. Soot is substance formed by combustion, or separated from fuel during combustion, rising in fine particles, and adhering to sides of the chimney or pipe conveying smoke especially the fine powder consisting chiefly of carbon [2]. Soot pollution introduces large quantities of particulate or gaseous contaminants into the atmosphere to induce unfavorable environmental impacts [3]. Soot pollution is characterized by an increase in the oxidizing capacity of the atmosphere, decreased atmospheric visibility, and deterioration of air quality in a given region [2,3]. In addition, it significantly impacts the climate, living environment, and human health. Air pollution occurs when harmful substances other than their natural constituents are present in the air, these substances can take the form of gases, particulate matter (PM), or even energy,

such as heat and are detrimental to human health and the ecosystem [4]. Nigeria is battling with rising air pollution concerns. The vast oil exploration and production activities and high population growth rate are major contributors to this problem [5,6]. Nigeria is a country endowed with natural resources and mineral resources with the capacity to make her one of the wealthiest countries in Africa [7,8]. However, poor management of these resources has retarded the economic growth of Nigeria making her to be numbered among countries still ravaged by poverty in Africa. The siege of soot pollution in Rivers State, Nigeria is a testament to the lack of proper management of valuable natural and mineral resources in the region. Hence, Rivers state among others in the Niger Delta region constitute the centre for illegal bunkering and artisanal refinery in the country. Soot pollution has contributed significantly to the unavailability of safe drinking water—76–80 percent in rural areas and 50–55 percent in urban areas lack access to safe drinking water [7]. Rivers State is in the Niger Delta which sustains Africa's largest, and the World's third mangrove forest, full of petroleum resources and diversified ecosystems, with numerous aquatic and terrestrial organisms [9]. Environmental education will therefore play a great role in awareness creation and sensitization towards tackling the challenge of soot pollution across communities, cities, campuses and companies in Nigeria [10]. Poetry is identified as a valuable tool for climate change

education for sustainable development in Nigeria. This study identifies eco-poetry as a valuable tool for tackling soot pollution thereby enhancing climate resilience and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Methodology

Data used for this study is derived from published works including academic journal articles, conference papers, textbooks and internet materials. The researchers gathered a lot of materials for the research but summarized the characteristics of the papers that focused more on “ECO-POETRY AS A VALUABLE TOOL FOR TACKLING SOOT POLLUTION IN NIGERIA”. This enabled the researchers to generate the synthesis of various researchers’ views on the subject matter. .

Understanding Eco-Poetry

Poetry with its psychological benefits has been discovered as a valuable tool which can be used to help students and teachers in the various Universities in Nigeria and in Africa to understand the impacts of climate change and to learn the adaptation and mitigation strategies for sustainability [8]. A poem is a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their beauty and sound and are carefully arranged, often in short lines which rhyme [8]. There is no doubt, therefore, that poetry can be used as a valuable tool to convey the message of climate change in schools, universities and institutions around the world in a very profound way. Poetry is beauty and beauty attract [11]. Poetry has a unique way of communicating to the listeners and readers the message of hope, beauty and love that enables them to seek creatively ways to preserve our planet from global warming [11]. Researchers have identified poetry as a valuable tool for awareness creation on plastic waste management and plastic pollution mitigation in Nigeria [12]. Researchers have also identified poetry as an innovative tool which can be used in tree planting education for environmental sustainability in Nigeria [13]. Eco-poetry is poetry with a strong ecological emphasis or message. Many poets, poems and books of poems have expressed ecological concerns; but only recently has the term eco-poetry gained use (Wikipedia, 2024). “One of the chief characteristics of eco-poetry, as defined by James Engelhardt, is that it is connected to the world in a way that implies responsibility. As with other models that explore and assume engagement (Marxism, feminism, etc.), Eco-poetry is “surrounded by questions of ethics”(Wikipedia, 2024). Eco-poetry generally refers to poetry about ecology, ecosystems, environmental injustice, animals, agriculture, climate change, water, and even food [14]. Green Creativity which needs to be promoted all across Africa will go a long way in enhancing eco-poetry in Nigeria and beyond [15]. Poetry has a unique way of expressing emotions, ideas and experiences which is so appealing and attractive to the human mind. It turns out that there are some important psychological, therapeutic and developmental benefits of poetry. Poetry helps in language development, creative language skills, writing skills, self-expression, and in the development of natural rhythms [11]. Poetry is important for children, and poetry is good for adults as well. Through poetry, we can express the beauty and wonders of nature, and the need to preserve our globe from environmental pollution and global warming. There is so much to be done both locally and globally to ensure that our generation and future generations can benefit from the climate change education, mitigation and adaptation using the tool of poetry [11]. Eco-poetry also entails the use of poems in conveying the message of climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development locally, nationally and globally. Through eco-poetry we can express the beauty and wonders of nature in a pleasant manner thereby helping to achieve environmental sustainability

[14]. Eco-poetry uses language to deepen a sense of nature’s presence in our lives; and these invocations of nature’s presence—celebratory of the biological fact that we are nature— suggest an ecological understanding of nature and its processes. Eco-poetry uses comparable metaphors for describing the relationship between poetic making and ecology [14]. Youth engagement in eco-poetry will enhance climate resilience and also help to tackle the menace of soot pollution in Nigeria [16].

Case Study: Poem “Healthy Air, Healthy Planet”

The poem “Healthy Air, Healthy Planet” advanced by the Benji Poetry And Music Global Concepts highlights the need to make the world a better place by mitigating soot pollution which is one of the major causes of unhealthy air in Rivers State, Nigeria. The poem further proves that poetry can be used innovatively to educate communities, cities, campuses and companies in Nigeria on the why, how and which tools to use in mitigating soot solution which is also a form of air pollution thereby enhancing climate resilience. You can read the poem below:

Healthy Air, Healthy Planet

Healthy air breeds healthy planet
Healthy planet breeds healthy people
Our goal is to safeguard the planet
From the hustles and bustles and rumbles.

Air pollution is so real
Breeding many a devastation
Its impacts can be greatly felt
Bringing economic losses to nations.

Healthy air beams with elegance
Blooming our meadows and bowers
Blooming with sweet smelling fragrance
Of fresh fruits, leaves and flowers.

Healthy air breeds healthy planet
The healthy planet we truly desire
Let us stop the devastating effects
Of indiscriminate dumping of wastes here and there.

Indiscriminate waste is detriment to health
Inflicting diseases and conflicts
Yet waste can be turned into wealth
Waste recycling is a venture of profits.

Waste recycling tackles air pollution
Bringing a breath of fresh air to communities
Save the planet from environmental degradation
For the hope of a brighter future we see.

Accentuate our nation’s sustainable development
Air pollution we must refuse
Let us ensure our planet’s betterment
Reduce waste, recycle and reuse.

Healthy air breeds healthy planet
Healthy planet breeds healthy people
Our goal is to deal with adverse climate effects
Keep the sky blue and let the earth bubble [17].

Innovative use of Eco-Poetry in Tackling Soot Pollution in Nigeria

Eco-Poetry can be a valuable tool to tackle soot pollution in Nigeria by:

1. **Raising Awareness:** Eco-Poets can write about the effects of soot pollution, raising public awareness and inspiring action. The negative effects of soot pollution in Nigeria are profound which includes air-borne diseases, economic losses, land degradation, etc. Soot pollution affects the health and well-being of citizens with the risks of terminal diseases such as cancer, bronchitis, asthma and several respiratory diseases. Eco-Poetry can bring people together, fostering community engagement and collaboration to address soot pollution. Poetry can facilitate conversations across campuses, communities and cities in Nigeria about the importance of environmental stewardship towards tackling soot pollution in Nigeria.
2. **Emotional Connection:** Eco-Poetry can create an emotional connection to the issues of soot pollution in Nigeria thereby making people (especially the youths) more interested and passionate about finding solutions to the menace of soot pollution in Nigeria. Eco-Poets can use metaphors and imagery to explain complex environmental issues in a comprehensible manner that connects and resonates with their emotions.
3. **Inspiring Change:** Eco-Poets can inspire change by highlighting the impact of individuals and collective actions by campuses, communities and cities in Nigeria on tackling the issues of soot pollution for environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Furthermore, Eco-Poetry can inspire policymakers to take action against soot pollution.
4. **Providing a Platform:** Eco-Poetry can provide a platform for marginalized communities to express their experiences and concerns about soot pollution. This will enable their voices to be heard easily by the international community and other multilateral organizations such as the World Bank Group (WBG) which will prompt them to come to their aid. Eco-Poetry can support advocacy efforts, amplifying the voices of those affected by soot pollution.
5. **Encouraging Sustainability:** Eco-Poets can promote sustainable practices and lifestyles that reduce soot pollution. Such sustainable practices include strategic tree planting activities, use of hand sanitizers and face masks when necessary, renewable energy use in communities, etc. By leveraging the power of poetry, Nigerians can come together to tackle soot pollution and create a cleaner, healthier environment.

Recommendations

Following the findings from this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

- i. The Nigerian government, industry players and all other stakeholders should as a matter of urgency focus on supporting quality research towards tackling soot pollution which includes the innovative use of eco-poetry.
- ii. There is need for enactment of policies in Nigeria towards reduction of soot pollution from industry plants, gas flaring, artisanal refineries, domestic burning of fuel woods and commercial burning of motor tires to permissible levels as defined by national and international standards.
- iii. The need for the government and civil society organizations to urgently create awareness for the citizenry energy on collective preventive measures and health tips on the soot pollution in the country is paramount.
- iv. Poetry and other forms of art can be used innovatively as educational tools for awareness creation and advocacy campaigns towards mitigating the negative effects of soot pollution in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Soot pollution is one of those climate disasters resulting in poverty, diseases, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss in

Nigeria. In response to these challenges, several stakeholders are working together strategically to enhance climate change education and climate resilience from the grassroots to the transcontinental level. It is very important to let all stakeholders know that a healthy air breeds a healthy climate and a healthy planet. Eco-poetry is a valuable tool in tackling the environmental menace of soot pollution in Nigeria and beyond.

References

1. Odirichukwu JC (2023) Soot Pollution and its Effects in the Economic Growth of Rivers State, Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental Geotechnical and Water Resources* 1.
2. Wang Y, Yao L, Wang L, Liu Z, Ji D, et al. (2014) Mechanism for the formation of the January 2013 heavy haze pollution episode over central and eastern China. *Sci China* 57: 14-25.
3. Ewubare DB, Agbugba IK, Kpeden C (2021) Awareness and Impact of Black Soot on Selected Food Vendors in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. *IIARD International Journal of Economics and Business Management* 3.
4. Whyte M, Tamuno-Wari N, Kabari S (2020) Residents' perception of the effects of soot pollution in Rivers State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Environmental Science & Technology* 14: 422-443.
5. Olowoporoku AO, Longhurst JWS, Barnes JH (2012) Framing air pollution as a major health risk in Lagos, Nigeria. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment* 157: 479-488.
6. Yakubu OH (2017) Particle (soot) pollution in Port-Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria—double air pollution burden? Understanding and tackling potential environmental public health impacts. *Environments* 5: 2.
7. Ebiri NO (2015) Assessment of Particulate Matter Concentration among Land Use Types in Oyigbo and Environs in Rivers State Nigeria. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology* 7: 252-261.
8. Anabaraonye B, Ewa BO, Hope J (2021) The psychological benefits of poetry and its innovative use in green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Entrepreneurship (CJoE)* 5.
9. Chidumeje NP, Okonkwo LK, Subhashni T (2015) The Niger Delta wetland ecosystem: What threatens it and why should we protect it?. *African Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* 9: 451-463.
10. Onnoghen UN, Ojong AA, Omang TN, Obibessong V, Asor LJ (2020) Environmental Education: A Potent Tool for the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (Good Health and Wellbeing, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy and Sustainable Cities and Communities) in South-South Nigeria. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 17: 1198-1210.
11. Anabaraonye B, Nji AI, Hope J (2018) Poetry as a valuable tool for climate change education for global sustainability. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research* 9: 81-85.
12. Okon EO, Orji EI, Ojong AA, Anabaraonye B (2023) Poetry as a valuable tool for awareness creation on plastic waste management in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research* 5: 23-27.
13. Okon EO, Okolo NV, Dibia SIC, Anabaraonye B (2022) The innovative use of poetry in tree planting education for sustainable environment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Civil Engineering and Technology* 3: 13-16.
14. Perez CS (2020) Teaching Eco-poetry in a time of climate change. <https://thegeorgiareview.com/posts/teaching-ecopoetry-in-a-time-of-climate-change/>.

-
15. Okon EO, Odoh CC, Olisah NC, Ewa BO, Anabaraonye B (2025) The Role of Green Creativity in Enhancing Eco-Poetry for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Global Warming and Climate Change* 1: 1-5.
 16. Onnoghen UN, Olisah NC, Ewa BO, Nwobu EA, Anabaraonye B (2024) Youth Engagement in Eco-Poetry for Enhancing Climate Change Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Current Trends in Agriculture, Environment and Sustainability* 5: 1-5.
 17. Anabaraonye B (2021) Healthy Air, Healthy Planet. <https://projectgreeninitiative.wordpress.com/2021/09/08/healthy-air-healthy-planet/>.

Copyright: ©2025 Benjamin Anabaraonye, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.