

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Limestone quarrying is a major economic activity in many developing countries including Nigeria. Nigeria is endowed with abundant mineral resources of international value, including gold, marble, gypsum, gemstones, iron ore, natural gas, topaz, coal, clay, lead, tar sand, construction stone and construction sand. While the exploitation of natural resources has traditionally been seen as a vital part of economic growth, it is now well recognized that concern for environmental and socio-economic consequences must be included as a key component of development activities. In many developing nations like Nigeria, quarrying is an important contributor to the national economy. However, the negative environmental impacts of quarrying are increasingly being recognized as critical (Bridge, 2004). In response, many companies, especially international ones, are embracing Corporate Social Responsibility as a fundamental component of resource extraction operations, including quarrying (Garriga and Mele, 2004). The quarrying sector may strengthen the economy at the national scale; it may also present an entirely new set of problems at the scale of the local community. Exercising social responsibility in small, remote centers, however, often means that international and transnational corporations must interact with rural or indigenous people who have strong emotional and historical links to the land (Garvin et al., 2009).

These socio-economic impacts are synonymous with adverse and benefits. It could include pressure on local housing, market and increase in community conflict and crime. The creation of supporting social infrastructure including schools, hospitals and so on may transform a previously remote area and investment in transport facilities may improve accessibility to other centers of economic activities, further enhancing its prospect for development. Indeed, governments frequently regard quarrying projects as an opportunity to 'open-up' peripheral regions. Impacts do not fall evenly on affected parties and areas. Although a particular project may be assessed as bringing a general benefit. Some groups and / or geographical areas may be receiving most of any adverse effects, the main benefits going to others elsewhere. There is also a distinction between actual and perceived impacts. Subjective perceptions of impacts may significantly influence the responses and decisions of people towards a proposed development. Modern quarrying methods are highly capital

intensive by comparison with those prevailing in the 19th century. This limits not only the number, but also the type of job opportunities. Locally-recruited labour often lacks the skills required to operate complex machinery and management usually remains in the hands of imported expatriate personnel. This in turn creates an enclave mentality in which quarrying communities remain isolated from the wider society of the country. Many of the biggest disappointments have resulted from the failure of mineral processing and related downstream manufacturing to develop at or near the site of extraction. It is these activities which create the largest number of jobs and frequently the greatest profit. They are therefore, highly desirable from a policy perspective. It is not only governments in developing countries which have been frustrated by the minimal extent of downstream processing; state authorities within developed economies have had similar experiences. The contribution on people and culture/heritage within close proximity to the quarrying operation (host communities) by the industry should create an environment that will accept and encourage development (McDivitt and Jeffery, 1992).

Investigations carried out by Humann (2004) revealed the Luka community (South Africa) representatives staunchly opposed the proposed Impala open cast mine on the grounds that the community has not benefited from the company's historical activities in the area and has not been adequately compensated for negative impacts caused by the company activities in the area. The research also revealed that the company efforts to communicate directly with community representatives in the local government ward committee, including constructing a small office building to facilitate community meetings and interaction with the company yielded little or no result due to tribal faction not until the company realizes that, given the new, increasing motives for community engagement, supporting legitimate representation structures in the community.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Limestone quarrying activities can lead to health effects ranging from respiratory problems to mental disorders. Studies in Tanzania revealed that symptoms of heavy metal poisoning such as sensory disturbance, tremor, gingivitis, metallic taste, neurasthenia and night blindness are common (Harada et al., 1999). In the last five years, studies on environmental impact of limestone quarrying and processing in Sagamu (Sagamu – Ogun State, Nigeria) have revealed a declining kola nut output from the plantations within a few kilometres radius of the cement factory (Adekoya, 2003; Aigbedion, 2005). Exploitation and processing of minerals in a particular area creates cultural

impacts, which involves the changes to norms, values and beliefs of individuals that guide and rationalize the cognition of themselves and their society (Burdge and Vanclay, 1996).

1.3 Significance of the study

The aim of this project is to determine the environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in Ini Local Government Area of Akwalbom state, interpret findings, analyze implications, and convey high level results and implications to national decision-makers for sustainable and better environment of all limestone deposit areas in Nigeria.

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study was undertaken majorly to examine the environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit areas.

Specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To ascertain whether there is a significant environmental impact of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit areas.
- ii. To know whether the environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit area is accessible.

1.5 Research questions

In the course of the study, the researcher seeks to provide suitable answers to the problem following the questions below:

1. Is there a significant environmental impact of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit areas?
2. Can the environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit area be accessed?

1.6 Research hypotheses

Ho: Limestone quarrying has no significant environmental impact on limestone deposit areas.

Hi: Limestone quarrying has significant environmental impact on limestone deposit areas.

Ho: The environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit area is inaccessible.

Hi: The environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in limestone deposit area is accessible.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study was carried out to investigate the environmental impact assessment of limestone

quarrying in Ini Local Government Area. The study is limited to Ini Local Government Area in Akwalbom State. This is because of the representative nature of all limestone deposit areas in Nigeria, proximity to the researcher, time and financial constraints.

1.8 Scope of the study

This research work is on the environmental impact assessment of limestone quarrying in Ini Local Government Area with particular emphasis on how it impacts on quality standards of the soil and water in Ini Local Government Area of Akwalbom State.

1.9 Definition of terms

Limestone: This is a hard sedimentary rock, composed mainly of calcium carbonate or dolomite, used as building material and in the making of cement.

Limestone Quarry: This is a place where large blocks of naturally occurring sedimentary calcite or aragonite rock are cut from the earth, mainly for use in construction.

Limestone Deposit Area: This is an area where limestone is found.

Environmental Impact Assessment: This is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF LIMESTONE QUARRYING IN LIMESTONE DEPOSIT AREAS

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