

NAME: OSADEBE ANTOINETTE ADAOBI

MATRIC NO: 19/MHS01/360

COURSE: GST 122

The Environmental Impact of Recycling.

An environment is the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operate. It is the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. Dividing environments, we can mention three kinds of environment; Natural, Industrial and Social environment. Natural environment includes water, light, land, air, and all other organism that live in nature. Industrial environment includes cities, villages, and all other human synthesis. Social environment includes authorities, universities, school, companies, and other establishments along with their output legal and their communication ways.

Environmental health is the branch of public health concerned with all aspects of natural and built environment affecting human health. The World health organization(WHO) defines environmental health as “All the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related behavior.” Environmental health consists of preventing, or controlling diseases, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment. The Healthy people 2020 Environmental health objectives focus on six themes, each of which highlights an element of environmental health. That is; outdoor air quality, surface and ground water quality, toxic substance and hazardous waste, homes and communities, infrastructure and surveillance, and global environmental health. Creating healthy environments can be complex and relies on continuing research to better understand the effects of exposure to environmental hazards on people’s health.

Maintaining a healthy environment is central to increasing the quality of life. Globally, 23% of all deaths and 26% of deaths among children under age 5 are due to preventable environmental factors. Environmental factors are

diverse and far reaching. They include; exposure to hazardous substances in air, water, soil and food, Natural and technological disasters, climate change, occupational hazards and the built environment. Poor environmental has its greatest impact on people whose health status is already at risk. Therefore, environmental health must address societal and environmental factors that increase the likelihood of exposure and diseases. The six themes of the environmental topic area draws attention to elements of the environment and their linkages to health but we would be focusing on **toxic substances and hazardous wastes**. Reducing exposure to toxic substances and hazardous waste is fundamental to environmental health and one of the ways to do this is through recycling.

Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new materials or objects. It involves anything that recovering and reusing materials or products that are generally considered as rubbish and thrown away. The recyclability of a material depends on its ability to reacquire the properties it had in its virgin or original state. There are three types of recycling, known as primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary recycling is when the recyclable material or product is recovered without being changed in any way and is usually for the very same purpose. Secondary recycling is when the material or product is used in some other way without reprocessing, while tertiary recycling refers to a process that involves chemical altering of the material or product in order to make is reusable. It is an alternative to “conventional” waste disposal that can save material and help lower greenhouse emissions. Recycling is a key component of modern waste reduction and is the third component of the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” waste hierarchy, thus aims at environmental sustainability by substituting raw material inputs into and redirecting waste output of the economic system. Recycling materials include many kinds of paper, glass, cardboard, metal, plastics, electronic, tires and textiles.

Recycling is one of the best way to have a positive impact on the world we live in, as it is said **“What exercise is to health, recycling is to environment.”**. Many environmentalism begins with the recycling symbol and

ends with a recycle bin. Recycling is important to both the natural environment and to us, as waste has a huge negative impact on the natural environment and it can help the environment in the following ways; Recycling helps to reduce pollution caused by waste as harmful chemicals and greenhouse gasses are released from rubbish in landfill sites. Habitat destruction and global warming are some effects of deforestation, recycling can help reduce the need for raw materials so that the rain forest can be preserved. Huge amounts of energy are used when making products from raw materials, recycling requires a much less energy and therefore helps to preserve natural resources.

As the natural part of environment involves us human, recycling can also be important to people. It creates space for waste in other words, it reduces the waste sent to landfills and incinerators. Recycling helps to reduce financial expenditure in the economy, as making products from raw material cost more than if they were made from recycling products as well as also increasing the economic security by tapping a domestic source of material. Recycling preserves natural resources for the future generations, it reduces the use of raw material. It creates jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries.

As there are the positive effects to recycling, it also has its negative effects. If the sites where recycling is done are not managed properly it can lead to pollution. A lot of debris is collected everyday for recycling, the sites can become unhygienic. Abandoned dump sites can severely damage surrounding environment. Harmful chemicals in the trash can mix into with soil and water, which can cause water pollution that harm the plants and fishes in water and soil pollution. When it gets mixed with rain water, a poisonous substance known as leachate is formed and can be dangerous if it reaches water supplies. When recycling, there is no guarantee that the new recycled product obtained will be of good quality because recycling is done from used. Also, the process of bleaching, harsh chemicals are used which can be hazardous to health on exposure.

However, it is observed that the benefits of recycling outweigh the risk related with the mismanagement of dump sites. Well operated recycling

programs are unlikely to cause any harm to the environment and will only help to preserve the flora and fauna of our planet.