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ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS ASSOCIATED WITH SAND HARVESTING ACTIVITIES IN AWKA NORTH SETTLEMENT AREA IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Sand harvesting activity in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria has been a major economic operation for over forty years. The indiscriminate sand harvesting operation in Anambra State's fragile geology has grossly affected the living conditions and environment of the people. The study was carried out to assess the environmental impacts of sand mining on the housing area and environment in Awka North Local Government Area. The study employed survey method, field observation; in-depth interviews and 400 questionnaires were randomly sampled. The results showed that 38% of the sampled population strongly agreed that their buildings were threatened by sand mining in the area. 35% strongly agreed that their infrastructures like electricity lines, roads and drainages were affected by the mining activities. It was found out that the mining processes are indiscriminately carried out with no post mining treatment and management of mined areas. The abandoned sites have caused massive damage to the landscape, infrastructures and buildings in the area. Human lives and properties have become threatened as a result of sand mining. Presently, mining operations have ceased in the area, though the negative effects have not. It is recommended that laws governing mining operations be enforced. With sustainable efforts made to reinforce the geotechnical conditions of the area to protect the vulnerable state of the human life, buildings and the environment.

KEYWORDS: Sand harvesting, mining, environment, housing development, management and sustainability.