

CHALLENGES OF ZIMBABWE'S MEDIA IN THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's media plays a key role in the dissemination of environmental education (EE) information. One of its goals is to inculcate positive values, attitudes, and behavior change of the public towards the biophysical and cultural environments with a view to promoting sustainable development (SD) at local and national levels. Based on secondary and primary data that were collected in January and February, 2013, this paper identifies and discusses the progress and challenges, which the media has experienced recently in the execution of its mandate. Some of the hurdles identified include: the lack of EE centers in the country, remoteness of some areas, which restricts the accessibility of the electronic media (radio, television and the internet), the predominance of English at the expense of indigenous languages, and public resistance to behavior change due to the lack of interest in environmental issues. The paper argues that unless measures are taken to address these challenges, the country's EE policy is not likely to yield positive results in the future, which undermines the goal of SD at national level.

Keywords: Media, Environment, Education, Sustainability, Development.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main providers of EE in Zimbabwe is the media. As an agent of socialization, it plays a key role in the dissemination of information, which can shape people's ideas, attitudes, knowledge and behavior. The country's media seeks to *'promote environmentally friendly habits through the production of well researched, balanced and probing environmental stories in indigenous languages as well as English'* (Zimbabwe National Environmental Education Policy and Strategies, 2003:31). Zimbabwe's EE policy came into operation in 2003 with the goals of making

'sustainable development a national priority, to take a pro-active role in environmental issues and to respond to environmental challenges facing Zimbabwe at the personal, local, national, regional, and global levels through education and communication processes' (Zimbabwe National EE Policy Document, 2003:3).

There are two broad types of media, namely: print (news papers, magazines, brochures and posters) and electronic (radio, television and the internet). This paper discusses the role of the media in the delivery of EE in the country as well as the challenges associated with its task. According to Fien (1995), the ultimate goal of any national EE policy should be to change human behavior so as to produce citizens who have a spirit of environmental stewardship. This paper seeks to achieve several objectives, namely:

- a) Outlining the main objectives, which guide the media in its quest for the provision of EE in Zimbabwe
- b) Exposing how different print media organizations understand some key EE concepts
- c) Examining the progress made so far
- d) Identifying the challenges encountered, and
- e) Suggesting possible solutions to these challenges in the country's quest for SD.

RESEARCH METHODS

Two methods were used to assemble information for this study. They included secondary and primary forms of data. While secondary sources comprised existing literature on EE (such as news papers, brochures, posters and the EE policy document), primary data came from interviews that were conducted in January and February, 2013. The data targeted government-controlled newspapers (*The Herald, The Chronicle, The Sunday Mail, The Sunday News* and *The Masvingo Star*), privately sponsored ones (*The Daily News, News Day, The Standard* and *The Mirror*) and the electronic media. The information from these sources was analyzed and interpreted and it yielded the views that are expressed in this paper.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEDIA IN ZIMBABWE

According to information collected from interviews, the media in Zimbabwe seeks to achieve several objectives, including to:

- a) educate, inform and entertain the public
- b) collect news and disseminate it to the nation

- c) promote development at local and national levels
- d) provide advocacy on issues of local and national interest, and
- e) generate income through advertisements.

In a bid to provide EE in the country, Zimbabwe's media is guided by nine objectives, which are listed in the policy document:

- a) To integrate EE in teaching, learning, training and extension programs in the formal and informal sectors of education. The strategy involves the incorporation of EE in media studies. Three actions are involved, namely: the provision of pre-service and in-service EE courses for media personnel, up-dating the media on key environmental issues/events thereby enabling them to report accurately and disseminate environmental news and emphasize the need for adequate research prior to reporting on environmental issues
- b) To raise public awareness of environmental issues and promote holistic management of the environment in all sectors of the community. The strategy is to sensitize the public on environmental issues and SD goals in the country. The actions involved include: encouraging environmental reporting by media personnel, utilizing a variety of media channels to disseminate environmental information to the public, and involving the media in environmental activities and deliberations.
- c) To facilitate the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values requisite for environmentally sustainable behavior. The strategy is to promote an environmental ethic by popularizing environmentally friendly behavior and actions. The main actions include: the use of various genres in mass media productions focusing on environmentally sustainable behavior and produce inter-active media products, which promote environmentally sustainable behavior.
- d) To promote SD through the use of all channels of communication. The strategy is to document and report SD activities at community and national levels. Actions involved are: using a variety of mass media to document and report SD practices, making SD a key feature of media communication channels and highlighting global best practices on SD, which are applicable at the local level.
- e) To encourage sustainable livelihoods within communities not usually reached by formal channels of education and communication. The strategy involves encouraging a participatory approach in the planning and implementation of environmentally sustainable projects by local communities. Actions on the other hand include: providing media and arts outreach programs to outlying communities, documenting and reporting environmentally sustainable local community activities and initiatives, and drawing government attention to environmental challenges in marginalized communities.
- f) To identify and mobilize resources to initiate self-sustaining EE activities. The strategy is to support self-sustainable EE initiatives. Actions include: reporting self-sustaining initiatives by stakeholders and train communities to produce media materials on EE activities.
- g) To protect and promote the use of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). Strategies are: to develop community awareness of the value of IKS and to encourage the preservation of IKS. Actions include: providing media coverage of IK practices in English and indigenous languages and promoting and encouraging attitude change through documenting practical applications of IKS.

- h) To support private and public initiatives in EE research. The strategy is geared at making environmental research findings topical media issues while the action involves documenting and reporting public and private EE research initiatives and findings.
- i) To ensure monitoring and evaluation of EE programs and activities in all sectors. The strategy is to follow up progress of EE program and activities. This is supported by two actions, namely: producing media reports (documentaries and features) covering the implementation of environmental programs and activities, and disseminating information on EE initiatives inside and outside the country.

HOW DOES THE MEDIA DEFINE SOME KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS?

In examining the role of the media in Zimbabwe, this study also investigated how it understands three key terms/concepts, namely EE, SD and environmental education for sustainable development (ESD). It is pertinent to note the diverse views of some of the newspaper reporters (Table 1). Palmer (1998) defines EE as a form of education that seeks to inculcate values, norms and attitudes that are necessary in order to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among people, culture and the biophysical environment. Consequently, the main goal of EE is to enable communities to solve their environmental problems with the view of achieving SD. Mbiba (2003: 16) defines the concept as *“a multi-sectoral approach to global environmental issues, which advocates for the development of attitudes and skills as well as change in environmental behavior. Central to EE is the belief that given the appropriate education about the environment, man will be responsible and behave in environmentally friendly ways”* that promote SD.

Palmer (1998) outlines the nine elements of an EE curriculum, which include:

- a) Knowledge of the environment and its potential for human use. Arts, Science and Geography can inculcate a sense of environmental awareness and responsibility
- b) A theoretical and potential knowledge of appropriate technology and its role in SD
- c) Knowledge of the history and nature of a global society and factors, which discourage SD
- d) Understanding of environmental politics at national and global levels
- e) Political literacy, which enables students to analyze factors, which govern the global economy and have a bearing on the plight of the environment
- f) Exposure to social education, which enables students to see the need for SD in the presence of contradictions, which prevail in the modern world system
- g) An understanding of popular culture and its negative impact on the environment ideology and consumerism
- h) Involvement in projects aimed at promoting SD
- i) Inculcate a sense of hope for the future without indoctrination.

Without a sound knowledge of the linkages among these elements, communities cannot effectively address their environmental problems. In Zimbabwe EE is provided by formal institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. In formal and non-formal settings, it is delivered by government departments such as the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Forestry Commission (FC), urban councils, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media (print and

electronic). While *ZIMPAPERS* define EE as public awareness on environmental issues, The *Masvingo Star* regards it as the production of articles, which teach the public on the environment and its biodiversity. *The Mirror*, on the other hand views EE as information that enables people to protect and maintain their environment. It is obvious that all the above types of print media have a fairly sound knowledge of EE and its goals.

Table 1: Views of different newspapers on some key terms/concepts

Newspaper	Key Term/Concept	Definition
ZIMPAPERS: (The Herald, The Chronicle, The Sunday Mail and The Sunday News)	EE	Public awareness on environmental issues
ZIANA: The Masvingo Star	EE	Production of articles that teach the public on various aspects of the environment and its biodiversity
The Mirror	EE	Education or information that helps people to protect and maintain their environment
ZIMPAPERS	SD	Positive change that can be sustained or remain in force regardless of challenges
The Masvingo Star	SD	The dissemination of relevant, home-grown information on environmental conservation
The Mirror	SD	Engaging in projects that sustain people's livelihoods
ZIMPAPERS	ESD	Awareness given to the public about the environment for positive change
The Masvingo Star	ESD	Educating people on how to ensure food security, health and growth of society
The Mirror	ESD	Education that enables people to sustain their livelihood through projects such as new farming methods

Source: Newspaper Interviews

SD on the other hand, has been defined as a form of development, which *'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'* (WCED, 1991:8). The concept of SD is multi-dimensional, comprising ecological, economic and social aspects (Mapira, 2012). Its main goal is to develop a sense of environmental stewardship at local, national and global levels. Consequently, humanity should develop a more caring attitude to its environment than it has done in the past. ZIMPAPERS' view of SD's main goal as the development of *'positive change that can be sustained or remain in force regardless of challenges'* (Table 1). The Masvingo Star regards its mandate as the dissemination of relevant, home grown information on environmental conservation while The Mirror defines the concept of EE as *'Engaging in projects that sustain people's livelihood'*. Although none of the above definitions is comprehensive, they all bear some truth about SD. However, environmental stewardship and behavior change are generally lacking in them.

According to the SADC Report (2006), ESD is a new type of education, which marries EE and SD. Although EE has always been geared towards the achievement of SD during the last two decades, this link has been popularized, adding new zeal. However, for most people the difference between EE and ESD is not clear. ZIMPAPERS' definition of ESD is *'Awareness given to the public about the environment for positive change'*. That of The Masvingo Star is *'Educating people on how to ensure food security'*. Finally, The Mirror defines ESD as education that *'enables people to sustain their livelihood through projects such as new farming methods'*. If the media has a shallow knowledge of concepts, it is not likely to be effective in the dissemination of this form of education.

PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

It is pertinent to examine the progress made so far by different types of media in the dissemination of EE at national level.

The Electronic Media

The electronic media plays an important role in the dissemination of information in Zimbabwe. As mentioned previously, it takes three forms, namely: radio, television and the internet. There are two broad types of radio stations in the country, namely government-controlled and privately owned and sponsored. The former include Radio Zimbabwe (which is dominated by indigenous languages such as Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Shangani and Venda) and FM Radio (which appeals to English speaking members of the population as well as the youth). The latter include short-wave radio stations such as: Voice of the People (VOP) and Voice of America (VOA). While government controlled stations convey the government's political ideology and propaganda, the private ones provide an alternative view point on most issues. It is generally sympathetic with opposition political parties, which are not well represented by the state media. There is only one television station in the country, namely: Zimbabwe Television (ZTV). Both government controlled radio stations and ZTV are run by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC).

The electronic media disseminates EE to the nation through various programs and documentaries. Some of the issues covered include: resettlement, wildlife poaching, deforestation, water conservation, sustainable agriculture, food security, dam construction, veld fires, soil erosion, gully control and environmental impact assessment (Chimhowu, et al, 2010). However, in most remote parts of the country (such as border areas), both radio and television receptions are poor due to out-dated and

back-ward machinery. Recently, China donated state-of-the art equipment to ZBC (*The Herald*, Wednesday, 20 February, 2013, page 2). Once this technology is installed, it will improve reception in various parts of the country. Although it is less accessible to most citizens, the internet is becoming more important in the dissemination of EE information in Zimbabwe. However, most remote parts of the country are not accessible to radio, television and the internet leaving the print media as the only provider of EE in such areas.

The Print Media

Zimbabwe's print media takes three broad forms/types, namely:

- a) Government controlled newspapers (ZIMPAPERS/ZIANA)
- b) Privately owned and sponsored newspapers, and
- c) Brochures, posters and pamphlets produced by such organizations as the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Forestry Commission (FC).

It is pertinent to examine the progress that has been made by each of the above media types in the provision of EE at local and national levels. Some of the articles that have been published recently in government- controlled papers reflect their pre-occupation with environmental issues (Table 2).

Table 2: Environmental Issues Published recently in Government-controlled Papers

Name of Paper	Story	Environmental Issue Covered
The Sunday Mail, November 11-17, 2012 page D7	'Residents drink own waste...as tests prove water safe for human consumption'	Pollution of Lake Chivero, Harare's main water source.
The Sunday Mail, December 23-29, 2012 page D3	'Tokwe-Mukorsi: Chivi's lifeline'	Dam construction in a semi-arid area.
The Sunday Mail, December 30, 2012-5 January, 2013, page 3	'Storm destroys 32 homes in Chivi'	Damage caused by a rain storm in Chivi area.
The Masvingo Star, January 28-February 3, 2013, pages 1-2	'Masvingo dams gain'	Increase of water level in Lake Mutirikwi, Masvingo's only source of water.
The Sunday Mail, January 27-2 February, 2013	'33% of Harare bore holes contaminated'	Underground water pollution in City of Harare.
The Sunday Mail, February 3-9, 2013, page D3	'Floods: The nightmare continues'	Damage caused by floods in the Zambezi Valley.

Source: Government-controlled newspapers

Themes covered include: river/water pollution, dam construction, rains, storms and floods. In general, the articles educate the public on current environmental issues. A report on the pollution of Lake Chivero (*The Sunday Mail*, November, 11-17, 2012, page D7) describes the complexity of the river pollution problem in the following terms:

'Experts say Lake Chivero, Harare's water source, is heavily polluted to levels comparable to a sewage pond. Information gathered shows that while city fathers deny discharging raw sewage into the lake, millions of litres of effluent are choking the water body everyday'

The Masvingo Star also informs residents about the problem of water scarcity in the city. It states that

'Dams around Masvingo have recorded some inflows following the heavy rains experienced around the country but water levels remain critically low in major supply dams according to the Zimbabwe National Water Authority.

Masvingo City's water source, Lake Mutirikwi whose water level had gone down to around 10 percent, has recorded a slight increase to 16.14 percent as of last week', (pages 1-2).

The article on Zambezi floods (*The Sunday Mail*, February, 3-9, 2013, page D7) describes the damage caused by the natural hazards that occurred recently along the river basin in the following terms:

'The torrential rains and subsequent flooding have caused massive damage to agriculture by destroying crops and killing livestock'.

Although most of the articles in the above table focus on the negative aspects of environmental issues, that on the Tokwe-Mokorsi Dam, paints a positive picture. It describes the dam as a 'lifeline' to the surrounding rural communities who need water for agriculture and domestic consumption. Another article (in *The Masvingo Star*, January 28- February 3, 2013, page 1) also carries a somewhat positive message. Entitled "Masvingo dams gain", it claims that

'Dams around Masvingo have recorded some inflows following the heavy rains experienced around the country but water levels remain critically low in major supply dams according to the Zimbabwe National Water Authority. Masvingo's main water source, Lake Mutirikwi whose water level had gone down to around 10 percent, has recorded a slight increase to 16.14 percent as of last week...'

In the same vein, a more recently published article in *The Herald*, 20th February, 2013, pages 1-2 (not included in the above table) deals with efforts that have been put in place in order to rehabilitate Harare's water system. It reports that

'Harare City Council has negotiated a US\$80 million loan with a Chinese bank to overhaul water treatment plants and replace ageing pipes to ensure at least 80 percent of the city receives constant supplies'. The headline of the article is entitled 'Council gets US\$80m to rehabilitate water system'.

The privately owned print media also reports on environmental issues, including: wildlife, disease outbreaks, waste disposal and management, poaching of endangered animals, cleaning the environment and bio-diversity in the Gonarezhou National Park, river pollution, Miss Earth beauty pageant and water pollution (Table 3). *The Mirror* outlines its main goals as:

- a) Informing the public on current affairs
- b) Reporting on new farming methods as well as the protection of the environment.

Its main activities include:

- a) Reporting on environmental degradation such as river pollution
- b) Reporting on sustainable ways of farming.

However, the main challenges it has faced in the past include:

- a) Failure of the paper to reach remote areas due to transport problems
- b) Most people do not understand English, which is the vehicle of communication in the country, and
- c) Poverty, which prevents people from buying copies of the paper.

An article, which appeared in *The Mirror*, 8-14, February, 2013 (page 9) deals with water pollution and contains the following information:

'There was panic among Masvingo residents last week when muddy brown water with a lot of residue oozed out of their domestic taps. The City Council was forced to use a public address system around the suburbs and the city center to calm residents on the fears of getting unsafe water...A fire-tender vehicle drove around the whole town with an employee shouting a message that the water was safe...The City Engineer attributed the problem to low water levels in Lake Mutirikwi where he said there was just 24 months supply left' (Bernard Mapwanyire, Reporter).

Table 3: Environmental Issues Covered by the Private Media

Name of Paper and Date of Publication	Story Title	Environmental Issue Discussed
The Mirror, 21-27 September, 2012, page 3	'Masvingo council guilty of polluting rivers'	River pollution in urban centers of Zimbabwe
The Mirror, 9-15, November, 2012, page 16	'Morgenster student scoops EMA beauty contest'	Miss Earth beauty pageant
The Mirror, 9-15 November, 2012, page 17	'Gonarezhou National Park: A jewel in the crown'	Biodiversity in the Gonarezhou.
The Daily News, Saturday, 29 December, 2012 page 13	'The Secret Lives of Africa's Giant'	Rhinos and Elephants: Newly discovered habits'.
The Daily News, 3 January, 2013, page 11	'Repair sewer pipes. No water, more garbage'	Problems of waste management in Harare
News Day, Friday, January 11, 2013, page 12	'Zambia bans hunting of lions'	Wildlife poaching
News Day, Monday, January, 28	'Clean up Zimbabwe Campaign'	Cleaning the environment
News Day, Friday, 4 January, 2013 page 5	'New cholera outbreak hits Zambia'	Disease outbreak due to sanitation problems
News Day, Thursday, 7 February, 2013, page 21	'CLEAN UP ZIMBABWE CAMPAIGN'	Anti-littering campaign
The Mirror, 8-14, February, 2013	'Brown water oozes out of Masvingo taps'	Water Pollution
The Standard, 10-16 February, 2013, pages 1-2	'City residents turn to bucket latrines'	Waste disposal problems in Mbare (Harare)

Source: Recent Newspaper Publications

The Standard (10-16 February, 2013, pages 1-2) also carries an article on the problem of sanitation in the city of Harare. It describes the problem of human waste disposal in Mbare, one of the low-income residential areas in the following quotation:

'Most people living in flats in Mbare have resorted to using the bucket toilet system when nature calls because they have not had running water for the past three weeks. Each morning the residents empty buckets full of human waste into Mukuvisi River and other open spaces because their toilets have since blocked due to a shortage of water.'

This has exposed not only residents of Mbare to diseases such as cholera and typhoid, but all the people who live downstream. This is also affecting residents of Harare and Chitungwiza, who drink poorly treated water from Lake Chivero...The City of Harare has been struggling to supply adequate and clean drinking water to residents for the past couple of years. In most cases, the residents are seen queuing at boreholes sunk by Unicef, some of which are contaminated, making the water unfit for domestic use. ...Over 4 000 people have succumbed to cholera and typhoid since 2008^o.

The second article (Table 3) deals with EMA's beauty contest that was conducted in the city of Masvingo last year (2012) with the aim of educating the public on environmental issues. According to the manager of Masvingo Province's EMA branch the aim of

'this competition is to encourage institutions (such as schools and colleges) to participate in environmental management activities like clean up campaigns, tree planting and environmental education within our communities' (*The Mirror*: 9-15, November, 2012, page 16).

Brochures, posters and pamphlets

Some providers of EE such as the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Forestry Commission (FC) produce information brochures, posters and pamphlets, which they distribute to members of the public during global and national events such as the World Wetland Day (February), Africa Environment Day (March), World Water Day (March), World Meteorological Day (March), World Earth Day (April), National Fire Week (May), International Day for Biodiversity (May), World Environment Day (June), World Day for Desertification, International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer (September), Clean up Zimbabwe Day (September), World Tourism Day (September) and the National Tree Planting Day (4th of December). Some of the brochures, which EMA has produced over the years, have been entitled:

- a) '**Introducing EMA**', which defines and explains the origins of the agency, its vision, mission, goals and organizational structure'
- b) '**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Zimbabwe**', which educates the public on EIAs and justifies its existence in Zimbabwe, and
- c) '**Air Pollution**', which discusses the causes and effects of atmospheric pollution as well as outlining the penalties used to deter possible transgressors of its laws.

EMA also produces a calendar of events for each year for the purpose of public dissemination during some of its campaigns (Mapira, 2012).

The Forestry Commission also produces pamphlets with different titles such as:

- a) '**Forestry Commission**', which outlines the vision, mission, core values, goals and operations of the organization at local and national levels

- b) '*World Forestry Day*', which provides information on this global event, which is observed on the 21st of March every year
- c) '*National Tree Planting Day*', that is commemorated on the 4th of December in Zimbabwe
- d) '*Tree of the Year*', which provides information on a tree that is chosen for this purpose during a particular year. For example the tree of the year 2012 was *Khaya anthotheca* (Red mahogany or mururu), and
- e) The '*Gum Tree Planting Calendar*', which guides people on the various stages that are followed in planting and caring for the gum tree.

However, the effectiveness of these documents in the spread of EE is under-mined by limited funding and the inaccessibility of some areas due to remoteness. EMA's annual reports since 2008 show that in spite of the agency's nation-wide campaigns, the number of veld fires has been on the increase, reflecting public apathy towards environmental issues (Mapira, 2012). This paints a bleak picture on the country's EE Policy.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE MEDIA IN THE PROVISION OF EE IN ZIMBABWE

Although the problems facing the electronic media have been mentioned, those that confront the print media have not. According to information derived from interviews, they include:

- a) The lack of EE centers at both local and national levels
- b) Resistance from communities, which do not take environmental issues seriously.
- c) Lack of skilled reporters who can write effectively on environmental issues. This applies mainly to local newspapers such as *The Manica Post* (Mutare), *Gweru Times* (Gweru) and *The Mirror* (Masvingo).
- d) Inadequate resources such as vehicles to transport reporters to some remote parts of the country. Again this problem affects local newspapers, which are not well funded.
- e) Interference from some politicians who want to influence the type of news delivered to the public.
- f) Hostility of the government to the privately owned print media, which it regards with suspicion. In some cases, news papers have been confiscated from street vendors and destroyed by suspected ruling party supporters. In such cases, the police force has often turned a blind eye to these incidents thereby displaying its partisan interests.
- g) Predominance of English over indigenous languages, which the majority of people use in their daily lives. Although Zimbabwe is one of the most literate societies in Africa (CSO, 2002) most people are not conversant with the English language, which dominates the print media.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The challenges listed above have a bearing on SD at local and national levels. They also have a negative impact on other sectors of the country's life such as industry, commerce, and NGOs, which depend on the media for their success. The fact that most Zimbabweans do not take environmental issues seriously is a cause for concern. It reflects apathy due to the ineffectiveness of the country's EE Policy at the implementation stage. No EE program can succeed without the cooperation of its citizens. The need to change people's attitudes on environmental issues is obvious in this case. Massive civic education

is necessary at local and national levels. However, this is not possible unless the government has the political will to embark on such a campaign. In the past the country has been criticized for its casual approach to environmental issues (Lopes, 1996). This partly explains why the fast track land re-distribution program was never preceded by an environmental impact assessment (EIA) even though the latter is mandatory according to the country's environmental policy (Chimhowu, et. al, 2010).

The lack of EE centers and shortage of resources such as skilled reporters on EE issues and vehicles for transport to remote areas, undermine the operations of most local news papers. This is due to inadequate funding of the papers. Compared to national news papers, their market is quite small, which influences the income generated from the paper sales. However, there are no easy solutions to the above problems. Skilled manpower calls for more remuneration while vehicles for reporters require adequate funding of the print media organization, something that is lacking in most cases.

Zimbabwe is still a polarized nation due to the political rivalry between major political parties that were forced to form a coalition government in 2009 (Chimhowu, et.al, 2010). This hostility has also spilled over to the media, which now displays serious divisions. At the same time some politicians from the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) accuse the private media of supporting opposition political parties such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, which they view as enemies who are backed by Western countries. They try to discourage them from reporting on some environmental issues, which they believe can tarnish the image of their political party, which has been in power since independence in 1980. For example, Moyo's (1997) publication on the pollution of Lake Chivero was not well received by some top government officials who regarded the book as a form of negative publicity. Such political attitudes under-mine press freedom and EE as they seek to promote narrow partisan interests at the expense of SD at local and national levels.

With a few exceptions, the lack of indigenous languages in the print media is also a cause for concern if EE has to reach the public. The need for news papers written in Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Shangani, Venda, Sotho and Tonga cannot be ignored. However, attitudes take long to develop and unless more efforts are exerted at national level, the country's goal of achieving SD through EE will never be achieved. Although Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa (with over 90%) according to the last population census (CSO, 2012) this is not likely to promote positive attitudes towards the environment due to the marginalization of indigenous languages, especially in the dissemination of EE information.

CONCLUSIONS

At both global and national levels, the media is a powerful agent of socialization as it influences people's views, attitudes and actions. This paper has examined the role played by Zimbabwe's media in the dissemination of EE. This has been done in the light of the nine objectives, which are listed in the country's EE Policy document (*Zimbabwe National EE Policy and Strategies*, 2003). Based on information that was derived from secondary and primary data sources, the paper discussed several issues including: definitions of EE from different media sources, progress made so far in the provision of EE, challenges encountered in the process and their possible implications in the country's quest for SD at both local and national levels. Some of the hurdles confronting the media in the execution of its mandate include the lack of resources such as: funding, skilled labor, poor remuneration for reporters and vehicles for transport to remote parts of the country. Other

challenges include: political interference in the dissemination of EE information and the marginalization of indigenous languages in the reporting of environmental issues. Although Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa, not all people can speak English, which dominates the print and electronic media. This undermines the spread of EE and the development of an environmental ethic at national level, a necessary element in the inculcation of positive attitudes and behavior change among the public. The paper argues that unless these challenges are fully addressed, Zimbabwe is not likely to achieve its EE goal of achieving SD through the media. However, these challenges are not confined to EE but also affect other sectors of the country's life such as: industry, commerce and NGOs. There is need for the government to create a more favorable environment for the media so that it can execute its mandate of informing and educating the citizens on issues of public interest.

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