

Extreme drought vulnerability in North West Nigeria drought vulnerability and impact assessment

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Climate change has become our new reality. It brings with it change in weather pattern that can have serious repercussions for all of us, upsetting seasonal cycles, harming ecosystems and water supply, affecting agriculture and food production, causing landslides, drought, and famine. Its effects are already visible in north western Nigeria, the climate variation in this part is not altogether new because it contains a significant portion of the Sudan-Sahara ecological zone of West Africa. However, since the early 1970s, climate anomalies in the form of recurrent droughts, frightening dust storms have overprinted their rhythms, creating short-duration climatic oscillations as against the normal cycles of larger amplitudes, the last 30 years have witnessed four severe droughts, numerous dust storms indeed, the weather of the region has become highly unpredictable making many citizens to wonder what has happened to the climate.

The persistence of drought in parts of northern Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s has been attributed to the prevalence of a stagnated anti-cyclonic circulation of the tropical atmosphere over areas that normally should be exposed to rising arm of the tropical Hadley cell circulation by mid-summer these cause themselves related to the tropical component of the global general circulation system.

Most of the droughts that occur in this part have been found to be associated with late start of the rainy season and early cessation of rains, resulting in drastic reduction of the length of the rainy season. Drought and the total absence of rain in these areas for of a very long time to the detriment of agricultural and other water-related activities is of concern in our country, it drastically affects agricultural yield and it kills livestock (two drought incidences in Nigeria- The 1970s and 1980s led to the death of millions of cows, goats and sheep, while food production was adversely affected). Drought also contributed to increased desert encroachment and excessive heat, both of which have an inescapable impact on human kind and the use of water in the ecosystem.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle is lack of awareness and knowledge.

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