



POSSIBLE WAYS OF CURBING THE PROBLEM OF EROSION IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL

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Abstract

Erosion is a natural phenomenon and in each year is determinant on the level of down pour or rain fall so to speak. One thing is certain and that is the fact that rain must fall, secondly that erosion is a sure must that it must come up, what seem so worrisome is the fact that certain people fail to have thought over where they are building their habitats and secondly the menace of erosion in such areas. The rate of rain fall in one year usually differs from what it might look like in other years, no doubt. At certain times weather forecasters in Nigeria like other countries furnish the people with information before the beginning of each rainy season, at one time or the other, such information is taken for granted and we find ourselves in the doldrum of erosion menace. In Nigeria, at present very many people are already victims of erosion devastation, yet its not over for tge year as scores of lives and property have been lost to erosion. The question every right thinking Nigerian will be asking is, since we know that erosion is an outcome of excessive downpour, what could be done to avoid its devastating effects. The above posed question form the gamut of this study. Various data collection techniques as oral interviews, journals, textbooks, periodicals, questionnaire and the internet were used. The basic need theory was adopted as theoretical framework. Thereafter, conclusion was drawn.

Keywords: Possible, Ways, Curbing, Problem, Erosion, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Various concepts embedded in the question above deserve some kind of explanation to enable their understanding. Such word are:

POSSIBLE

According to the oxford online Dictionary, Possible means,able to be done or achieved. It can also be taken for something that may exist or happen, but that is not certain or probable.

WAYS

Ways is considered as a long distance: to a considerable degree or extent: far is way.

CURBING

According to the Cambridge online Dictionary 2022 is, to control or limit something that is not wanted.

PROBLEM

A matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome, Oxford Advanced Learner's online Dictionary 2022.

NIGERIA.

An African country on the Gulf of Guinea, has many natural landmarks and wildlife reserves. Protected areas such as Cross River National Park and Yankari National park have waterfalls , dense rainforest, savanna and rare primate habitats. One of the most recognizable sites is Zuma Rock.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars from various nomenclature have tried to explain cases of erosion and their root causes. While many agree to their positions others disagree. The fact on ground remains that cases of erosion in Nigeria at the moment is nothing to write home about and makes headlines every day. The case of Bayelsa is the talk of the town while that of Anambra is a story for another day. The one of Imo state and very many others is something that no one will like to remember. All in

all, erosion has done more bad than good. While farmers are asking nature and God for more rainfall in order to have bountiful harvests, many who live by the banks of rivers and erosion prone areas are busy counting their losses which has amounted to millions of naira.

While families and offices including farmland have all been over taken by flood. The people are now rendered homeless and group of others left with no offices while precious lives have been lost in the course of days. Clips from the rampaging scenarios of flood across the country is very disheartening and heart breaking.

To say that flood at the moment is rendering many people homeless is simply an understatement, it has in fact messed people up, the worse of it all is that certain causes of flooding in Nigeria is man made.

RECENT CASES OF FLOOD DEVASTATION IN NIGERIA

According to Premium times tabloid, at least 500 people have been killed in floods across the country. Some of the states where deaths from floods have been reported include Kogi, Jigawa, Kebbi, Bayelsa, Anambra with about 31 states said to have experienced flooding in 2022.

About 90,000 homes have also been partially or totally destroyed in the floods, the official said. The permanent Secretary , ministry of humanitarian affairs disaster management and social development, Nasir Sani-Gwarzo, made this known during a news conference on Thursday in Abuja.

It is on record that over 1.4 million persons were displaced, with about 500 persons reported dead. 790,254 persons moved out of their locations , while 1,546 persons were injured' he said. Similarly, 44,099 houses were partially damaged ,45,249 houses totally damaged. 76,168 hectares of farm lands were partially destroyed, while 70, 566 hectares of farmlands were completely destroyed.

Mr Sani -Gwarzo said the federal government has approved emergency management plans to mitigate the impact of the flood nation wide. He spoke after the emergency meeting on flood situation with relevant stakeholders in Abuja. He also said government had approved the National Emergency flood preparedness and Response plans to mitigate and reduce the impact of the flood nationwide. He said experts responsible for controlling flood disaster had

informed the committee that the scale of the 2022 flooding was similar to that of 2012. He said the meeting would come out with a communiqué to inform Nigerians that government was not only aware of what the situation was but was prepared to reduce the impact. According to Mr Gwarzo, the government is also prepared to make sure that those places and communities not affected also get some relief materials. He recalled that early this year, Nimet predicted that some parts of the country would witness increased rain fall and deep into the rainy season as one of the African countries would release water from its dam. Mr Sani Gwarzo explained that the release of the water led to increase in volume of water that Nigeria was taking in.

He added that the release of the water resulted to the flooding, stressing that by the grace of God, the impact would be reduced to the barest minimum and more lives would be saved. He said the Federal Emergency Management Agency came up with relief materials reaching nothing less than 315,000 people that were displaced across the Line of the flooding impact. The National Emergency flood preparedness and Response plans for Nigeria has just been approved by the Federal Executive Council and it contains all the details of the road map that needs to be done. It includes the immediate short term and long term plans and therefore, we have a clear view of what to do and how to go about it, mitigate and reduce the impact of flood in the country. We are taking all the necessary actions to bring relief to the people affected by the flood. All the concerned agencies have renewed their commitment to strengthen their efforts in reaching out to the victims and bring relief to them, he said. Mr Sani Gwarzo revealed that during the meeting of the stakeholders, they came out with three prompt approach for the future. They include, the immediate actions that would be taken by respective agencies, the short term measures and the long term measures that would be taken by the agencies responsible, Premium Times and Agency Reports, October 12, 2022.

KNOWN CAUSES OF EROSION IN NIGERIA

There are several causes of Erosion/ over flooding in Nigeria. They include but not limited to:

1) NATURAL FACTORS

It has been observed over the years that there are certain years that rainfall is heavy and in some other years, heavier and in some others heaviest so to speak. To that effect, when the rains are so heavy and the drainages are not too wide enough to accommodate or carry the floods, the flood will definitely be forced to look for escape route, thereby causing unprecedented havoc. One thing must be established and which is the fact that the flood will definitely find a way to flow and seem unstoppable. In some years as this particular one when the rains seem to be too frequent and heavy also, flood which is a product of the rains takes over the roads and street different from the original arrangement made for it. (The emphasis is mine)

It has to be established that occurrence and reoccurrences of flood and its attendant damages has come to be neither can we stop the rains, neither can we stop the floods.

2) POOR SANITARY ATTITUDES AND CULTURE

It must be established with no iota of doubt that most Nigerians attitude to sanitation is at a very low ebb. Nigerian only comply when it is something that has to do with enforcing penalty on them. It has been discovered over the years that our people have developed poor sanitation attitudes. What this means in essence is that people dump refuse in the gutters and unauthorized places with reckless abandon and care little of what the outcome will be. Even at shops, business places and even at homes most Nigerian refuse to use the refuse dumps approved by the authorities, Why then won't floods and erosion take over the whole places bringing down houses and taking over the roads causing undue damages. What we are trying to say is that certain damages done by erosion and flood in Nigeria would have been avoided if our people decide to be law abiding and play to the rule. It has been discovered that certain diseases damaging lives in Nigeria would have been avoided if our people had been conscious of our environment and the negative effects of poor sanitation. In our big cities in Nigeria even along the express ways, refuse dumps are seen scattered the whole place. It paints the country in a bad light. Things pertaining to health is taken for granted and our health officials owed accumulated salaries. The Government need not be the only people to be blamed, rather it should be a collective blame

per se. Therefore, when the drains are blocked and floods can't find a way, it resort to the roads.

3) ERECTION OF STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS IN UNAUTHORIZED PLACES

It has equally been observed that given places or unauthorised places hold structures as shop, buildings, and squatter settlements. How this came to be is something that has not been adequately explained. By all standards, certain places as river banks, erosion/ floods routes are blocked. The question remains, if the floods cannot find way to flow to its destination which other option will be available than look for any other possible way it must take to flow. The flow of erosion is a natural thing, invariably, it cannot be prevented. It is high time people started understanding of the fact that the warnings of the meteorologists and weather forecasters need to be adhered to. The estate surveyors also are very necessary here too. This is because they are trained experts that know where people are not suppose to build or erect structures and where not to. But rather than adhere to the instructions of these experts among a host of others, our people feel unconcerned and less interested to do the necessary things but prefer to do it in their own way which finally comes back to hunt them. It has been discovered that in certain places, people do whatever that pleases them when it come to places of habitation especially in the riverine areas and they prefer to live by the rivers banks claiming it is cultural and all the rest of them. Such practices are dastardly acts and should open their eyes to see and face the realities of avoiding their families and property being flooded a way by floods. Flood menace has become a thing of sleepless nights.

The case is that when such damages are done by flood, it doesn't seem t possible to be recovered .Any damage done is done and nothing can be done to remedy the situation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE BASIC NEED THEORY

The basic need theory discusses important aspects and elements of the human society that needs to be addressed and effectively too. It is no longer news in Nigeria that Erosion menace is a serious issue of concern needing to be addressed and arrested. Human safety and life has become an issue of concern needing to

be taken care of, especially in the 21st century when flood and erosion has been ravaging the country due to human carelessness. Therefore, because the menace of flood has become a basic necessity and need to be adequately addressed in order to avoid further damages. In the light of the above, the basic need theory is considered the most suitable theory for this study is therefore, adopted as theoretical framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Efficient mapping, monitoring and maintenance of all flood plains, sea coast natural lakes and reservoirs (i.e dams) in Nigeria
- 2) Establishment of efficient monitoring stations at each sea coast should be made.
- 3) There is imperative need for collaboration between hydrologists , remote sensing and GS experts , environmental scientists , engineers, surveyors and other professional bodies etc in monitoring the annual hydrological cycle and weather patterns as well as giving appropriate advice to the government.
- 4) As all prognoses available suggests that Nigeria will experience alterations in weather patterns through out 21st century, with changes in temperature, rainfall, rise in sea level , therefore, data from NIMET should be obtained quarterly and measures should be implemented based on predicted future events.
- 5) Fast evacuation should always be carried out to minimize consequences of floods whenever they occur. This could only be achieved through supervision by serious minded personnel.
- 6) Both rural and urban dwellers of riverine and sea coast areas should be educated on the risks and consequences of floods or even compensated with safe alternative land.
- 7) Procurement of cutting-edged flood modelling , prediction and mitigation should be highly motivated.

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