

Examining the Effects of the 2022 Flood in Nigeria and the way forward.

Abstract

Flood disaster is a common natural disaster witnessed in Nigeria. In 2022, Nigeria saw the worst flooding experience since 2012, which claimed the lives of more than 600 persons, and displaced thousands. It brought many economic losses to both individuals and the government. The Flood affected 34 of the 36 in Nigeria, exacerbating the hardship experienced by individuals, especially those in rural communities. The study examines the effect of the 2022 flood in Nigeria and the extent of the damages in the country. The study found the impacts of flooding to be negative and a significant impediment to community development. Flooding was found to aggravate poverty levels, worsen health conditions, and negatively impact educational status and community development. This study recommends the completion of the second dam in Nigeria, coordinated spatial planning, and the building of disaster-resilient communities.

Introduction

Flood is a natural disaster resulting in direct loss of lives, social and economic properties, and physical and psychological injuries. The impacts of floods are more pronounced in low-lying areas than in other areas. This natural disaster constitutes a significant threat to the country's effort to achieve the global sustainable development goal (SDGs), particularly attaining environmental and human development by 2030. It is pertinent to state that 9 out of the 17 SDGs are directly affected by flooding (NIHSA, 2022). Hence, the need to tackle the menace of flood disasters cannot be overemphasized. Flooding threatens sustainability because it negatively affects the economy, health, social life, and environment.

Flood disasters in Nigeria are a recurring phenomenon, often with devastating effects on human livelihoods and infrastructural development. According to the 2022 Annual Flood Outlook, Flood constitutes a significant threat to the country's effort to achieve the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. In Nigeria, as in many developing nations, the impacts of flooding are more devastating due to the increased vulnerability of many communities. When floods occur in these communities, poor hygiene challenges emanate, diseases and pandemics escalate, water becomes contaminated, and lives are lost. Poor communities are more vulnerable than others because of their exposure to natural disasters, poorly constructed houses (easily damaged), and inadequate or poorly maintained drainage compound the negative impacts of flooding. There is also the disruption of economic activities, which reduces the income of low-income people, and the disruption of education. All these further exacerbate the poverty level of the inhabitants of poor communities. (Lawanson, Proverbs, & Ibrahim, 2023).

The 2022 flood affected many parts of the country; 34 of the 36 states were affected, and 200,000 homes were destroyed (Akbarzai, Smith, & McCluskey, 2022; Zachariah). According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the 2022 flood had the highest death toll following the 2012 flood (Amogu, 2023). Many stated that the Flood was the worst experienced in the country following the 2012 flood. According to the United Nations Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nigeria was among the countries listed as flooding hotspots in 2022. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) stated that 662 persons died, 3,174 suffered injuries, and the 2022 flood disaster displaced 2,430,445 individuals (Ogune, 2023).

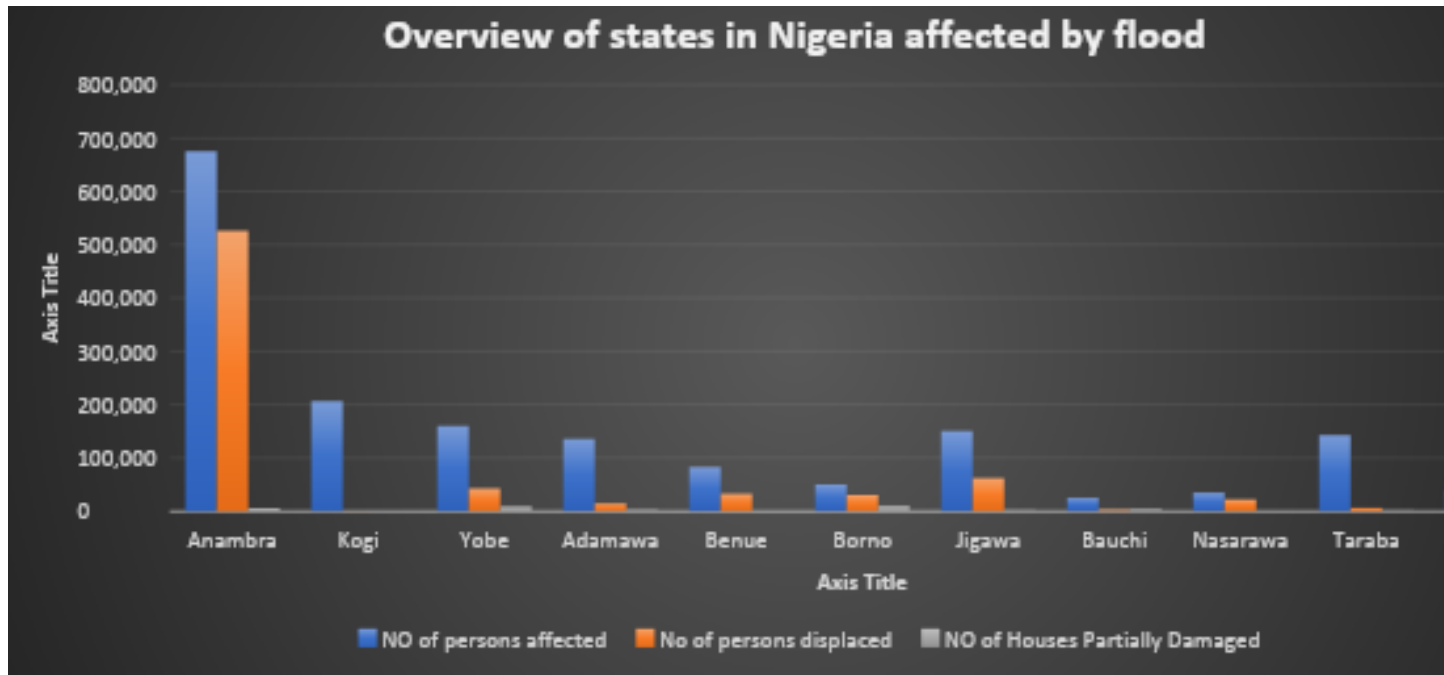
The Flood happened due to heavy rains, climate change, poor infrastructure, erosion, and poor building practices, especially on floodplains. Also, the release of excess water from the Lagdo dam in Cameroon and the failure of the Nigerian government to build a twin dam to take in the released water was significant (Jones, 2022; Zachariah). The Dasin Hausa Dam was supposed to be two and a half the size of the Lagdo Dam in Adamawa state. However, sadly, since 1982, the Nigerian government has yet to complete the building of the Dasin Hausa Dam. As a result, anytime the Cameroonian government releases excess water from the Lagdo dam, communities in Kogi, Benue, northeastern and other states get flooded, resulting in massive damages (Wahab, 2022). The need to mitigate the impacts of flooding has become a public issue of global interest as reflected in various international treaties, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This research paper examines the impact of the 2022 flood in Nigeria and proffers policy recommendations that may help ameliorate the devastating effect of future flood occurrence. The research seeks to answer the extent to which the 2022 flood affected the Nigerian State.

Impact of the floods

- **Food Security:** An assessment by a team of three multi-disciplinary scientists, including one experienced staff from each of the respective states' Agricultural Development Program (ADP) and State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). The assessment was to ascertain the level of damage in the agricultural sector, revealing that an estimated N700 billion in economic value has been lost to damages caused by the 2022 floods in Nigeria's agricultural-related sector. This includes the loss of 8.4 million tonnes of fourteen crop varieties output, valued at N384.4 billion, with the fish sector accounting for the loss of N100.2 billion. At the same time, over N93.04 billion was also lost in the livestock sector. In addition, the overall loss on agricultural structures and farmlands amounted to over 120 billion naira, with 863,648 hectares of farmlands affected (Adegwu; Omanga, 2023). More than 440,000 hectares of farmland have been partially or damaged. The agricultural losses recorded from flooding incidents led to a catastrophic loss of food access and livelihoods, worsening food scarcity. For instance, Olam Company, one of Nigeria's most prominent contributors to the rice value chain, had its farmland of around 4,400 hectares in Nasarawa state completely submerged by excess water from the river Benue (Okoli & Nwokolo, 2022). These losses caused severe damage to food security.
- **Human Security:** According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flash reports for September 2022, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Nigerian Red Cross (NRC) data from October 2022, a total number of 1,664,467 people have been affected across states while 60,720 shelters were fully damaged and nearly

33,542 shelters were partly damaged in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Benue, Kogi, Jigawa, Bauchi, Nasarawa, Taraba and Anambra states. Also, more than 600 people lost their lives, as well as children across the country (IOM, 2022). The Flood damaged roads, bridges, and transport networks, making transporting people and agricultural goods difficult. According to IOM Flash Appeal Flood Response of 2022, 60754 houses were damaged, increasing victims' vulnerabilities and rendering them homeless.



Data source: National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), 2022

Also, the Flood brought a cholera outbreak. Communities in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states had cases of this outbreak. In the Bay States, 7,485 cases of cholera and 319 associated deaths were reported (UNICEF, 2022). This disease outbreak resulted from water contamination and a lack of hygiene facilities from the Flood. The Flood affected over 230 health facilities, while 30 were completely flooded (acaps, 2022).

- Economic Loss:** According to Reuters, Nigeria's economic growth reduced to 3.5% in the fourth quarter from 3.98% due to widespread flooding, which destroyed farms and hindered other financial operations in affected areas. The Global Rapid Post Disaster Assessment Damage Estimation Technology on the 2022 flood revealed that the range of loss incurred by the country as of November 25, 2022, was between \$3.79bn to \$9.12bn with an estimated amount of \$6.681 billion (best median estimate) as direct damages recorded between June and November 2022 (Omidiji, 2023; Nnodim, 2023).

Recommendations

The damage wrecked by the Flood was massive; hence relevant authorities are to make conscious efforts to reduce the impact of subsequent floods to a large extent. Therefore, government and stakeholders are encouraged to work on institutional gaps and inadequacies in

Nigeria's efforts to deal with flooding and other climate-related disasters. These can be done through:

- The federal government should ensure the completion of the second dam in Nigeria.
- Adopting coordinated spatial planning involves bringing urban planners and environmental practitioners together to organize the distribution of people and activities in an area.
- Government should Invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience, which requires states to put structural, non-structural, and functional disaster risk prevention and reduction measures in critical facilities such as schools, health facilities, and other physical infrastructures to withstand hazards.
- Government should help farmers to engage in dry-season farming to help boost food security.

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