

Climate Induced Crisis: A Case Study of Ibi Skirmish Aftermath of 2012 Flooding

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Abstract

Global insecurity as a result of insurgences over many parts of the world seems to be warring against the major global concern of this era. Climate change seems to be having alliance with increasing insecurity in the world. Barely coming out of the global financial, economic, energy and food crisis that swept most part of the world in 2008, Nigeria is yet weighed down again by environmental and social insurgences in the last two years. For instance, largest part of the nation revenue that would have been used to create million jobs is on security and to woo foreign support on security matter in the nation. Because of the sensitivity of the dual facet monster, and the numerous octopus-like hands of its operation, stakeholders seem confused or divided. The seemingly division at the head appears priming dis-connection at the various parts of the body.

Increase rate of flooding has created an unimaginable trauma, economic shocks, reduced employment, raised recruitment of armed groups and eventually gave room to seemingly unending violence in the northern part of the nation. To overcome these problems, this present government has invested so much in youth targeted programmes and projects to alleviate poverty. In the past two years, almost 60 per cent of the SURE-P income is channelled towards recognition of importance of youth development for sustainable environmental management yet the impact seems eluded.

In attempt to relate environmental changes as a contributor to escalation of conflict in Ibi, Taraba State, the paper traced the linkage of climate change and social unrest along the riparian communities of upper Benue River Basin of Nigeria (Taraba). Using content and interpretative methodologies aimed at understanding through empathy, focus group, in depth- interviewing through phone and examination of archive resources, findings show that there exists latent print of climate change in Ibi crisis. There was glaring usage of the hands condemned by climate change on the causes of the skirmish on Wukari-Ibi. Out of 309 arrested in connection with the case, 179 charged to court, 79.6% have no other means of livelihood but farming. 40.6% lived in flood

prone area and out of this figure more than half are out of farming in that season as a result of 2012 flood hazard with each having, more than 4 dependants. Out of 2.4 million displaced by 2012 flood from the nation, more

25% lived in North – East and about 300 families in Ibi are yet to recover from the flood incidence. Climate change may not be the major cause of the resurgence of boko haram in Nigeria, neither in any part of the world, but the hands condemned by climate change (flooding) in the riparian communities of Taraba co-engineered the Ibi-Wukari skirmish.

This research was conducted for stakeholders in Taraba and Nigeria as a whole to rise up to the challenges of climate change social induced skirmish in Ibi-Wukari and Nigeria so as to prevent its foray in the future now that the election is around the corner.

Keywords: climate change, crisis, Sure-P, boko haram, Ibi-Wukari Taraba

1. Introduction

That climate is changing has now recorded general acceptance and its impact on every sectors of the economy has been scientifically established and documented. The nexus to crisis as a major cause of resurgence is now mind boggling.

Can anomalies of climate cause “anomalies in human”? To what extent can climate variables influence man’s action leading to protest and consequent violence. These and others are the mind boggler questions on the tree of philosophy of climate change – crisis nexus.

Conflict or crisis in the world is as old as the world. Crises come garbed in different garments, as a consequence of human mistakes and inability to properly decipher among other things. Anywhere it is ignited in the world it tears apart, brings mistrust, undue tension and deters progress. This is not untrue to what is happening in Nigeria today especially in the north –east. This is probably not unconnected to the clamour for National dialogue by the present administration. This is so to straighten the crooked ways for orderliness and smooth running of the country’s administration, economically, politically and socially.

Many reasons like poverty, joblessness, religious dichotomy, and mistrust between communities, external influence and pry have been adduced as contributors to conflicts in the nation and the world. Scramble for scarce economic resources especially land has been correlated with boundary dispute and brawl (Francis et al.,

2013). Of recent, Climate change connection to causes of inter boundary disputes is on the world digital board. Researchers from Princeton, Berkeley and Cambridge, according to Jen (2013) asserted that past climatic events have had a significant influence on human conflict. They added that the relationship between climate changes and increase violence is a strong one, but they suggested that further research is needed to determine how these changes manifest themselves into violence.

In 2012, Nigeria witnessed cases of occurrences that are beyond her imagination and immediate control that seriously affected her income and the economy. It sapped the national reserved and adjusted every sphere of the national planning. The least recognized in the national budget has taken the uppermost. The quest to ameliorate the situations has shifted priority. Curbing and keeping self-imposed crisis has almost replaced the primary goal of the nation especially that toward achievement of MDGs which Nigeria is a signatory.

This case report is an abstract from an on-going research title “Towards climate- change crisis’ challenge and food security in Taraba State. It will ever be remembered that Climate change has caused the highest spread destruction and psychological trauma in 2012 in the history of Nigeria. The case in the north east 2012 is a typical example of where cross boundary flooding can cause cross boundary damage, looting and consequence conflict. Any acts that strengthening communal conflicts will fortify cultism and capable of increasing act of terrorism. Emile Durkheim submitted that the world is a machine, comprising a large member of complex interacting systems in which everything is both cause and effect; identifying and representing those systems is the basis for understanding cause and effect in environmental and human system Emile (2012). In line with this, the objective of this paper is to examine the latent print of climate change in Ibi and attempt to link- nail these environmental changes as a contributor to escalation of conflict in Ibi.

2. Materials and Method

Ibi is one of the 16 local Government Areas (LGA) that made up Taraba states. The location of Ibi (Lat.8° 11' and long 9° 45') with its climatic condition are conducive for cultivation of a large variety of agricultural products. Due to the richness of the minerals in the parent rock; these soils are generally well suited for rice, maize, guinea corn likewise arable farming and tree crops production. The LGA covers an area of 2,672km² (Bureau for land and survey, Jalingo Taraba State, 2012). To the West, it shares boundary with Nasarawa state, to the East Gassol LGA, to the South Wukari and to the North, Plateau State. The notable economic activities of the inhabitants are fishing and farming. The Benue trough which is about 5,500meters deep is a booster to fishing as sources of livelihood. However, both River Taraba and River donga flowed into the Benue River within the LGA Figure (1) with increasing dosage of rainfall influence by the south westerly, the mean annual rainfall is high (1016-1270mm). The confluence in this LGA pose sharp memory to the underground water, couple with high rainfall, yearly flooding is eminent Adelalu, (2014b).

Apart from personal observation and comment from News media, structured questionnaires were administered with the assistance of trained Research Assistants and officers in charge to about 179 culprits charged to court in connection with the Wukari-Ibi skirmish beside the statements made by each. Information gathered included socio-economic status, means of livelihood, environmental influence and extent on means of livelihood after the flood. Because it was administered by some officers in charge, almost 96% of the questionnaires were retrieved and analysed using descriptive statistics.

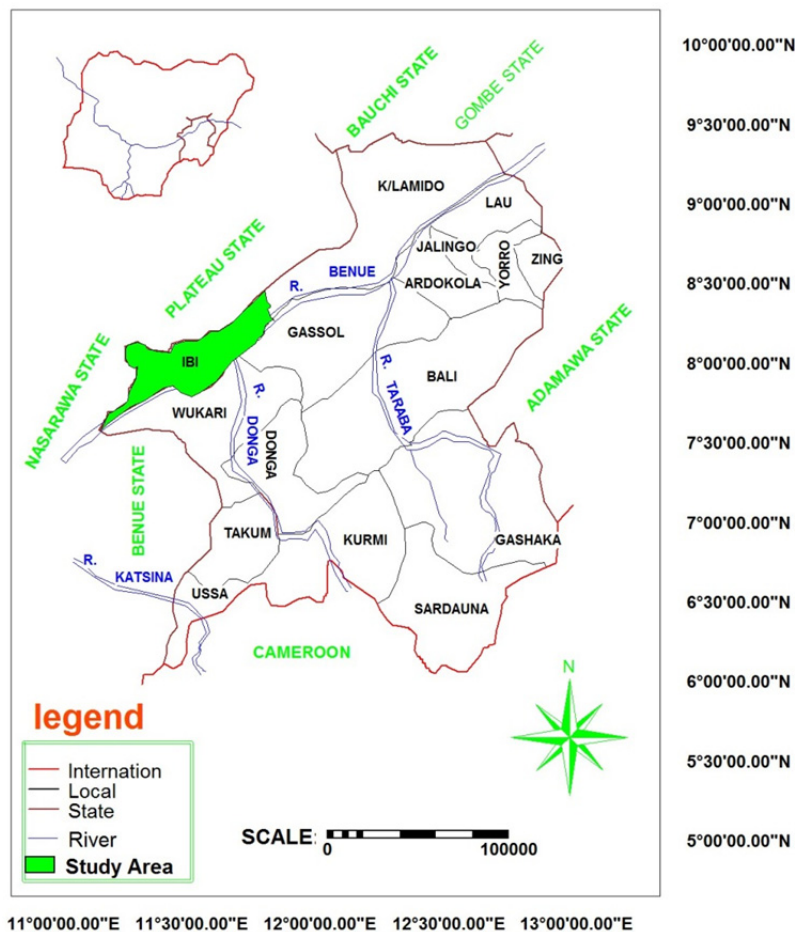


Figure 1. Map of Taraba State Showing the Study Area

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Environmental Changes and Human Unrest in Ibi

There is evidence of climate change in Taraba state Adebayo (2012). To the north of the state rainfall has been decreasing while to the south vice versa. The resultant flood are being aggravated in Adamawa and many parts of Taraba states especially Ibi by the release of excess water from Lagdo dam in Cameroon. The effect of 2012 flood within Ibi LGA include outbreak of disease, washing away of farmland, lives and properties destruction. Emmanuel (2013), on his research work on the socio-economic effect of 2012 flood in Ibi submitted that about

16% of the respondents have their building destroyed and properties washed away.34% have their farmland washed away by the flood and the produced destroyed. 30% claimed to have lost close relatives and animals. Other effects of 2012 include road submergence preventing easy transportation of goods and services. Schools, markets, churches, drainage channels are flooded and blocked with wastes. Electricity and telephone poles pulled down, cutting the area from the rest of the state consequent denial of access to quick government aids figure (8). Aftermath of the flood was obvious that farmers are the most hit figure (6). Flood caused the widespread destruction and psychological trauma in 2012.

According to Taraba State Broadcasting Station T.S.B.S. News (9th July. 2013) drawn from results of memorandum presented by chairman into enquiry of Ibi-Wukari crisis commission, 309 arrests were made concerning the issue. Based on the findings 179 were charged to court majorly youth below age 35. 79.6% have no other means of livelihood but farming. 40.6% lived in flood prone area and out of this figure more than half are out of farming- the only source of livelihood in that season as a result of 2012 flood hazard with each, having 4 dependant figs (5).

Examining the modest impact of emerging nexus in climate change and conflict, brilliant attempt has been submitted by Jack Hamiton. In his report on the violence in plateau, Jos Nigeria, the ascribed causes noted by the

respondents has been political and cultural issues. According to him, little attention was paid to one of the chief catalyst behind the conflict: Climate change Jack (2012). He submitted that climate change was a driver of conflict over the scarce resources in the region. Increase demand for farmable land, water for domestic and agricultural use is creating mass migration and antagonizing pre-existing tensions in a vicious circle like Jos. He added that variability in food production and prices of food stuffs has led to social unrest which in turns exacerbates the instability in food production and local investment.

A study by Adelalu (2011) on Climatic variability and water availability in Yola in Upper Benue River Basin, showed that rainfall total is fast reducing while cases of flooding is fast increasing. He discovered increased cases of dry spells, heat stress, drop in water tables and consequent shortage of water and foliage for animal feed. To overcome the problems, many have resulted in planting on the river beds, digging of river beds and sinking of bore hole on the beds not only for agricultural purposes but for domestic need. The reverse was the case in Ibi especially after farming season in 2012. The flood high jacked businesses, farmlands and other mean of livelihood in the community figure (5). Everything came to almost stand still. Throughout the year, increase rate of flooding created an unimaginable trauma, economic shocks, reduced employment, raised recruitment to idleness which is capable of and eventually gave room to seemingly unending violence in the state.

Climate change may not have a direct link to the insurgence of boko haram in Nigeria, neither in any part of the world, but it seems the hands condemned by climate (flooding) in the riparian communities of Taraba engineered the Ibi- Wukari skirmish. As we know that idleness negates prosperity since it is a devil workshop.

Cursory look into the past crisis in the state revealed some political scheming. It is the material environment that determines the formation of cleavages in terms of social group Durkheim (2012). Of course, there are underlying social and political tensions, inequalities, grievances so to say but the state remains one and peaceful until the flood struck: the last struck that broke the camel's back.

As at the time of this report, more than 300 families are yet to recover from the trauma of 2012 flood. The lingered flood destroyed many communities; flushed away many farm lands, made many widows, and rendered the youthful hands jobless for a whole farming seasons (Adelalu, 2014a).

People normally migrate to avoid being ridiculed and associated with very negativity of the society. But is not always easy, migration into state capital, Jalingo has led to congestion, higher cost of living and different waves of crimes like assassin, attack on the speaker and convoy, pick pockets and other unfortunate trends unheard of at least for the past decade. (Adelalu, 2014a)

The hike in price of grains especially rice (local rice) in Abuja and in many parts of Nigeria in the festive mood (2013) is not unconnected to deliberate withdrawal of rice farmers as a result of fear of repeat of the case of flooding of 2012 in many communities in north east especially in the land of the nature's gift to the nature. In the same vain, the submission by Abdulwasiu Hassan on 4th of September in daily Trust concerning food insecurity and consequent hike in prices for coarse grain in the same period is not unconnected with disconnection of majority of staple food farmers as a result of 2012 flood.

The issue of ban on importation of foreign rice when local farmers cannot meet the need of the nation call for rumination. This situation must be consciously dealt with. Taraba as a gift to the nation has the potential. Out of

16 local governments in Taraba, only Sardauna Gembu is unsuitable for rice production. Taraba State if properly harnessed has the potential and ingredients to meet the nation's grain need and to exploit Adelalu (2014b). The problem noticeable are cultivation of low productive rice and lag in modern mechanization (Oruonye, et al 2012) now glaring is **severe weather cases**.

This monster, is no doubt backpedalling practically all effort of tiers of governments in the whole world and to be specific the Sahel region of Africa. It has deprived many of seeing the dividend of democracy. For instance in Nigeria, this present government has invested so much in youth development. In the area of creating youth awareness, instilling courage to mobilize them for creativeness using media and creating enabling environment targeted to eradicate poverty. In line with this, almost 60% of the SURE-P income is channelled towards recognition of the importance of youth development for sustainable environmental management yet the impact seems eluded.

3.2 Ameliorating Climate Induced Challenges in Taraba State as Climate Shift

The on-going Kashimbilla construction as shock absorber to Lagdo dam is a welcome idea but to build long-term resilience in any communities; long-term strategies must go beyond building of dam.

TEPA should as a matter of urgency come out with blueprint which should include awareness of importance of

alley farming of all the wide spread flood prone area of Taraba and the gesture should extend to all areas in the north east where this flash flood are regular occurrence. This will boost the fertility of the flood plain and checkmate the flash flood. Hazard assessments based on remote sensing data, damage reports and field observations of the zone of the sensitive flood prone areas, incorporating GIS which should take cognizance to climate change among others and placements of such information on Nigeria map is expedient. The effort should include regenerating the landscape of affected states to save the areas from worse hit in the next return.

According to Nigeria Sunrise, Brono Agency for Nomadic Education has graduated about 350 persons, mostly nomads, women and widow affected by the recent insurgence from rural areas having undergone various post literacy and diploma courses in adult education. This is a giant step to ameliorate abnormality but beyond this, employment of the condemned hands is an antidote for idle hand is devil’s workshop.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

A thorough mug up of the situation in Ibi after the 2012 flood revealed that there exist latent print of climate change in Ibi crisis. There was glaring usage of the hands condemned by climate for the skirmish. Environmental change is taking new dimension and could have link to crisis, therefore, continuous assessment

of hydrological and climatological data as globe become warmer is pertinent. Monitoring and evaluating change in rainfall and runoff, land use as it affects the living conditions and social processes of both upstream and downstream users of catchments are required. Speedy execution of the proposed idea by all the stakeholders and National councils on water resource regarding operation “back- to- land ” for graduates especially Agricultural aligned support scheme is a welcome idea. This will not only addressed joblessness and put food on the tables of our teaming youths but bring back our epithets “the groundnut pyramid in the north”, the cocoa ‘indogi’ in

the west” Socio-economic status of the suspects arrested in connection with the Ibi skirmish

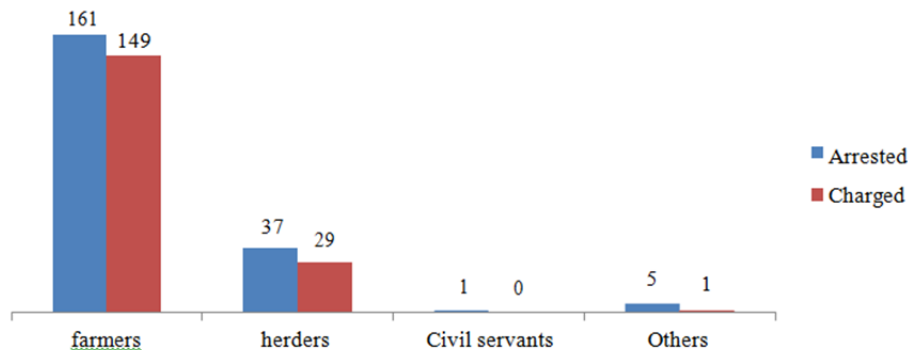


Figure 2. Occupational status of the suspects arrested in connection with the skirmish

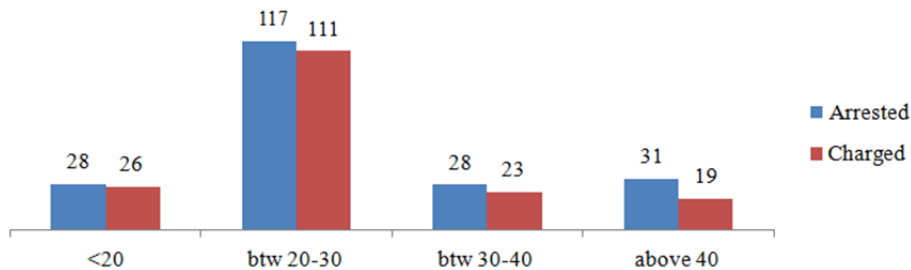


Figure 3. Age group of the suspects arrested in connection with the skirmish

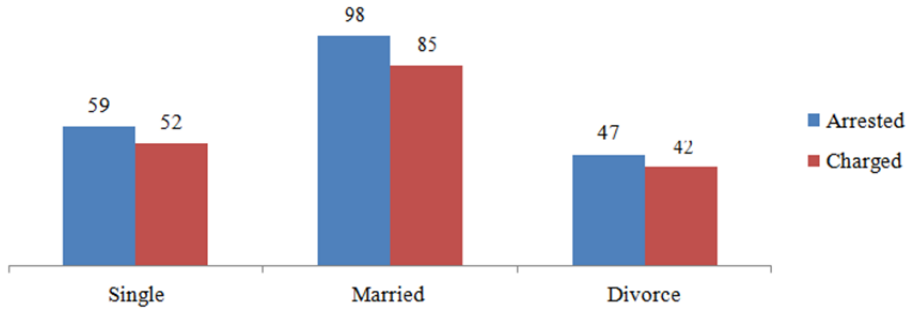


Figure 4. Marital status of the suspects arrested in connection with the skirmish

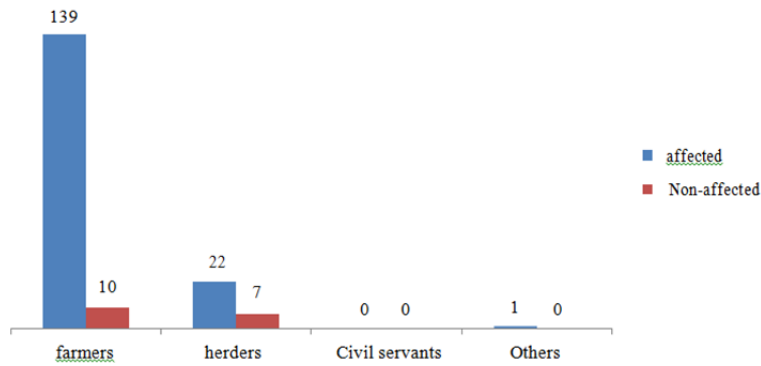


Figure 5. 2012 Flood victims in Ibi among the suspects arrested in connection with the skirmish

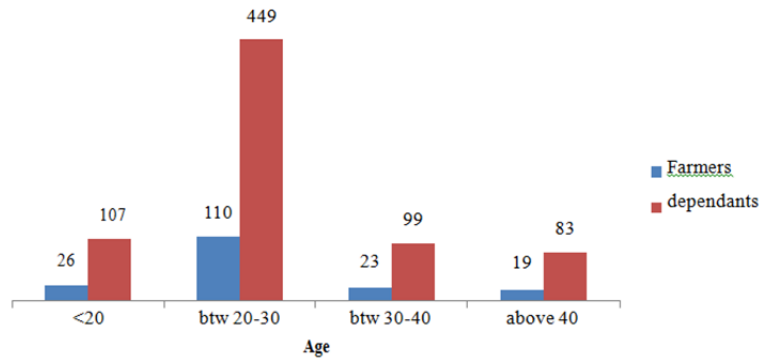


Figure 6. Culprits (Farmers) without other means of livelihood and their dependants

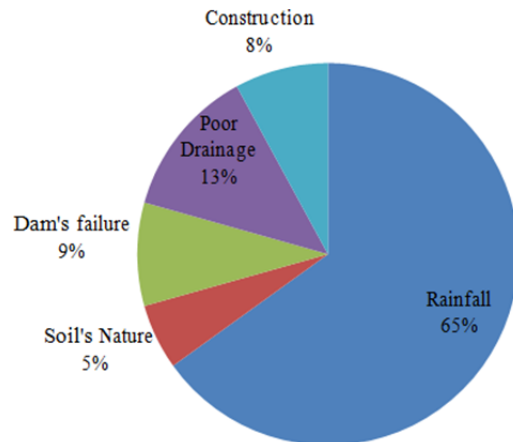


Figure 7. People's knowledge of the cause of 2012 flood in Ibi.

Source: culled from Emmanuel A.Y (2013)

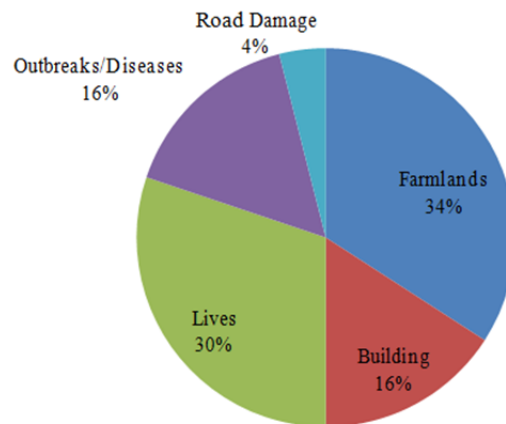


Figure 8. 2012 flood and effects on Ibi environ

Source: culled from Emmanuel A.Y (2013)

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