

Examination of Flood Disaster and Government Attitudes Taraba State Experience

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Abstract

Flood disaster, is a natural endemic, that has engulf Taraba State, rendering lives and the food security incapacitated, the State is in a more vulnerable stage, an attempt for search of solutions by the government and other agency add more salt to the injury, simply because the attitude of the Government is uncoordinated, insincere and unprepared but mere propaganda of interest, unknowingly to many, Taraba state produced 35-40% of the food that feed the Nation, the flood disaster in Taraba State has a dual effects, one against the food security of the Nation and against lives and properties of the people. The paper examine the relationship that exist between the two important variables and the roles play as a means of nailing to board the ugly situation which have multiple effects, one on human lives, economic and the food security of the Nation. The paper make recommendations on how flood disaster can be management using more viable strategy to mitigate the effects of the damage caused by the flood and to avoid subsequent occurrences.

Keywords: Flood disaster, Government Attitudes and Taraba State.

1. Introduction

According Wikipedia A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land which is normally dry. The European Union (EU) Floods Directive defines a flood as a covering by water of land not normally covered by water. In the sense of "flowing water", the word may also be applied to the inflow of the tide. Flooding may occur as an overflow of water from water bodies, such as a river or lake, in which the water overtops or breaks levees, resulting in some of that water escaping its usual boundaries, or it may occur due to an accumulation of rainwater on saturated ground in an area flood. While the size of a lake or other body of water will vary with seasonal changes in precipitation and snow melt, these changes in size are unlikely to be considered significant unless they flood property or drown domestic animals.

Floods can also occur in rivers when the flow rate exceeds the capacity of the river channel, particularly at bends or meanders in the waterway. Floods often cause damage to homes and businesses if they are in the natural flood plains of rivers. While reverie flood damage can be eliminated by moving away from rivers and other bodies of water, people have traditionally lived and worked by rivers because the land is usually flat and fertile and because rivers provide easy travel and access to commerce and industry.

Some floods develop slowly, while others such as flash floods can develop in just a few minutes and without visible signs of rain. Additionally, floods can be local, impacting a neighborhood or community, or very large, affecting entire river basins. The 2012 rainy season in Nigeria has been worse than earlier years, and heavy rains at the end of August and the beginning of September led to serious floods in most parts of the country. The Nigerian authorities contained the initial excess run-off through contingency measures, but during the last week of September water reservoirs have overflow and authorities were obliged to open dams to relive pressure in both Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon and Niger, leading to destroyed river banks and

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infrastructure, loss of property and livestock and flash floods in many areas. By 29 Sep, the floods had affected 134,371 people, displaced 64,473, injured 202 and killed 148. (IFRC, 29 Sep 2012) By the end of October, more than 7.7 million people had been affected by the floods, and more than 2.1 had registered as IDPs. 363 people were reported dead; almost 600,000 houses had been damaged or destroyed. Out of Nigeria's 36 states, 32 have been affected by the floods. (OCHA, 15 Nov 2012) By January 2013, the rivers were back at their usual water levels and further flooding was not expected in the short term (IFRC, 29 Jan 2013)

2. Flood Disaster and the Food Security

Taraba state is one of the 36 states of the federal that feed the nation, in term of agriculture and the state is endowed with food crop that the nation depend on. Agriculture is the major occupation of its citizenry of the state and most of the farm land is situated by the river basin, hence the area is vulnerable to flooding. The 2012 flooding has devastated, the state washing away the food crops on the land, bring about poor yield in the food production of the year under review. Heavy rains in recent years have triggered flood-related disasters in rural parts of the Taraba state that could have significant adverse effects on food security in the region.

While strong rains are expected at this time of the year, no one anticipated that the current downpour season would unleash one of the worst environmental disasters in year. Taraba state, for example, experienced its worst flooding in 2012. More local government areas and districts mostly in the rural north and central zone of the state have been affected by floods.

The flooding and the torrential rains came at a particularly bad time as farmers have yet to harvest their crops. The floodwater may be receding in many areas and the storm threat may have been lowered, but the real longer term cost has yet to be seen. Fields were also destroyed and farmers in central and northern Taraba state have been left devastated. The recent disasters are expected to create a notable dip in the agricultural output in the Taraba state, and this could worsen hunger incidences in the already food producing state.

3. Flood Disaster and Government Attitudes

Flood disaster does occur as a surprise as some people think, it has signs of warning which a careful government may found important and as an input to mitigate the effects there after, but government tend to act when the damage has been made. Flooding warning are mostly published nationwide and States involve are advise accordingly to set up technical mitigation committee on the way forward. Government are only seen setting committee on relief management which were mostly unmerited those affected were left to their fate of rebuilding their homes, the rural poor will then have to worry about making their lands productive again and national and local governments and the state care less, when the state should suppose to be ready to provide their farmers with any necessary emergency relief and technical assistance that will boast the land and measures base on technical suggestions on how to limit it frequency . But it shouldn't be viewed as a kind of parochial concern of individual farmer but State problem and the coordinating relief efforts at all level. It should start by convening immediately to assess and resolve the food security issues and agricultural trade imbalances created by the floods and the technical nature of the management strategy for future replication. When government attitudes towards flooding become positive, the effects will not be much and the outcry will also not be high too.

4. Government Effort in Preparing For a Flood

Here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the flood by government:

- Contact the local geologist or town planning department or meteorology department to find out if your home is located in a flash-flood-prone area or landslide-prone area.
- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters.
- Plan and practice a flood evacuation route with your family. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be the "family contact" in case your family is separated during a flood. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.

5. Community Effort in Preparing For a Flood

Here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the flood by community:

- Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the flood strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power when there is standing water, fallen power lines. Secure structurally unstable building materials.
- For drains, toilets, and other sewer connections, install backflow valves or plugs to prevent floodwaters from entering.
- Anchor fuel tanks which can contaminate your basement if torn free. An anchored tank outside can be swept downstream and damage other houses.

6. Individual Effort in Preparing For a Flood

- Gather the emergency supplies you previously stocked in your home and stay tuned to local radio or television station for updates..
- Have your immunization records handy or be aware of your last tetanus shot, in case you should receive a puncture wound or a wound becomes contaminated during or after the flood.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles with clean water. Sanitize the sinks and tubs first by using bleach. Rinse and fill with clean water.
- Bring outdoor possessions, such as lawn furniture, grills and trash cans inside or tie them down securely.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations were advanced to government and those that are directly involve by the flood;

1. Government should set a permanent agency who will serve as technical committee on flood disaster with a viable research unit that is functional and has local offices all over the state as means of proactive measure
2. Set a relief management team that will sincerely address the needs of the victims affected.
3. Communities and individuals in warning areas should be relocated or giving an enlightenments on hazard of the flood
4. Safety and Security measure is also essential by individual because any natural calamities espouse itself with serious devastation to transportation, communication channel, supply of electricity etc. Hence, in

the immediate aftermath of any calamity, the surrounding environment becomes dangerous and unsafe due to its exposure to toxic and harmful objects. This becomes more important for children as they are usually overlooked by the parents during the calamity or in the immediate aftermath of it.

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