

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Climate change and variability are concerns of human being. The recurrent droughts and floods threaten seriously the livelihood of billions of people who depend on land for most of their needs. The global economy is adversely being influenced very frequently due to extreme events such as droughts and floods, cold and heat waves, forest fires, landslips etc. The natural calamities like earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, though not related to weather disasters, may change chemical composition of the atmosphere. It will, in turn, lead to weather related disasters. Increase in aerosols (atmospheric pollutants) due to emission of greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide due to burning of fossil fuels, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) etc., Ozone depletion and UV-B filtered radiation, eruption of volcanoes, the “human hand” in deforestation in the form of forest fires and loss of wet lands are causal factors for weather extremes. The loss of forest cover, which normally intercepts rainfall and allows it to be absorbed by the soil, causes precipitation to reach across the land eroding top soil and causes floods and droughts. Paradoxically, lack of trees also exacerbates drought in dry years by making the soil dry more quickly. Among the greenhouse gases, CO₂ is the predominant gas leading to global warming as it traps long wave radiation and emits it back to the earth surface. The global warming is nothing but heating of surface atmosphere due to emission of greenhouse gases, thereby increasing global atmospheric temperature over a long period of time. Such changes in surface air temperature and consequent adverse impact on rainfall over a long period of time are known as climate change. If these parameters show year-to-year variations or cyclic trends, it is known as climate variability. Agriculture is one of the sectors most affected by ongoing climate change. The wide range of literature on this subject demonstrates that damages caused by climate change can be relevant to both cropping and livestock activities (IPCC, 1990; Adams et al., 1998).

Climate change will have a significant effect on the rural landscape and the equilibrium of agrarian and forest ecosystems (Walker and Steen, 1997; Bruijnzeel, 2004). In fact, climate change can affect different agricultural dimensions, causing losses in productivity, profitability and employment. Food security is clearly threatened by climate change (Sanchez, 2000; Siwar et al., 2013), due to the instability of crop production, and induced changes in markets, food prices and supply chain infrastructure. Moreover, because of the multiple socio-economic and bio-physical factors affecting food systems and, consequently food security, the capacity to adapt food systems to reduce their vulnerability to climate change is not uniform from a spatial point of view (Gregory et al., 2005). However, besides its primary role in producing food and fibres, agriculture performs also other functions, such as the management of

renewable natural resources, the construction and protection of landscape, the conservation of biodiversity, and the contribution to maintain socioeconomic activities in marginal and rural areas. Climate change could affect also this multifunctional role of agriculture (Klein et al., 2013). The ongoing effects of climate change require the individuation of mitigation policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and identify appropriated adaptation strategies that aim to contain agricultural losses both in market goods and environmental services (such as protection of biodiversity, water management, landscape preservation and so on). These strategies can easily be identified and applied if the economic effects of climate change on agriculture are assessed. However, creating models that are able to assess these effects accurately can present difficulties for several reasons. The first is data availability: while data are frequently available, they are not disaggregated on the necessary temporal and/or spatial scales. Another reason is that research about the effects of climate change involves multidisciplinary skills and competencies because analyses of the effects of climate change involve many factors such as the consideration of (Bosello and Zang, 2005):

1. Climate and other induced climate-change environmental aspects,
2. Biological and plant physiology aspects,
3. Technical and socioeconomic factors,
4. Strategies to coping with the effects of climate change,
5. Impacts on the main economic adjustment mechanisms at the national and international level,
6. Feedback of the changed conditions on climate.

Economic and agricultural policies play an important role in such analyses, as does the geographical scale (e.g. local, regional or international) considered for the analysis. In addition to these aspects, it is also important to consider the temporal and spatial variability of the events which in turn causes a difficult predictability of future scenarios.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The change in climate over the years has been having lots of impacts on the communities of the various nations of the world. Nigeria has been having her share of the impacts of climate change. These impacts are felt by the farmers of Nigeria and Kebbi State in particular. Climate change is known to be having impacts on farming practices thereby having effects on agricultural production by the farmers. The main trust is to determine the impact of

climate change on farming practices in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The question is how have farmers been coping with the impacts of the climate change all these years? When the answer to this question is found, communities will not drift away from their locations for other places. When the farmers are allowed to move away from their various locations due to the impacts of climate change, the consequence will be communities or households drifting from one place to another. This will result in hunger, poor health and poor wellbeing of the farmers' households (Maginness & Stephens 2008 and Lal, Alavalapati & Mercer, 2011). Other results of rural-urban shift due to detrimental climate change effects includes stresses and disturbances such as increased land use change, pollution, wild invasive species (U.S. Global change research programme (USGCRP) 2009). As these shifts continue there will be high pressure on the social amenities in the newly found home, urban area (Rumble, Tubb & Acher, 2008), hence the need for the study to investigate the effects of climate change on farming practices in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The major purpose of this study is to examine the effect of climate change on farming practices. Other general objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the nature of climate change.
2. To examine the awareness of effects of climate change on farming practices by farmers.
3. To examine the effect of climate change on farming practices.
4. To examine the problems farmers face due to effects of climate change.
5. To examine the relationship between effects of climate change and farming practices.
6. To suggest the strategies for alleviating the impacts of climate change on

agricultural practices in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of climate change?
2. What is the level of awareness of effects of climate change on farming practices by farmers?
3. What are the effects of climate change on farming practices?
4. What are the problems farmers face due to effects of climate change?
5. What is the relationship between effects of climate change and farming practices?
6. What are the strategies for alleviating the impacts of climate change on agricultural practices in Nigeria?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no effect of climate change on farming practices.

H₁: There is a significant effect of climate change on farming practices.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between effect of climate change and farming practices.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between effect of climate change and farming practices.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be beneficial to government, agricultural extension workers, farmers and other researchers. The study will provide information on the perceived extent to which climate change has impacted on farming practices.

The information will help government to encourage and support farmers in production activities. The knowledge of the findings would help the government to make policies on how to check the effects of climate change on agriculture in Kebbi state and Nigeria in general. The study will provide information to agricultural extension workers on adaptation strategies, which they could teach the farmers to adapt to in such situations. One of the purposes of the study is to discover the suitable strategies for alleviating the impact of climate. The information would serve as a body of knowledge for the agricultural extension workers who teach the farmers on improved farming practices.

The findings of the study would help farmers to reduce the impact of climate change on agricultural practices. The study will suggest to the farmers suitable adaptation options in coping with climate change effects on agriculture. An understanding of the impacts of climate change would help the framers to mount appropriate strategies to keep agricultural practices profitable to matching the varying trend in farming activities. The study could be used as a resource material on climate change and its impact on agriculture for researchers who may be interested in researching on related topics. The research is equipped with the findings on the impacts of climate change on farming practices.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the effect of climate change on farming practices in Kebbi state

LIMITATION OF STUDY

Financial constraint- Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (Internet, questionnaire and interview).

Time constraint- The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Climate Change: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and / or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.

Farming: Farming is the act or process of working the ground, planting seeds, and growing edible plants.

Practices: A method, procedure, process, or rule used in a particular field or profession; a set of these regarded as standard.

EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON FARMING PRACTICES IN KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA

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