

PDF - ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICES AMONG CROP FARMERS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA - researchcub.info

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

According to the United Nation report (1984), Land-use management is the world's most important environmental and productivity problem. Land degradation, especially soil erosion, soil nutrient depletion and soil moisture stress, is a major problem confronting many African countries (13th International Soil Conservation Organisation Conference (ISCO), 2004).

Environmental degradation in National, State and Community levels in Nigeria is now a critical issue posing serious threats to the populace (Ezemonye, 2007). The major processes of land degradation are physical (in the form of soil erosion, compaction, and crusting and iron pan formation) (Kathleen, 1993). In Nigeria, one of the most serious problems of land-management is soil erosion. Soil erosion constitutes one of the greatest environmental and productivity problems, causing an estimated 30 million tonnes of soil loss annually. Although erosion is a natural process human land use policies also have an effect on erosion, especially industrial agriculture, deforestation, and urban sprawl (Montgomery, 2008, Kotke, 2007). Most of these severe and frightening soil erosion problems and catastrophes in Nigeria are found in many parts of South Eastern region where population densities and resource pressure in these parts rank among the highest in rural Africa. There have been several reports on this ravaging situation in the Southeast, "the conditions, under which our kith and kin have to make their daily living in Nigeria, are hellish and inhuman," (Orabuchi, 2006).

Soil degradation is a serious problem in Nigeria (World Bank, 1990). Deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, soil salinization, alkalinization and water-logging, form different but often interrelated aspects of soil degradation (Chukwuemeka Okoye, 2009). In Nigeria, soil degradation affects about 50 million people and leads to the greatest loss of Gross National Product (US \$3000 million per year) relative to other environmental problems (World Bank, 1990). Recent years have witnessed a rise of serious concern about the environmental risks associated with modern agricultural practices. Accelerated soil erosion is one of the major constraints to agricultural production in many parts of Enugu State.

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