



## **The menace of floods in the Benue Trough and vulnerability analysis: 2017 Flood**

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Floods pose tremendous danger to people's lives and properties. Globally, they cause about one third of all deaths, injuries and damage from natural disasters (Askew, 1999). In Nigeria, the pattern is similar to the rest of world, (NEMA Annual Report 2012). Flooding in various parts of Nigeria has forced millions of people from their homes, destroyed businesses, polluted water resources and increased the risk of diseases (Baiye, 1988; Akinyemi, 1990; Nwaubani, 1991; Edward-Adebisi, 1997). In 2012, the country experienced its worst floods for 80 years (NEMA Sept 9th 2012; ngrguardiannews.com). Four states namely Adamawa, Kogi, Benue and Taraba within the Benue Trough were the worst hit. Like most urban areas of the third world, the states affected have experienced accelerated population growth which has led to changes in land use activities. The 2017 floods saw most communities in Benue state thrown into chaos. This was associated with pluvial floods, minor river channels, canals and poor surface water drainage. The studies further showed that flooding is a significant problem, response has been slow at best, lacking in most cases and there is reluctance from stakeholders to participate in the exercise. Pluvial floods are becoming an increasing problem in the Benue Trough and have more long term implications as very limited response is provided. Most of the areas where people were displaced in 2017 were from inland areas. In addition, the quality of human settlements in terms of temporary shelters used for displaced people, housing type and construction, infrastructure, and lifelines in the affected communities were of poor quality. This highlights the devastating impact pluvial floods can have on local communities. Scale of analysis is used to examine the event: vulnerability as a scale-dependant variable determined by spatial scale (global to individual) and specificity of a place, and also time scale taking into consideration a number of indicators (over a period of time or for a specific moment in time) (Cutter et al, 2003; Collins et al, 2009).