



Emerging initiatives in sustainable coastal hazard management in Nigeria: The role of environmental statistics

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Nigeria is one of the maritime countries in Africa. It lies within the tropics along the Gulf of Guinea, on the western coast of Africa. The country's topography ranges from lowland along the coast and in the lower Niger Valley to high plateaus in the north and mountains along the eastern border. Nigerians suffer significantly from various types of disasters. Disasters such as floods, tidal waves, coastal erosion, sand-storms, dust-storms, oil spillage and other man-made disasters have claimed many lives in Nigeria and rendered many homeless. In general, Nigeria has a relatively weak economy with an under protected and expansive environment. The contribution of these characteristics make Nigeria's environment especially vulnerable. In Nigeria, flooding, erosion and oil pollution have constituted most critical elements of coastal hazards. The general increase in population in the last two decades has placed more people at risk whenever an extreme weather event occurs. Also the significant increase in human settlement particularly on floodplains over the past thirty years has increased the risk of flooding. However, in recent time, there has been a growing institutional awareness and concern for environmental statistics in Nigeria. This paper examines the emerging initiatives in the collection, use and analysis of environmental statistics in Nigeria. There are a lot of environment-related data in Nigeria which are not readily available as they are usually scattered in the various Government Agencies/Departments in form of technical reports/publications or in files that are not easily accessible as a comprehensive database for this purpose is yet to be put in place. New and emerging initiatives on environmental statistics needed for flood and storm management are identified such INFOTERRA network, and Poverty-Environment Sustainability indicators among others. Difficulties in data collection and its subsequent application (in the area of flood and storm surge) are discussed. The role and assistance of international scientific organisations in Nigeria is examined. The paper concludes that storms and flood can be management through the application of relevant environmental statistics in Nigeria.