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## Research Article

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FOR LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION IN SUB SAHARA REGION

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## ABSTRACT

This study is carrying out the objective of socio-economic impacts for lake Chad basin Commission, these impacts include damages exerted on the natural environment, accessibility to sites, provision of infrastructural facilities and the overall success/failure of the Commission programme. This study reveals the implementation of existing framework of SEIA in order to ensure that local people and other interests are effectively represented in the lake Chad basin Commission.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC or CBLT in French) is an intergovernmental organization that oversees water and other natural resource usage in the basin. There are eight member governments—i.e., Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Algeria, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Sudan—chosen for their proximity to Lake Chad.

The organization's secretariat is located in N'Djamena, Chad. The LCBC is Africa's oldest river or lake-basin organization. In its founding document (the Convention and Statutes relating to the Development of the Chad Basin) the parties commit themselves to a shared use of the basin's natural resources. It is a member of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO).

## KEYWORDS

Lake Chad, impact, Commission, socio-economic, Basin, Region, Sub-sahara.

## INTRODUCTION

Muhammad The prolonged drought in the Sudan Sahelian zone of West Africa has resulted in the proliferation of permanent, semi-permanent and mobile settlements all over the floors of Lake Chad (Ijere, 1997). Increasing aridity has also resulted in herders of different nationalities moving to the Lake floor in the dry season for pasture and water. Migration to these areas has brought about interaction of people of different nationalities resulting in conflicts. Conflict resulting from scramble over diminishing fishing grounds and emerging farmlands are now commonplace. The Nigerian - Chad war of 1983 and current dispute over territory in the Lake area between Nigeria and Chad and also between Nigeria and Cameroon are all fallouts from the drying up of the Lake. The current dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon led to the intervention of the international Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2002. The

International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon led to the ceding of 33 villages to Cameroon in the Lake Chad region (Omipidan, 2005; Bolori, 2005) the decision of the Federal Government to resettle returnees affected by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings on the boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon in some selected communities along the lake Chad area, (fragile environment) is bound to have a lasting impact on the environment (physically and socioeconomically). This study examines the socio-economic impact of the lake Chad basin Commission on the fragile environment of the Lake Chad Basin area of Nigeria. The concept of socio-economic impact studies provides a general framework for the assessment of a development project in order to determine its likely ecological and socio-economic consequences and also determine any possible alternative (Dr Umar Ali 2021). Socio-economic impact involves analysis of potential impacts of new projects on local communities and

wider society, and the development of strategies to manage these impacts. socio-economic impact studies can be carried out as a separate study, but often delivered through an integrated environmental and socio-economic impact studies. Socio economic impact assessments are usually carried out to assist policy makers in making decisions that promote long-term sustainability, including economic prosperity, a healthy community, and social well-being. A socio economic impact examines how a proposed development will change the lives of current and future residents of a community.

Development and socioeconomic situation Generally, inhabitants of the LBC live with relatively high poverty rate and population pressure, with about 50 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The human population in the area is expected to grow annually by

an estimated 2.5–3.0%. The area is also prone to intense water scarcity with access to less than 550 m<sup>3</sup> of water per population in the area is expected to grow annually by an estimated 2.5–3.0%. The area is also prone to intense water scarcity with access to less than 550 m<sup>3</sup> of water per year. Their challenges include poor medical facilities, human literacy, and inadequate water supply. The critical factor to the economy of this region is the level of displacement resulting from the conflict and the consequent unemployment and deprivation. As Boko Haram continues its attacks in the area, thousands are forced to flee across the borders between the countries around the LCB, and within the states, records of thousands of refugees fleeing Nigeria to Cameroon when insurgents sacked Rann, one of the border towns, recorded. The same was the case with over 5000 inhabitants of Baga, another city on the border of Chad, fleeing across the Lake into Ngouboua village in Chad. This new demographic is dependent on aid and accounts for a swelling

vulnerable population and fragile economy in the LCB. The main points for trade and access to local markets for inhabitants, which are the borders are mostly closed for security. Some livestock farmers move their herds through longer routes passing Niger, from Chad

to sell at higher prices at the border markets. Commercial activities from fishing and in Chad. This new demographic is dependent on aid and accounts for a swelling vulnerable population and fragile economy in the LCB. The main points for trade and access to local markets for inhabitants, which are the borders are mostly closed for security. Some livestock farmers move their herds through longer routes passing Niger, from Chad to sell at higher prices at the border markets. Commercial activities from fishing and agriculture have become

restricted. Counter-terrorism endeavor by joint task force has been recorded to involve “clearing out” areas around the border, surrounding forests, and the lake shores. This military style operations targeted at flushing out insurgents have the side effect of destabilizing the lives of local fishermen and farmers Maiduguri, in Borno State, Nigeria, has an ancient history of serving not only as a cultural and religious hub but as the commercial heartbeat of the LCB region. Going back to thousands of years culturally, the Kanem-Bornu Empire and Kanembu of Chad are akin to the Kanuri in Nigeria in the way of life and language. The threat of constant Boko Haram activities over the last few years in the area has negatively affected business in the region and the rest of Northeastern Nigeria.

#### **Brief History of Lake Chad Basin Commission.**

The Lake Chad Basin Commission was created in 1964 by the four countries bordering Lake Chad: Cameroon,

Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The Republic of Central Africa joined the organization in 1996, Libya was admitted in 2008. Observer status is held by Sudan, Egypt, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The aims of the commission are to regulate and control the use of water and other natural resources in the basin and to initiate, promote, and coordinate natural resource development projects and research.

#### **Poverty and ripe recruits**

Following the high levels of displacement and refugee status, inhabitants of the LCB seeking a means of generating income and employment engage in hawking agric produce and menial tasks. Many send their children to Koranic schools, 5 The Socioeconomic Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin Region, entrusting their children whom they are unable to care for to religious teachers. In many cases, this leads to radicalization of the children and the perpetuation of extremism. Scholarly work on reasons why insurgency and terrorism may thrive shows that the socioeconomic environment is a critical predictor. The response of people, especially women, to this is participation in these organizations. Governance failure, corruption, economic marginalization leading to poverty, unemployment, inequality, and hunger are challenges faced by people in Nigeria and the LCB in varying degrees. According to Matfess and corroborated by Walker some Boko Haram women exercised agency in joining the ranks to make their quality of life better. Contrary to the argument of some scholars like Zedalis, regarding this point poverty does breed terrorism. Radicalization is associated ranks to make their quality of life better. Contrary to the argument of some scholars like Zedalis, regarding this point poverty does breed terrorism. Radicalization is associated with poverty in some cases, in the context of Northeastern Nigeria and the LCB, radical groups

offer economic prospects. The study showed women's agency and voice through independence and empowerment in literacy, education, earning power and property right as necessary. Commission's Basin Committee for Strategic Planning (BCSP), coordinates local activities between the member states.

#### Activities lake Chad Basin Commission.

The LCBC controls the hydro-active regions in the Chad Basin, called the Conventional Basin. The initial Conventional Basin consisted of approximately 427,500 km<sup>2</sup> of the total area of the Chad basin in 1964. The definition says it excluded the majority of the terminal depression consisting of desert that provides little or no effective hydrological contribution to the Conventional Basin. This was subsequently expanded to include additional watersheds in northern Nigeria, southern Chad, and northern Central African Republic, with a current total area of 967,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Some projects of the LCBC member countries are linked with the GEF program. In November 2002, the LCBC signed an Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. In July 2000, Lake Chad was declared a Transboundary Ramsar Site of International Importance). The aim is to create a network of national and regional conservation areas in the Chad Basin and to set up institutions dedicated to their sustainable management. In this connection the Chad Wetlands Initiative (CHADWET) was launched in June 2003, organized by the Ramsar Bureau and its Mediterranean Coordination Unit. With the support of MEDWET (Mediterranean Wetlands), the Mediterranean branch of the Ramsar Convention, and its Coordination Unit, CHADWET is set to be developed on the model of MEDWET, again in the framework of the GEF program. With a view to obtaining funding, there were plans to present the

CHADWET to the Ramsar Conference in November 2005 as a Ramsar Regional Initiative.

#### Chad, a system under threat

The shrinking of Lake Chad, which is bordered by 4 African countries (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad), is already an ecological catastrophe but it is fast becoming a very human disaster as well. The 30 million people who live in the lake region are being forced into ever-keener competition for this vital and disappearing resource. The drying-up of the lake water and deterioration of the production capacity of its basin have affected all the socio-economic activities, leading to internal exodus and increased pressure on the natural resources and conflicts between the populations. In addition to the approximately 60% decline in fish production, there has been degradation of pasturelands, leading to shortage of dry matter estimated at 46.5% in certain places in 2006, reduction in the livestock population, and threat to biodiversity.

The situation in the Lake Chad Basin is one of the most important untold stories of recent times. The lake was once one of the largest water bodies on the planet and due to climatic variability, climate change and human pressure on water resources in its basin over recent decades, the lake has shrunk by 90% from 25000 square kms in 1963 to less than 1500 square kilometers in 2001. At the current rate of recession of the water body, the Lake could disappear about twenty years from now, according to climate forecasts of NASA.

Something must be done urgently to reverse the tragic disappearance of Lake Chad if the livelihoods of this vast area are to be safeguarded. This realization led to the setting up in 1964 of The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). Representatives of the Lake Chad Basin countries that border the lake meet to regulate and control the utilization of water and other natural



resources in the Basin and they, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Development Partners are actively seeking new models of Adaptive Water Management that take account of traditional agricultural techniques as well as the need to ensure food security for the people of the region.

There is a realization by the Lake Chad Basin Commission that the diminished flow Photo: FAO foto of water into the lake means that, alongside a radical change in water management techniques, a scheme to replenish the water in Lake Chad is necessary. The flow of the two main sources of replenishment for the lake, the Chari and Logone rivers have decreased significantly in the last 40 years. The Feasibility Study for an ambitious programme to divert water flow from the Oubangui, the major tributary of the Congo River, into the Chari river system will be presented at the Special Event on October 16th.

### Impact on livelihoods

The immediate impact of the drying of Lake Chad is loss of livelihoods. One of the respondents said in an interview that, Many years back, this water used to be what we depend on for farming, fishing and herding. Since the water has dried up, sustaining our livelihoods has become so hard. We can hardly farm now and we record regular death of our livestock because of lack of fodder and water to fatten them. Because of this, most people have abandoned farming, fishing and livestock rearing because they are no longer sustainable in this area.

Loss of the traditional means of livelihood leads to widespread poverty and food insecurity. A 2017 report estimated there were about 10.7 million inhabitants of Lake Chad Region in need of humanitarian services.

Impact on regional stability the shrinking of the lake contributes to regional instability in four ways. First, some of the region's people have taken to criminal activities for survival. One of the major criminal activities in the area is cattle rustling.

Reports have pointed to rising incidence of cattle rustling in the region. It's easy to move cattle over the country borders in the area to evade arrest. Contemporary rustling has been associated with Boko Haram who resort to cattle rustling as additional means of raising fund in support of their operations. Boko Haram has become a serious security problem in the Lake Chad region.

Most of the response to the threat of the group has been military. For example, from 2009 to 2020, Nigeria's defence budget totalled nearly \$21 billion with a substantial part going towards the fight against Boko Haram.

Haram has capitalised on the loss of livelihoods and economic woes to recruit people into its ranks. It either appeals to the poor ideologically or directly uses economic incentives.

Interviews with respondents also revealed that the drying out of the lake has intensified long-distance migration of people and livestock to cities and towns of the basin's countries.

The result has been competition for resources, especially farmer-pastoralist conflict. Between 2016 and 2019, almost 4,000 people died in Nigeria as a result of farmer-pastoralist conflicts.

As the lake has shrunk, the water has shifted towards Chad and Cameroon while the Nigerian and Nigerien sides have dried up. This forces people to cross national borders to reach the shoreline. Respect for boundaries disappears. A complex web of social,

economic, environmental, and political issues spills into interstate conflicts. This conflict relationship caused by access to and management of the lake has seriously affected the collective effort of the region's states to fight Boko Haram.

## CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the socio-economic impact of the resettlement scheme project construction and its effect on the immediate environment. The study shows that very little attention has been devoted to the degree of involvement and participation of the returnees and the host communities compared with the comparative focus upon physical infrastructures. The findings from the study also show that even though infrastructures such as schools, health centres, market stores, viewing centres and boreholes were provided in each of the resettlement sites, they were not the immediate needs of the resettled people. The resettled people would have preferred a canal on the Lake Chad to enhance their means of livelihood and transportation, shelter to accommodate them and land for farming. The resettlement therefore has increased pressure on the already fragile environment of

the Lake Chad region. Thus, contrary to the expected benefits, enhanced income, higher standard of living, increased employment opportunities through general enhancement of farmers and fishermen's welfare by way of government support, most of the returnees have experienced the worst hardships in their life resulting from poor land fertility, displacement, deception and land deprivation.

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