

Recent Changes in Onset and Cessation Dates of Rainfall and their Effects on Farming Activities in Sub-Urban Areas of Lokoja

by

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Abstract

This study examined recent trends in the onset and cessation of rainfall and their effects on farming activities in sub-urban areas of Lokoja, between 1985 and 2014. Walter's method was used to derive the onset and cessation dates in the study area. Copies of questionnaire were administered to farmers in the study area to solicit information on onset and cessation of rainfall, as well as their effects on farming activities. Graphs were drawn to show the changes in the onset and cessation of rainfall in the study area between 1985 and 2014. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse and present the effects of rainfall particularly onset and cessation on farming activities. The findings revealed that the trends in the onset and cessation dates were characterized by inconsistency, and variability. Additionally, it was discovered that onset dates are becoming earlier, while cessation dates are getting late. Also, the yield of crops such as rice, maize, cassava, yam and vegetable are increasing as a result of earlier onset of rainfall resulting in more moisture for these crops. The yield of other crops (such as millet and guinea corn) on the other hand were decreasing due to late cessation of rainfall resulting to excessive availability of water. It was, therefore, recommended that government support for farmers be increased to support the cultivation of rice, maize cassava, yam and vegetable in the study area. It was also suggested that land preparation and planting of crops (maize, yam, cassava rice and vegetable) should be done from 11th of April, which is the determined mean onset date of rainy season in the study area.

Key Words: Onset, Cessation, Farming, Effects, Walter's method, Sub-urban Areas