

CHAPTER 10 GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF NIGERIA

Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- identify various geographical regions of Nigeria.
- describe each region appropriately.
- list resources located in each of the regions.
- identify problems associated with each region.
- suggest possible solutions to each of the problems identified with the various regions.

Introduction

Nigeria has been divided into various geographical regions based on some criteria. Such criteria include geological, climatic and economic characteristics of each region. Each region differs significantly from another. However, there is no region in Nigeria that is not blessed with abundant resources that enhances development. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on the physical setting, people, population and settlement pattern in each of the regions. Various resources and economic activities located in each region are discussed and problems of development identified.

10.1 Southern Coastland

Physical Characteristics

The southern coastland of Nigeria refers to the low-lying region of the country having a height of 150m above sea level, along the coastline running from Lagos down to Calabar. The region is characterized by

creeks and lagoons, swamps and sand bars. The soils are mainly sedimentary deposits. The vegetation is made up of tall and slender mangrove trees, raffia palms and coconuts trees. In this region, the river Niger enters the Atlantic ocean through her many tributaries that deposit alluvial materials that later formed the fan shaped Niger Delta. The region is one of those regions that records heavy rainfall throughout the year. Annual rainfall is between 2,700mm and 4,400mm. Daily temperature are equally high and can be as high as 75⁰F.

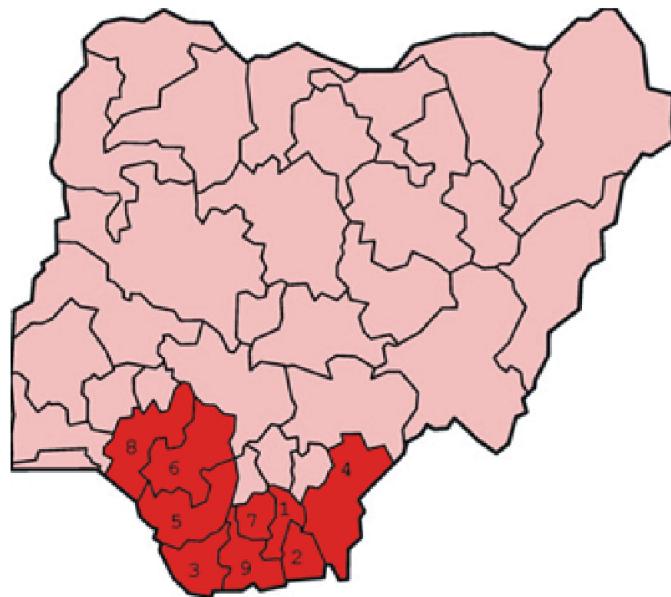


Fig. 10.1: Southern coastlands/Niger Delta

People and Population

The region is made up of several ethnic groups. The Ijaws are the major ethnic group found in this area while Isokos, Urhobos, Itsekiris and a small proportion of the Ibos and Yorubas who are found towards the northern and eastern part of the region. The area is sparsely populated with the exception of few cities such as Port Harcourt, Calabar, Uyo, Warri, Sapele etc.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern is largely dispersed due to the prevailing environmental conditions. The region is characterized by swamps and excessive rainfall that is conducive for dense population. The riverine areas often experience flooding, which results in raising of houses on stilts. Generally, settlements are few and small in size in this region. However, pockets of larger urban centres can be found in the coastland. The largest of these urban centres include: Lagos, Warri, Calabar and Port Harcourt.

Transportation

Because of the peculiar nature of this area, roads are rather few and poorly developed. Hence, the only effective means of transportation is water transport along the lagoons and creeks. The marshy nature of the region makes road construction expensive. However, fairly upland areas have modern roads while some cities have airports. The airports in Lagos city and Port Harcourt are one of the busiest in the country. Rail transport is generally underdeveloped with the exception of Lagos and Port Harcourt that is gradually experiencing improvement in recent times.



Fig. 10.3: Water transportation in southern coastland

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

The region accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's oil and natural gas. In other words, the region is the backbone of Nigeria economy. Major economic activities of the region include oil mining, fishing, agriculture and traditional crafts. A sizeable proportion of the population is engaged in fishing, industrial activities, oil mining, yam most especially water yam and cocoyam, plantain, maize and cassava are grown in this region. The mangrove trees are sources of fuel and are also used for telephone and electric poles. Other economic activities in this region include lumbering in the forest belt, rubber tapping and processing especially in parts of Edo, Delta and Cross River states.

Problems of Economic development

The peculiarity of this region, being a marshy area imposes some constraint on the economic development of the region. Some of the problems of the region are:

1. Road construction is difficult due to the presence of mangrove swamps and poor drainage. This hinders effective transportation in the region.
2. Excessive rainfall hinders agricultural development as few crops can be grown within the area.
3. Perennial flooding with its attendant loss of life and properties makes life difficult.
4. Destruction of marine life and vegetation due to oil spillage and pollution.
5. Coastal erosion and ocean incursion that threatens settlement growth.
6. The growth of marine weeds, especially water lycinth on coastal rivers, creeks and lagoons poses a serious problem for the

development of water transport.

The region will witness rapid economic growth if efforts are directed towards flood control, land reclamation, improved transportation through dredging. In addition, attention ought to be placed on clearing of water weeds, provision of agricultural incentives, ensuring strict adherence to environmental regulations as a step towards curbing the mearance of oil spillage and pollution and judicious use of oil wealth in improving industrialization in the region.

10.2 Cross River Basin Physical Characteristics

The region known as Cross River Basin is a low lying region found between Udi hills and the eastern borderlands. The eastern borderlands are made up of Oban hills, Obudu Plateau, Adamawa, Shebshi and Plantika rising to 1,200m above the grounds. The regions stretches to about 100km east-west and 300km north-south. The relief or the region is made up of shale and sand stone, coupled with extensive patches of seasonally flooded plains. The land is remarkably uniform rising to about 180 metres above sea level. The Cross River and its tributaries drain the regions. The climate is sub equatorial and the vegetation is made up of swamp forests that occupies the Cross River estuarine area and the guinea savanna vegetation in the northern part and the region. Annual rainfall is about 300mm and daily temperature is high most of the months of the year. Temperature may be up to 80⁰F sometimes.

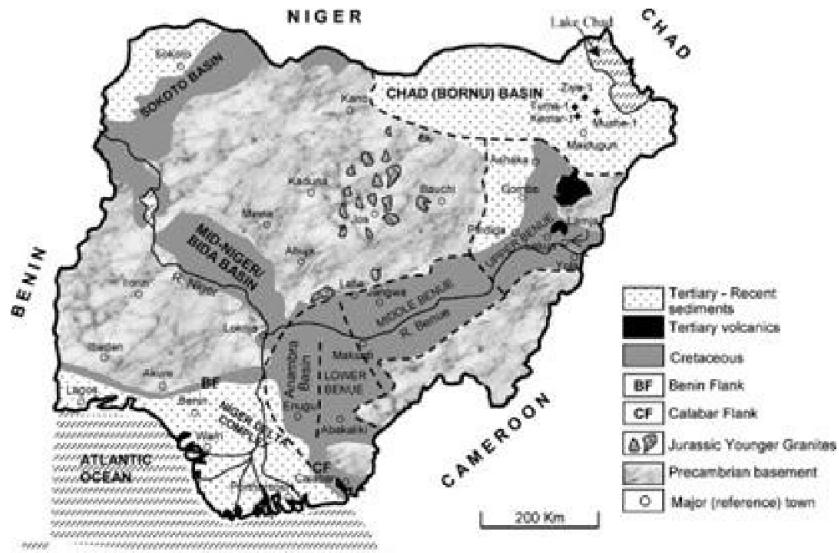


Fig. 10.4: Map showing Cross River Basin

People and Population

The region is mainly dominated by ethnic groups such as Ibo, Ibibio and Efik. Other ethnic groups that can be found in the region include Tiv and Idoma that occupy the northern part of the region.

Settlement Pattern

Settlement pattern is dispersed. Population density is about 300 persons per sq kilometre in few areas of dense population. In the eastern borderlands where population is sparse, density is about 20 persons per sq km. Most people live in villages, however few urban centres are noticeable in the region and include: Calabar, Ugep, Uyo and Ikot-Ekpene.

Transportation

Transportation is poorly developed, most especially in the eastern parts. Urban centres such as Calabar and Uyo have well connected modern roads. Calabar has an international airport and a port. Rail transport is poor in the region. The Cross River and its tributaries provide natural waterways for regional interaction and trade.

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

Major mineral resources obtained from this region include petroleum mined in the coastal areas of Akwa Ibom and limestone at Nkalagu. Agricultural resources include palm produce, timber, rubber, cocoa and rice. Rice is produced in Abakaliki and Afikpo area in commercial quantities. The Tiv grow soya beans, guinea corn and beniseed in the north of the Cross River plains. Lumbering, plantation agriculture (oil palm and rubber) and large scale ranching forms other economic activities in the region. Tourism and the hospitality industry have become important economic activities in the region due to the presence of the Obudu cattle ranch Tinapa tourist centre and the export processing zone.

Problems of Economic Development

Some challenges facing economic development in the region include:

- (i) Flooding due to excessive rainfall. This poses serious problems for agricultural development.
- (ii) Impenetrable mangrove forests and swamps that make crop cultivation difficult and also limits the practice of lumbering and movement as in search of trees is impeded.
- (iii) Insect and pest invasion affect human health and limit human productivity.
- (iv) Increased crime rate, particularly vices such as prostitution and human trafficking, armed robbery and kidnapping.

Solutions to the above problems include: Improved agricultural system, pest and insect control, improved security and good governance.

10.3 Western Uplands

Physical Characteristics

The western uplands cover areas south of River Niger (Kainji dam areas) up to the coastal lowlands areas near Lagos. The region includes parts of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Edo and Kwara states. Much of the area lies between 300-800 metres above sea level, with peaks over 1000m at Idanre hills. The relief is gentle in some parts of the region, while pockets of inselbergs constitute high relief that rises to a few hundred metres above sea level are noticeable. Parts of the region are made up of basement complex that are igneous rocks. Short coastal rivers that drain the region include Rivers Ogun, Osun, Osse and Owena. The climate of the region is an equatorial climate. Vegetation is mainly forest in the south and derived savanna in the northern part. Annual rainfall is about 200mm and daily temperature may be about 80⁰F.

People and Population

The region is mainly inhabited by the Yorubas. Other ethnic groups in the region include Ebira, Igala, Edo and Bini. The region is densely populated with about 125 persons per square kilometre in most urban centres.

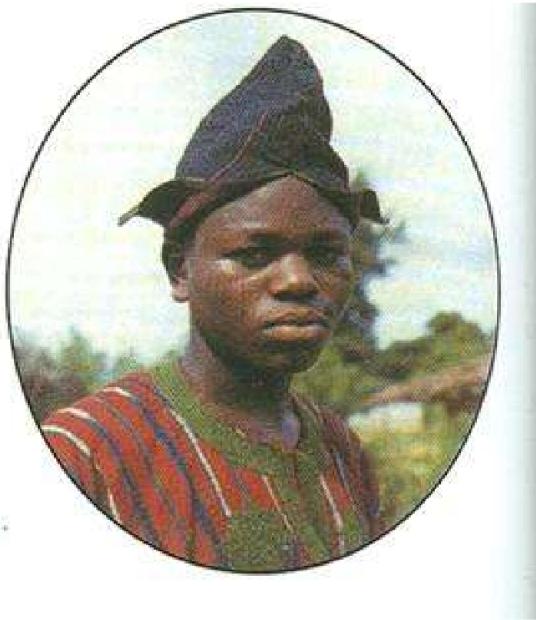


Fig.10.5: A typical Yoruba man

Settlement Pattern

The region is a highly urbanized region, which is due to its nucleated pattern. The region has large towns and big farming villages. The big cities of the region include Ibadan, Ogbomosho, Oyo, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Ilesa, Ondo, Ijebu-Ode etc. The average Yoruba man is urbane and prefers to live in the towns.

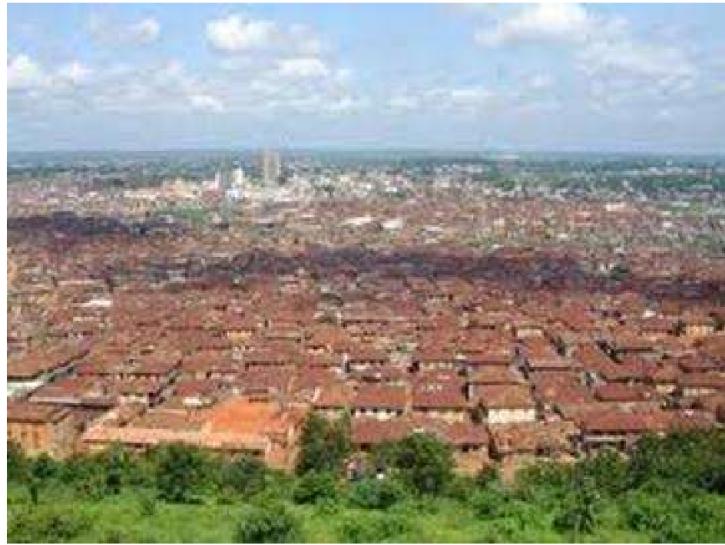


Fig.10.6: The city of Ibadan

Transportation

The regions have good road networks. Such roads include Ibadan-Lagos, Ibadan-Ilorin expressway (under construction), Ibadan-Ife and many access roads which are regarded as all weather roads. Most villages are linked either by feeder roads or footpaths. Railway is fairly developed. There is rail linkage between Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Ota and Ilorin. Air transportation is high developed in the region. There is an international airport in Ilorin and Lagos. Airports that provide domestic air transport services are located in Ibadan, Benin city and Akure.

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

Important minerals in the region include crude oil and bitumen in Ondo state, gold in Ilesha, marble in Igbedi, Oyo state and other precious stones in Oke Ogun areas. Manufacturing activities are well developed and include:

- (i) Local cottage industries: These include: local textile production e.g. Adire cloth production in Abeokuta. Also, we have cloth weaving in

Iseyin, pottery, dyeing, metal work and calabash carving which is a prominent feature of the economy of the region.

- (ii) Manufacturing industries: Large scale manufacturing industries are present in the region and include wood production activities in sawmills, beverage industry, cement factory at ewekoro, breweries at Ibadan and Ilesha. The major industrial axis includes Sagamu-Abeokuta-Ibadan, Ilesa-Osogbo. Other industrial towns are Ewekoro, Igbokoda, Ile Oluji etc.
- (iii) Mining and quarrying industries e.g. marble in Igbedi, Oyo state.

The main agricultural products of the area include cocoa production, rubber, palm oil, kolanut, orange and tobacco. The region is popularly known as cocoa belt of Nigeria. Trading activities in the region are related to the local agricultural activities. It is characterized by the activities of middle men and women who specialize in the selling and buying of food crops, local crafts, clothes, kolanuts and imported materials. There are also important trade settlements. For example, Sagamu is a famous settlement noted for the production and marketing of kolanuts.

Problems of Economic Development

Some challenges facing economic development in the region are:

1. Inaccessibility in the hilly areas as a result of the rugged landscape.
2. Thick forested areas that make agricultural activities difficult especially the practice of lumbering.
3. Problems of pests, insects and diseases that attack crops and reduce agricultural yield e.g. black pod of cocoa.
4. Environmental problems such as flooding and erosion.

10.4 South Eastern Scarp Land

Physical Setting

The south eastern scarp land covers areas south of River Benue and east of the Niger Delta. It extends down south to the Imo river. The relief of the region is characterized by the presence of an escarpment called the Udi plateau. The plateau slopes gently westwards but steeply eastwards resulting into east-facing huge scarp face. The scarp face is heavily dissected in various places by headwaters of rivers such as the Anambra and Imo rivers. Annual rainfall is about 1800mm with temperatures above 80⁰F. Vegetation changes from tropical forest to Guinea savanna as a result of intensive human activities. The climate is sub-equatorial.

People and Population

The region is mostly inhabited by the Ibos, who are commercially inclined. Average population density is very high and reaches over 200 persons per square kilometre in some areas. Due to population pressure on land resources in the area, out-migration of Ibos has become a common phenomenon.

Settlement Pattern

Although there are major urban centres such as Enugu, Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Onitsha and Nsukka, however, many people live in villages that are generally scattered across the region. Population density is very high in settlements such as Nsukka, Orlu, Awka and Okigwe.

Transportation

The region has a good network of roads which enables human and material movement. However, excessive rainfall, the nature of soil and topography of the area exposes the area to serious erosion that has spoilt many of the roads. The eastern railway line that passes through Umuahia and Enugu is fairly developed. Air transport service is enhanced in the region with the presence of Enugu and Owerri airports.

Resource, Trade and Economic Development

Major resources of the region are coal found at Enugu, lignite at Onitsha and limestone in Nkalagu. The limestone deposit at Nkalagu has enabled the growth of accendent factory in the region. Farming is the most important economic activity and it is being done at subsistence level. Crops grown include food crops such as cassava, yam and maize. Cash crops grown include oil palm tree and cashew.

There are farm settlements in the region. For example, Uzo-Uwani rice farm. Animal such as goats, sheep and cattle are reared in the region. Local crafts are also prominent in the region. Trading in both local and foreign products is done on a large scale.

Problems of Economic Development

Some problems of economic development in the region include:

1. Gully erosion that renders the land uncultivable and impassable.
2. Poor acidic and porous soil that cannot support intensive agriculture.
3. Population pressure that results into large scale out migration.
4. Fragmented farm holdings which hinders large scale farming.

10.5 The Chad Basin

Physical Characteristics

The basin occupies the extreme north east part of the country. The depressed basin is composed of tertiary rocks with inland drainage lake known as Lake Chad. The lake has many rivers draining into it. Important rivers in the region are Rivers Hadejia, Gana, Yobe and Yedseram. The area is almost flat with the exception of Hadejia sand dunes. These dunes rise to about 12-13m high and about 300m wide. The climate is hot, however it is cold during harmattan. Rainy season is short. Dry season is long. Vegetation is scanty, except along the river valleys.

People and Settlement

The major ethnic group in the region is the Kanuris. Other ethnic groups include Hausa, Fulani, Shuwa Arabs etc. Population density is very low about 50 persons per sq kilometre.

Settlement Pattern

Settlement pattern is highly dispersed consisting of small scattered settlements. However, there are few urban settlements in the area particularly Maiduguri which is a very big urban settlement.

Transportation

Transportation is poorly developed, except in Maiduguri. The city is well linked by road, rail and air to other parts of the country. Donkeys, horses and camels are used as means of transport especially in the rural areas.

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

The dominant economic activity is farming. Intensive farming is being practiced along river flood plains. Stable food crops such as groundnut, rice and maize are grown during the rainy season. Other crops produced in the region include cotton and gum arabic. Animal rearing is important and the Shuwa Arabs practice pastoral nomadism and mixed farming. Poultry farming is also carried out on a large scale and fishing is practiced on the Lake Chad.

Important minerals like salt and potash are available in the region. There are speculations about the presence of petroleum deposits in the area. Modern industries are few in the area, but the few ones are concentrated in Maiduguri. The industries are mainly processors of agricultural materials and include flour milling and vegetable oil milling.

Problems of Economic Development

Major challenges of the region include:

- (i) Hot climatic condition during the dry season. Daily temperature sometimes rises to about 40°C which makes people uncomfortable and unable to undertake intense physical activities.
- (ii) Acute water shortage due to short rainy season.
- (iii) Desert encroachment and unreliable climate. The area is a drought infested region.
- (iv) Poor communication due to extensive land area and scattered small settlements.
- (v) Sparse population and remoteness from the southern markets and sea ports.

10.6 Sokoto Plains

Physical Characteristics

The Sokoto plains covers a large part of the country. The relief of the region is generally lowland with average height between 150 to 500 metres above sea level. The region is drained by the Sokoto river and its tributaries. Other important rivers in the region are: Rima and Zamfara. These rivers are usually flooded during wet season and leaves behind a thick alluvial deposit that support fadama agriculture. Fadama are plains along flooded areas that are very fertile and rich in alleviation. They are noted for rice cultivation.

The climate of the area is the tropical continental which has a long dry season and short rainy season. The soils are friable made up of sandy and clayey soil. The vegetation is sudan savannah which consists of grassland and a few scattered medium-sized and stunted trees.

People and Population

Dominant ethnic group in the region are the Hausa. Others are Fulani, Zuru and Buzu. Population is sparse as the density is about 50 persons per sq km. The city of Sokoto however, is highly populated.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern is dispersed. Villages are scattered across the region. Apart from Sokoto, other important settlements in the region include Gusau, Kaura Namida, Birnin Kebbi and Argungu.

Transportation

Transportation is poorly developed. Most of the roads are untarred and are usually dusty during dry season. Major settlements are linked by roads and there is an airport located in Sokoto. Donkeys and camels are still used as a major means of transportation in the rural areas.

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

Important minerals in the region include: limestone, phosphate, gypsum and gold found along the Zamfara river valley. The presence of limestone facilitates the location of cement factory in Sokoto. The region is agriculturally endowed. Crops grown in the region include groundnut, cotton, tomatoes, guinea corn, onion, rice and beans. The Sokoto-Rima scheme is a major irrigation project that support irrigation farming in the area. Pastoral farming is predominant and involves the keeping of animals such as cattle, sheep and goats. Modern industries are lacking in the region, even though local craft abound. Trading activities in agricultural goods is very high. Animals and food crops are transported to be sold in most of the southern markets especially from Kwara state down to Lagos.

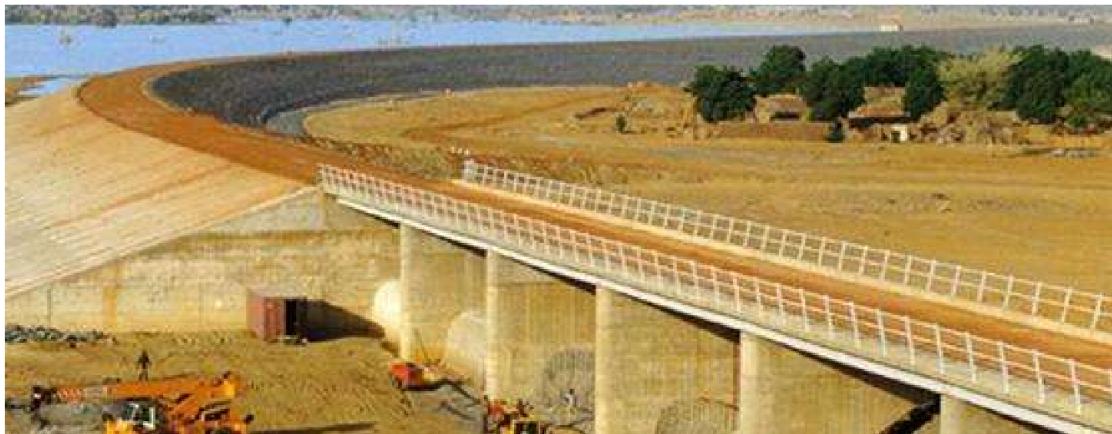


Fig.10.7: Jibiya irrigation project

Problems of Economic Development

Challenges of economic development in the Sokoto plains include:

- (i) Serious environmental problems such as drought, flooding and desertification constitute hindrances to agricultural development and general socio-economic development of the region.
- (ii) The extensive land area and scattered settlement makes communication difficult as distances to be covered between the settlements are rather large and huge costs will be incurred in building roads connecting them.
- (iii) Weather variability threaten farming activities especially prolonged dry conditions.
- (iv) Remoteness from the southern markets and seaports. This makes marketing of agricultural products difficult. The traders often travel long distances to markets for sale of their goods. In the process, many goods get destroyed while traders incur losses and high transport costs.

10.7 Niger Benue Trough

Physical Characteristics

This region is characterized by a huge depression below 300m above sea level. The relief of the area is characterized by older sedimentary rocks, laterites and alluvial soil. The valleys of Niger and Benue are broad in many areas, but narrow in some areas especially where there are rapids, and waterfalls. The trough stretches from Sokoto plains in the north-west through Lokoja to Yola in the east. The trough is underlain by basement complex rocks. The Benue trough developed on sedimentary rocks and is relatively shallow. It is flooded during the rainy season and exhibits braided characteristics during the dry season.

The climate of the area is tropical hinterland with pronounced dry and wet seasons alternating. The vegetation is guinea savannah but the wet soils close to the river channels are occupied by gallery forest.

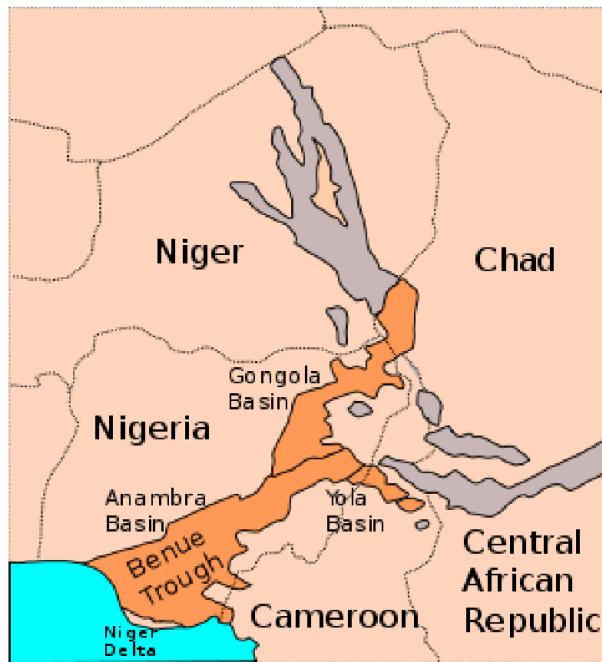


Fig. 10.8: The Niger- Benue trough

People and Population

The dominant ethnic group in this region are the Nupes and Tivs. Others are the Gwari, Idoma, Igala, Bassa, Jukun and Kamberi. The area is sparsely populated as population density is under 20 persons per square kilometre.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern of the area is generally that of dispersion. Villages are scattered in the region. Major towns are Yelwa, New Bussa, Lafiagi, Jebba, Numan, Bida, Lokoka – a town located around the confluence of River Niger and Benue. Others are Maiduguri and Yola.

Transportation

The region has a poor transport network. Few towns are linked by modern roads. The bridges at Jebba and Makurdi link the region with the south and north. River transport is important in the region. Ferries are used to transport goods and man across the Niger and Benue rivers. Although railway passes through the region, however, this does not in any way have a significant influence on railway development in the region. Air transport services are not available with the exception of a local airport in Yola.

Resources, Trade and Economic Development

Important mineral resources of this region are coal, which was recently discovered on the Benue valley and iron ore at Itakpe and Agbaja plateau. Agricultural products of the region include sugarcane produced in Bacita sugarcane plantation and rice cultivated along Bida Lafiaji-Patigi area. Fishing is undertaken on all the rivers. Livestock farming is also practiced and there are a number of modern large-scale agricultural projects e.g. the Niger Agricultural Project at Mokwa. Industrial development is generally poor, with the exception of local crafts and art work. The Ajaokuta iron and steel industry that ought to propel the region

on to an accelerated industrial growth has become moribound. Middle men trade in agricultural commodities.

Problems of Economic Development

1. Transport problem affects the region as there are no good roads, no railway and no air transport services. This has confined transportation to river transport with all its limitations. Most urban centres in the area have fairly developed road network.
2. The soils of the region are composed of ferralitic and laterite soils which do not encourage agricultural enterprise.
3. The area is sparsely populated as a result there are no ready market (population) to attract industries.
4. Climatic conditions make it difficult to cultivate certain cash crops that can help in the development in the region.

10.8 North Central Highlands

Physical Characteristics

The region is made up of an extensive rolling plain, gentle and undulating topography. The relief ranges between 600 and 1000 metres above sea level. The region comprises two tablelands. First, is the high plains of Hausa land otherwise called the Nassarawa tableland that rises to an average elevation of about 1000 metres above sea level. The second is the Jos Plateau that rises to about 1700 metres about sea level. The region is part of the old African plateau made up of the basement complex rocks. Volcanic features are observable at the region, and this is related to igneous activity that had taken place some years ago.

The region is drained by important rivers like rivers Sokoto, Kaduna, Hadejia, Gongola, Aboko and Mada that flows down the plateau in a radial pattern. The climate is tropical continental characterized by summer rains and winter drought. The raining season may last for about

six months and later followed by a pronounced dry season. The rainfall is a single maximum and ranges from 500mm to about 1000mm annually.

The soil of the region vary from laterite soils to sandy and fine loose soils. The vegetation is mainly guinea savannah in the southern part with trees which can be as tall as 6 to 12 metres. The vegetation changes to Sudan savanna as one moves northwards. Temperature is generally high in the region but low around Jos plateau areas.

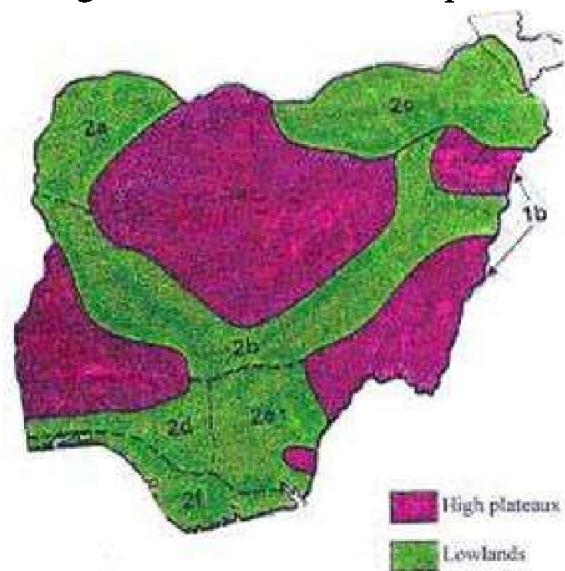


Fig. 10.9: North Central Plateau

People and Population

The dominant ethnic groups in this region are the Hausa and Fulanis. However, there are other important ethnic groups which include the Gwari, Pankshin, Birom, Anga, Java and Kaji or southern Zaria and the Jukun of Plateau state. Population is very high in the densely populated areas around Kano and Kaduna with a population density of over 200 persons per sq km. Aside these areas, the remaining vast expanse of land in this region is sparsely populated.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern is generally dispersed. The Fulanis who are traditional cattle rearers live almost entirely in dispersed settlements. Urban settlements in the area that are of great importance are Kano which is the commercial centre of the north and Kaduna which remains the political headquarter of the north. Other important towns include: Jos, Bauchi and Katsina.

Transportation

The region has a good road network that connects major towns and cities. Apart from this, the region is also well-served by railways and air routes. All the cities and towns in this region are well connected to the Federal Capital city, Abuja. Railway lines link Kaduna, Kano, Kafanchan, Jos, Gombe and Bauchi to the rest of the country. The region also has international airports in Kano and Abuja and several domestic airports located in Kaduna, Bauchi and Jos which serves the region.

Resources, Trade and Economic Development

Major mineral resources of this area include tin and columbite found in Jos and Bukuru area. Also, gypsum is found in commercial quantities in Bauchi. This has enabled the growth of the cement factory in the state. The main agricultural resources of the area include cereals, wheat, millet, rice, sorghum and maize. Cash crops produced in this region include cotton and groundnut. Other crops are beans and vegetables. Livestock rearing is also important in this region. Transhumance is practiced by cattle Fulani who move their cattle up and down hill in search of pasture. There are irrigation projects in the region. A good example is the Hadeija-Jamaare project in Kano. The Tiga dam was constructed on Hadeija-Jamaare rivers to irrigate farmlands for the production of wheat and vegetables.

Industrial development is fairly good. The big cities including Jos, Kaduna and Kano are highly industrialized. Textile mills are located in Kano and Kaduna, oil refinery in Kaduna, cement manufacturing in

Bauchi, tin mining and processing in Jos, tomato processing in Gombe and diary processing in Vom near Jos. Local crafts thrive in the region also. Leather works are found in Jos, Kano and Zaria and cloth dyeing is prominent in Kano.

Trading activities is common in most of the big cities. Food crops and vegetables are transported to the south for sale. Other important industrial activities going on in the region is the Peugeot car assembly at Kaduna, rock breweries and production of biscuit and confectionaries by NASCO biscuit and confectionary factory in Jos. All products of these industries are transported for sale in the south and various cities and towns in the northern part of Nigeria.

Problem of Economic Development

Challenges of economic development in the region are:

1. Shortage of rainfall and prolonged drought that limit agricultural production.
2. Increased rate of desertification as a result of high rate of urban development which involves the removal of sparse vegetation cover.
3. Flooding that has ravaged most farmlands with its attendant loses in properties and human lives.
4. Increased rural-urban migration due to poor agricultural development in the rural areas.
5. Frequent crises and conflicts between various ethnic nationalities, particularly the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency that has caused large scale destruction of lives and properties. The industrial and commercial activities in his region have been seriously affected due to continuous bombings and armed attacks on facilities and people in the region.

10.9 The Eastern Borderlands

Physical Characteristics

This region is located in the eastern borders of the country and next to the Cameroun Republic. The borderlands cover major parts of Adamawa and Taraba states and part of Cross River state in the South. The relief of this region consists of chains of hills and plateau along the eastern border. Bamenda highlands, Bino plateau, Mambila plateau, Shebshi mountain and Adamawa plateau are major hills and plateaux in the region. The relief ranges from 600 to 2000m with only few peaks rising over 2000 meters above sea level. Generally, the highlands are made up of metamorphic rocks whose surfaces have been dissected in various places to produce isolated hills and deeply incised gorges. Volcanic landforms such as volcanic cones and lava flows can be identified in the region.

The climate of this region is tropical continental rainfall which is principally orographic and comes in storms. Due to heavy precipitation, forest cover is noticeable on Obau hills and around Obudu plateau. The region is drained by river Benue which has Katsina-Ala and Gongola as its major tributaries. Apart from the forest on major hills in the region. The remaining regions are mainly savanna, except the steep highland slopes where forests occur.

People and Population

The region is mainly dominated by large number of language groups including the Fulfulde, Kilba, Kaka and Kuteb, Mumunye, Margi and Biwatiye, the Chamba, Higgi and other numerous language groups. The famous Koma people are located in this region. The region is sparsely populated with overall population densities existing between 20-40 persons per square kilometre due to the peculiar hilly nature of the relief of the region.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement is dispersed, but agglomerated within the isolated valleys. Most important towns in this region include: Yola, Numan, Hong, Jalingo and Kanye. Apart from Yola and Jalingo which are capitals of Adamawa and Taraba states respectively, other settlements are villages and small towns.

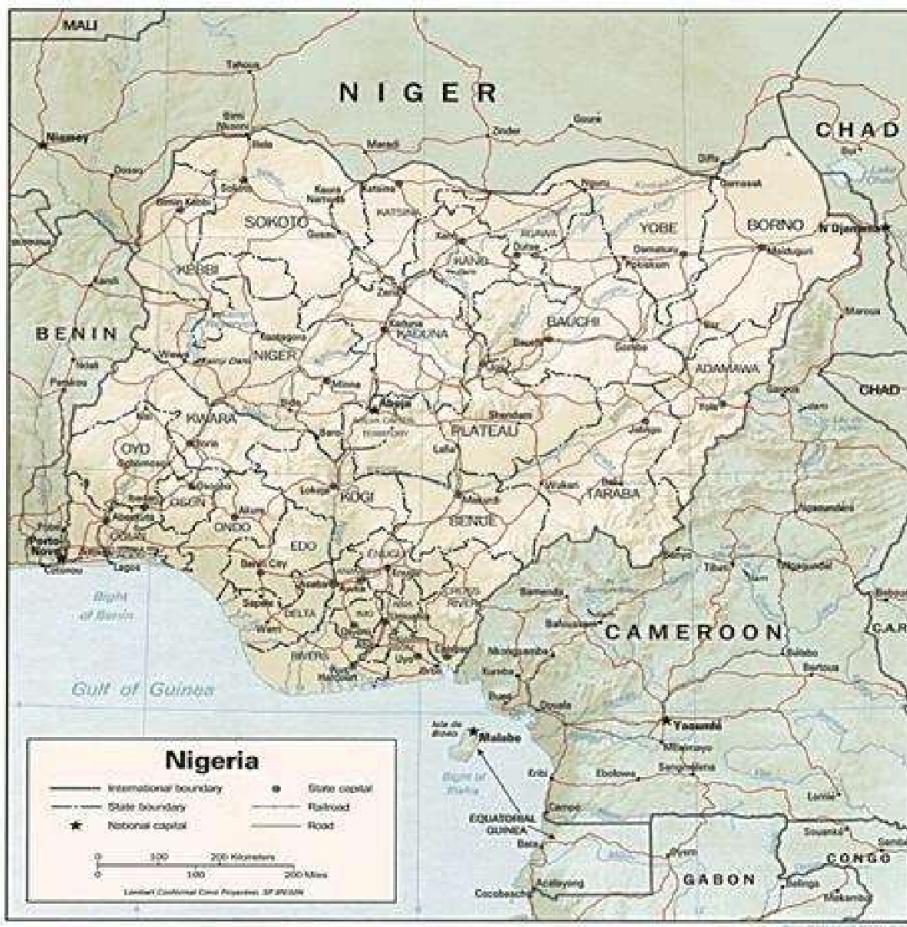


Fig. 10.10: Relief of the eastern borderlands

Transportation

The rugged nature of the topography of this region constitutes impediment to the development of good road networks in the region. The region is highly remote and unconnected by railway. River transport takes

place on river Benue. There is a domestic airport at Yola, that connects the region with other parts of the country by air. Other forms of transportation in the region include the use of animal and human portage.

Resources, Trade and Economic Activities

Important resources of this region are limestone, salt, iron ore and uranium. Exploitation of these minerals has been hindered by poor accessibility in the region. Agriculture is supported by the modified tropical climate. The high altitude modifies the climate of the region that makes it look like a temperate climate. As a result of this, tropical crops such as rubber, cocoa, cotton, coffee and tea are grown. Temperate crops such as apple, potato and grapes are also grown. Food crops grown in the region include maize, millet, yam and cassava.

Nomadic Fulani rear animals like cattle, goat and sheep. Today, modern cattle ranches are located in this region. Fulani herdsman drive their cattle along the rolling upland topography in the region.

Rubber and timber production are noticeable at the lower well watered slopes of the Oban hills. Industrial development is poor in this region. However, in recent times, tourism industry has received a big boost such that it is gradually coming up in this region. The embellishment of Obudu cattle ranch and resort has given the area a new lease of life.

Problems of Economic Development

Challenges of economic development in the eastern borderlands include:

1. Poor road network as a result of rugged reliance and remoteness from other parts of the country. This has contributed significantly to the poor socio-economic condition of the area.

2. Severe environmental problems such as flooding along the steep slopes of the highlands hinder agricultural practices along the slope.
3. Sparse population within the area is a constraint on industrial development. The area does not attract investments due to low market demand (population).
4. As a result of poor development in the region, people migrate to nearby urban centres which further aggravate development problems in the region as rural areas are depopulated depriving them of manpower needed for development.

Summary

The geographical regions of Nigeria comprises the southern coastland, cross river basin, western upland, south eastern scarp land, the Chad basin, Sokoto plains, Niger-Benue trough, north-central highlands and the eastern borderlands.

Resources and economic activities in these regions are diverse and are principally influenced by landscape and physiography of the area. The climatic condition and the nature of the soils determine the level of agricultural production.

Settlement pattern varies. Many of the region have dispersed settlements with the exception of the western upland region that is highly nucleated.

Transportation is poorly developed in many of the regions, however, there are pockets of industrial development in regions especially the western upland and the north central highlands.

The southern coastland and the Niger-Delta region forms the backbone of the Nigerian economy. Over 95% of the country's foreign earnings come

from crude oil mined in this region.

The cocoa belt of Nigeria is found in the western upland region and accounts for more than 70% of cocoa export of Nigeria.

Fadama agriculture is prominent in the Sokoto plains due to perennial flooding by the Sokoto-Rima river. The flood plains of these rivers are important areas of local rice cultivation.

Revision Questions

1. It is characterized by low-lying region made up of creeks, lagoons, swamps and sand bars. This statement best describes
 - A. the Sokoto plains
 - B. the Chad basin
 - C. the southern coastlands
 - D. the eastern coastlands
2. The major economic activity in the southern coastland region is
 - A. exploitation of crude oil
 - B. iron ore processing
 - C. cement manufacturing
 - D. none of the above
3. The relief of the western uplands rises to peak of about 1000m at
 - A. Ibadan
 - B. Ede-Osogbo area
 - C. Idanre hills
 - D. Ekiti hills
4. The western uplands is underlaid mainly by the
 - A. metamorphic rocks
 - B. volcanic deposit

- C. basement complex rock
 - D. sandstones
5. Udi plateau is found in the
- A. north central region
 - B. eastern borderland
 - C. south eastern scarp land
 - D. Cross river plain
6. Lignite is an essential resource found at
- A. Nkalagu
 - B. Onitsha
 - C. Itakpe
 - D. Obubra
7. The tropical climate in the region has been modified by altitude to reflect temperate climate. This best resembles
- A. Niger-Benue trough
 - B. north central uplands
 - C. eastern border lands
 - D. the southern coastlands
8. Which of these settlements is located close to the confluence point of rivers Niger and Benue?
- A. Okene
 - B. Lokoja
 - C. Markurdi
 - D. Lafiaji
9. An example of an area where centripetal pattern of drainage is noticeable is
- A. the north-central highlands
 - B. the Sokoto plain
 - C. the eastern border lands

- D. the southern coastlands
10. The relief of the region is characterized by heaps of sand called sand dunes. This best describes
- the Sokoto plains
 - the north-central highland
 - the Chad Basin
 - the western uplands

Answers

1. C 2. A 3. C 4. C 5. C 6. B 7. C 8. B 9. A 10. C

Essay Questions

- 1(a.) With specific examples, identify the major problems facing economic development of either the southern coastlands or the Sokoto plains.
- (b.) Suggest possible ways by which these problems could be solved (SSCE June 1988)
2. Compare and contrast the eastern scarp lands and the western highlands under the following headings:
- (a) relief (b) peoples and population (c) settlement patterns (d) agriculture (SSCE June 1996)
3. Compare the north central highlands with the cross river plain under the following headings:
- (a) relief and drainage (b) people and settlement (c) economic activities (WASSCE June 2000)
- 4(a.) Highlight five problems of development of the cross river basin.
- (b.) In what ways can these problems be solved? (WASCE June 2012)
- 5a. Write a geographical account of the Chad basin under the following headings:

- (a) relief and drainage (b) agriculture (c) problems of development
(SSCE June, 1996)