

GEOG 275 Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa

Name -----

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### Midterm Q1

**Write an essay in which you explain how African people may affect their physical environment and their livelihood? Give 4 examples from 4 peer reviewed articles.**

African population depend on agriculture and the use of natural resources for development., Such resources include rich soil, surface ground water, and forests. As a result of interaction between people and the natural resources, people might mismanage or overexploit these resources and causes environmental degradation, such as desertification, soil erosion , water pollution, deforestation and depletion of water sources. However, since the time of the Sahelian drought 1967-1973, levels of desertification continued to rise and become more notable around major regions of Africa. The Sahara began to intrude useful arable and pasture lands at the rate of 1.5 million hectares per annum, (Darkoh,1989). Desertification is a desert-like condition that turns productive land into bare unproductive land. Bare land reduces humidity on air which hinders cloud formation which reduces rainfall.

Soil erosion, came as a result of the effect of desertification. It is the process of the removal of fertile soil. This type of soil contains essential nutrients for crops to grow. However, this farmable land is being reused multiple times, which causes the soil to be unfertile. It has been estimated that available arable lands in the States of the southeastern Nigeria have been reduced by 50% as a result of erosion (Amangabara et al., 2017). Soil erosion is caused by deforestation and the loss of trees is the aftermath of deforestation. Deforestation also involves destroying forests, habitats, and woodlands for the use of making a profit by selling crops and other materials. For example, Nigeria has lost up to 96% of its natural forest cover and that the current rate of deforestation is estimated at 11.1% per annum (Olatunji 2020).

Moreover, because of the effect of desertification and deforestation will result in soil erosion which will result in the removal and drifting of the topsoil that contains nutrients (plant food) by wind. For example, in the District of Lawra in Ghana, 87% of resident small-scale farmers report moderate to severe degradation of the land, evident in extinction of plant and animal species, excessive soil erosion, and loss of land cover and nutrients (Osumanu et al., 2016).

Nature has been exploited to make a profit or to meet the demands for material needs of the people. What is beneficial to the overall African population and the environment is that Africans should strike a balance between the use of natural resources (increasing food production), environmental conservation and population growth.

### References

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