

## Assessment of the Ecological Tragedy on Lake Chad

**Authors :** Luke Onyekakeyah, Cynthia Onyekakeyah

**Abstract :** The conflict in Northeastern Nigeria could mar local and international efforts to salvage the drying Lake Chad, which at present is merely 20 per cent of its original size. The conflict which began in 2009, assumed a monstrous dimension to the extent that any prospects of a redeeming action on the Lake is bleak. The concern of the authorities in the basin countries is how to bring the conflict to an end in the interest of the ecologically-dependent riparian population. Lake Chad is Africa's fourth largest lake. From a previous 388,500 km<sup>2</sup> some 600, 000 years ago, the Lake has shrunk to a maximum length of 25,000 km<sup>2</sup>. During the last four decades, the Lake has been susceptible to increasing variability and irregular rainfall. Dry spell, excessive evaporation and sandstorm have adversely affected the Lake, such that a 2001 estimate put the Lake to a meager 19,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Given the critical importance of the Lake as a source of livelihood for over 20 million people, there is mounting concern that an unprecedented human and ecological catastrophe is unfolding, should the Lake eventually dries up. The study evaluates the Lake Chad and how the conflict has adversely impacted it.

**Keywords :** lake chad, conflict, salvage, Nigeria

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