



CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND VEGETATION CHANGE IN THE DECIDUOUS OPEN CANOPY OF ZARIA AREA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The deciduous open canopy forests of the guinea savannah ecosystem around Shika - Zaria were studied for evidence and drives of environmental change. Stem cover of woody species; diversity and population were evacuated in 900m² plots of preserved and farmed areas of the vegetation. Woody plant population in preserved segment was 915 plants in 900m² and 484 plants in 900m² of farmed segment. Shannon Weiner diversities were 2.301 and 2.088 respectively. Woody stem covered 4% of sampled ground area in the preserved segment and 3.2% in the farmed segment. The woody plant population disparity between studied land use types amounted to 76% dissimilarity. While the woody species composition of the two land use types remained largely similar, their relative abundance predisposes the ecosystem to increase albedo. Overgrazing and extensive farming characterized by slash and burn land preparation are probable ingredients for large scale environmental change.

Keywords: Deciduous, ecosystem, environmental change, open canopy

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