

ABSTRACT

Severe drought has affected Kenya in the past decades reducing crop yields leaving millions of people in dire need of food. Drought cycle in Kenya has reduced increasing drought frequency in the recent decades. This study assessed drought characteristics in Laikipia West sub-County which lies in a region classified as arid and semi arid. The specific objective of the study was to analyze seasonal and annual drought characteristics in Laikipia West sub-County between 1984 and 2014. The study adopted documentary review design in the data collection. Standard Precipitation Index was used during the data analysis process. The drought years identified in Laikipia West sub-County were: 1984, 1985, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2008 and 2009. The seasonal drought events shows that for the period under study Laikipia West sub-County has never experience drought during the MAM and OND seasons in the same year. This explains the importance of seasonal climate forecast to crop farmers. The study also established that the average drought cycle in the study area is 3 years. The study recommends construction of mega water reservoirs which could collect water during the wet season to be utilized during the dry seasons. The study also recommends channeling of drought information through the government agencies at the beginning of every season.

Keywords

Drought, Documentary Review, Drought Characteristics, Standard Precipitation Index, Drought Cycle