



PRIORITY ACTION FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION DURING EMERGENCY OPERATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The history of how successive governments are making efforts to protect the lives and property of Nigerian citizens during emergencies/disaster situation cannot be completed without mentioning the contributions given by the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This paper traces the priority action of the NGOs during emergency situation in Nigeria based on a study of previous literature about NGOs missions as majority of the Nigerian people, especially the rural communities are in support of how NGOs are training rural skills and local knowledge that were grossly underutilized by the communities. Although, the NGOs may have the same missions but different in approaches to emergency situation. However, the study proposed to NGOs the best ways to respond to emergency situation by getting information about the location of the disaster, accessibility of the area, and to avoid duplication of efforts or clash, they also have to inquire about what other sister organizations' are doing about same incident. It is also a priority for every NGO to make necessary arrangement of response plan according to the rule of laws.

Keywords: NGOs, priority action, Emergency operation, Government and Communities

1. Introduction

For several years, disasters in respect of its magnitude do occur in Nigerian communities and many attempts were made as far back as 1930s to review the impacts as horrible experience that have claimed lives, properties and infrastructures in the affected communities have failed. Modern approaches like hazard that trigger disasters exist everywhere as observed by [1] and there is no local government in Nigeria without peculiar hazard and some with common risk which at time can also cause vulnerability that often overwhelm the capacities of the affected community or communities in question [1]. Such occurrence turns back the hands of the development clock by destroying years of efforts and labour and by so doing perpetuating poverty and underdevelopment through the destruction of infrastructure and other socio economic investments [2].

One of the critical discussions in this paper review of disaster management is on how NGOs are prioritizing their action towards reducing the vulnerability impacts on the communities. Although, many NGOs themselves were built according to peculiarities of the country they belong and each country has its different share of experience about the disaster occurrences; some might have experienced natural disasters like flood, earthquakes, drought volcanoes, while some might have suffered the consequences of man-induced disasters such as terrorism; insurgency, communal conflicts, wars and civil unrest which has its own devastating affects to others countries [3].

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) among its mandate is to establish coordination for operational response, relief and recovery efforts by issuing tasks to relevant government agencies as well as partnering with NGOs. This analysis is of the opinion that a more flexible approach will be required in the response of Nigeria in order to place adequate resources and expertise at the disposal of the internally displaced persons in the country. The analysis therefore concludes that the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by Nigeria and the proper use of SOPs within NGOs who are there every day to assist the victims will enhance the level of cooperation and understanding among NGOs in addressing the various needs of the IDPs and that will go a long way to ameliorate the plight of the IDPs in the country [4], [5].

2. Related works

This paper tend to display related works on how the involvement of different actors and stakeholders such as agencies, NGOs, INGOs and CBOs during emergency operation in Nigeria as contained in the document of National Emergency Management Agency of Nigeria [4] was approved by the law of the land of 1999 to deal with the disasters in all its ramifications which was subsequently amended by Act No. 50 of 1990 to acknowledge the work of relevant agencies, INGOs and NGOs in Nigeria and is similar to study by [6] in his book title: environment, terrorism and national security were all reviewed as conceptual methods of developing priority action for NGOs during operation.

Explanation in this paper about emergency management theory that is similar to this topic as presented in figure 2.1 were propounded by [11], [13], [8], [7] in their related works that indicates how NGOs are prioritizing their actions based on identification of hazard as a potential source of danger or something that can cause harm to a person e.g. electrical transformers and equipment's, chemicals and weapons where ever they are been stationed, you can see some warning signs and pictures of danger to inform the general public that there is danger that means hazard which can generate risk.

Vulnerability in this context simply means disturb, or is referring to the level to which an individual's or community, structure and services are likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impact of hazard when a victim become susceptible to a particular risk [9].

Capacity here means wherewithal or the ability to absorb or to contain the emergency situation. This ability revolve around knowledge about the nature of the disaster, what is available at our disposal for quick tackling of the emergency or hazards impact, risk and vulnerability on our communities that causing substantial damage, disruption and possible casualties, leaving the affected communities unable to cope with the situation or function unaided [9].

Risk refers to the possibility of harm or injury that might occur when exposed to a hazard e.g. the misuse of chemical and weapons, education, information and communication can trigger violence and that pose a serious risk and threat to live and property, this will happen the early warning sign pose by hazard has been ignored [7]. Therefore, hazard and risk are two terms that are related to safety and security during emergencies.

Therefore, emergencies come in many forms and having the right checklist, supplies and kit for any possible contingency can aid in making your family safe [11]. Planning ahead

also helps everyone understand what to do should a disaster strike [11]. In some instances it may be several days before vital services can be prepared and surviving this period may be difficult [9]. But disaster managers, with adequate enlightenment and preparedness, they can prevent a bad situation from becoming worse [10].

However, the explanation on disaster management cycle in this conceptual paper was originated by [11] and is showing steps to be taken to minimize the effects of both natural and man-made disasters [11], [13]. The emergency management framework is presented in Figure 2.1 below:

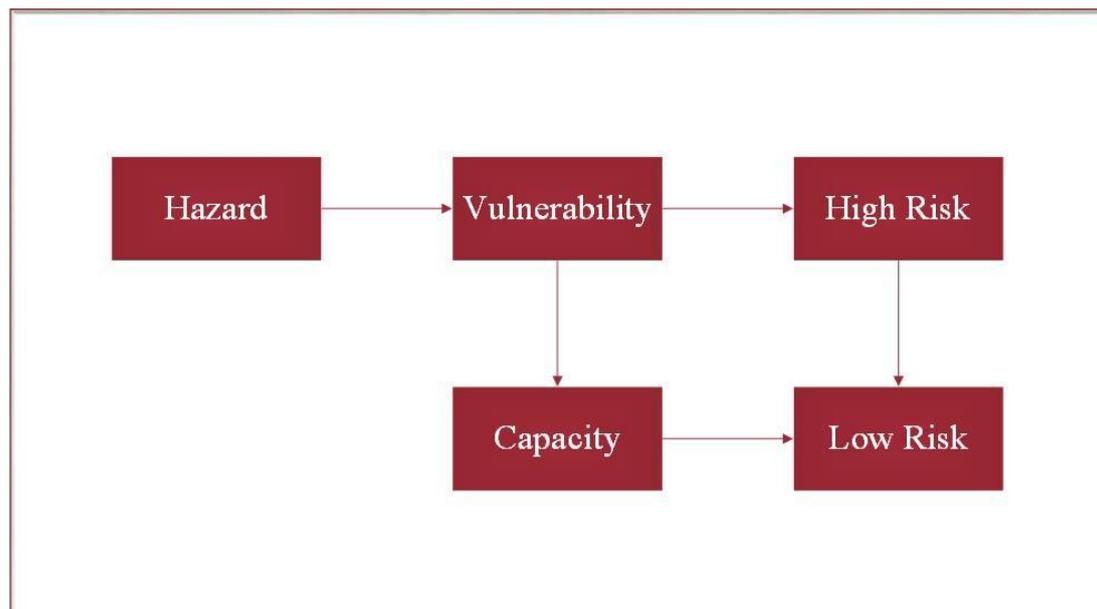


Figure 2.1: Emergency Management framework. Source: UNICEF DFO, Nigeria, (2012).

The emergency equation is $(H \times V - C = R)$

Where:

H = Hazard

V = Vulnerability

R = Risk

C = Capacity

Therefore, emergency management framework entail about in-depth interactions surrounding the cause of emergencies, knowledge about hazard and vulnerability that is associated with the risk and how emergency managers can develop a mechanism for

responding to emergency situation in order to reduce the level of deteriorating from bad to worse conditions caused by emergencies, put into consideration that majority of the NGOs activities revolve around building individual's and community capacity to contain the disasters for many years. But, all this depend on familiarization about 'emergency management framework' as theory bond into organizations to predict disaster and respond promptly as indicated in many frameworks such as Malaysian Disaster Management Directives No. 20: pra.4, page 2; NEMA Act No. 50 of 1999; ISDR, 2000 and Sendai framework, 2015 etc. as presented in figure 2.1 above:

3. Methodology:

The central method of understanding the priority action for NGOs was based on inductive approach organized between NGOs that are intervening in the management of over 2millions victims of terrorism disaster in the North-Eastern Nigeria. Theinterviews conducted were based on existing laws and structures of the NGOs. Furthermore, focus group discussion was held in a combine meeting with representatives of various NGOs/agencies including members of the communities affected by Boko-Haram terrorism on their mission to assist the victims, and other group of people collaborating in the study in order to provide and validate information, analyse and to recommend for ways of improving the quality of NGOs works are UNICEF and UNHCR and SEMA Bauchi, Nigeria.

A purposive sampling used in this study was based on recommendation by [20] to gain an excellent descriptive result between participating NGOs and their operations in real life base on the following needs: capacity building for community resilience, to understand the real people's problems in relation to needs and demands as expressed by the community, to understand that most of the disasters do occur by giving adequate warning sign enough to prevent it from occurrences and even if it cannot to be prevented, through adequate preparations it can be mitigated by means of lessening the situation through provision of timely responses to present enough relief and rehabilitation to the victims and all this depend on the proper use of available contingency plan within the NGOs to respond.

[12] have proposed several situations where purposive sampling is appropriate including studying an extreme events or deviant case, examining a politically important case, a study of where it is convenient in terms of time and costs, better access to the population or study area, and findings a sample in which the snowball process is much more effective. The

most important advantage of this method is that excellent descriptive results can be derived about samples as we intend to carry in this study. However, the disadvantage of this method is that you are likely to overweight subgroups in your population that are more readily accessible, and that no valid inference can be made from the sampled participants to any wider group in the population [12].

The phenomenological case study

This article aims to describe a phenomenological case study of NGOs that are participating in the management of victims of Boko-Haram in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. The study participants are mainly from the NGOs who have been participating in the management of many disasters even before the advent of Boko-Haram. Some other agencies/INGOs that are there to assist the NGOs were also involved because of the vital information they have in relation to subject matter that we are investigating. The first and the last interviews with the heads of NGOs and FGD were all recorded. The meeting were held in Development Exchange Centre (DEC), Bauchi state Nigeria on the 21st of November, 2016 in order to discuss some of the operational challenges faced by the NGOs, especially in managing the victims of terrorism disaster. Besides performed audio-visual recording, experts had also participate in the meeting to help understanding, focusing on the problem that need to be solved and the measures to be taken when interweaving the data collected.

4.1 Findings

Findings from observations on related works in search documents has shown that the management of the disasters is requiring collective responsibility to facilitate easy ways of achieving the choice of the people during emergencies and all these is depending on the nature of the incident, demands and degree of the complexity of the disaster [11]. But planning of immediate actions was based on the skills, cooperation, solidarity and the availability of local resources within the affected community to be able to contain the disaster [4]. Technical management that was about the mitigation plans usually come before, during or after the incident have had occurred while it was late at the expense of how the community should monitor and reconstruct the areas affected by the disasters [13].

It also shown that the inability of NGOs to prioritize action during emergency operation, especially in Nigeria where this study is focusing on, has brought so many set back in achieving the policies that discourage many donors to continue to provide larger aids. Instead of NGOs to act as specialists in disaster management, they prove abortive due to non-challent attitude of their members who conspired with other few members of the community who have the same feeling against it community to play a role of impoverished habits in conflicts situations [4]. The same problem was identified during formulation of this study interviews regarding the way things are moving despite the huge amount of money spent by government and philanthropists in aids of the victims but yet there was no meaningful result achieved [4], [5]. The following conversations are extractions from the raw data as stated by the participants regarding priority actions of the NGOs during emergency operation:

4.2 Priority Actions of NGOs

The objective of prioritizing action during emergency is to get information about the location, accessibility of the place. In order to avoid duplication of efforts or clash of authority, you have to inquire about what other sister organizations' are doing about that incident. It is also a priority for us as a head of NGOs to make necessary arrangement of response plan according to the rule of laws. But sometimes due to lack of clearly stated action plans, the NGOs themselves may find it very difficult to communicate with other NGOs who are in different location while on same mission to negotiate on role and responsibility especially with regard to basic needs of the victims. Below was descriptive analysis of raw data collected from the participants' statements regarding priority action for NGOs during emergency operation:

Participant 1 stated that: "During operation, each NGO have its own priority in line with their mandate, the Ops (operations) sectional head is developing the EPRP (Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning) for responding in the field as the things were happening".

Participant 2 stated that: "The man steer to my eyes and said; on receiving information about disaster alarm, you have to inquire about the location first, is it accessible or inaccessible, if it is accessible then you may ask about the nature of the incident and calculate on how long the operation will last before you start arranging for the personnel to be deployed or basic materials that are most needed. But if the place of the scene is inaccessible then you have to communicate with other NGOs to lay a helping hand. PI decision is supported by majority of the participants.

Participant 3 stated that: "The NGOs will communicate the need for resources, manpower and necessary facilities for securing the place of a scene. Participant 3 continues to state that: "First is life safety". Though, you have to think about you and your organization and then think about the other people out there who are responding, as this is a risky job. Then you can go into thinking about the operation objectives, whoever the operation commander is hmmm....i think the objectives they have laid out there and the priorities they have laid out will dictate what the priorities I will be given on behalf of my NGO. But to me, life safety is always number one. This opinion is supported by Participant 5 and many more others with reference to managing terrorism disaster".

Participant 7 stated that: "It is unfortunate that a communication which is very essential was not given priority. He described effective communication as critical for effective decision-making to make place. Communication in itself is of limited value unless it leads to meaningful collaboration". He was supported by Participant 4, 3 and 5.

Participant 8 mentioned that: "NGOs should have detailed communication plans that include the identification of essential information, shareable information, who should receive the information, sources of relevant information, information flow, and systems to support information flow. Otherwise you will be the first victim in the event of managing terrorism disaster operation".

In addition, the participants have also mentioned that security like Army, police and government officials were the first people on the scene so they were able to cordon the place and start the evacuation process, before mobilizing other NGOs. From there on receiving the information, the NGOs head's will inform officer's in charge of disaster units in their respective organizations and mandated them to verify the source of information and how the information was received, before deploying there staff to swing into action.

5. Analysis of findings

All of the participants 100% agreed that inquiry about the location is the priority action for every NGO as that will make them find out about the accessibility of the area. Followed by 80% who mentioned saving of lives and property. Provision of the relief materials was also mentioned by 69% others. Information and communication got the support of 69% and equally 69% have stated that security at around the scene of event is very important for the safety of their members. Others 60% have described that inquiry about operational period is important before mobilizing other NGOs 50% to join them. Further investigation on this finding has shown that 40% of the respondents agree that adequate preparation in anticipation of any emergency even before the emergency strike will enable the NGOs to mitigate, respond and by doing so, the recovery period as well as the operational period will not last longer than necessary. Table 1.1 indicate emerging theme and sub-themes on how NGOs prioritize action during operation.

Table 1.1: Emerging themes and sub-themes on priority action during operation

Theme 2	Sub-themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Priority action during operation	Inquiry about the location	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Serving life and property	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√
	Provision of Relief materials		√	√	√	√		√		√	√
	information / communication	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	
	Security at the scene of event	√	√	√		√		√	√		√
	Operational period	√		√	√		√			√	
	Mobilizing other NGOs	√	√			√		√			√
	Prepare, mitigate, respond and recovery			√	√		√			√	

Summary of analysis on this findings regarding the implication of priority action for NGOs during emergency operation have indicated that majority of the NGOs members had agreed to said that information regarding priority action were passed through heads of NGOs who make decision whether to participate or not. However, the implication of abandoning NGOs priorities may result to unnecessary hardship on the side of the victims and could be a weakness that sometimes the terrorist make use of it as opportunity to carry out their evil attacks. This finding is highly significant based on the total number of the participants who commented on the same issue.

5.1 Discussion

The objective of prioritizing action during emergency is to get information about the location, accessibility of the place of the scene and in order to avoid duplication of efforts or clash of authority, you have to inquire about what other sister organizations' are doing about that incident. It is also a priority for a head of NGOs to make necessary arrangement of response plan according to the rule of laws. But sometimes due to lack of clearly stated action plans, the NGOs themselves may find it very difficult to communicate with other NGOs who are in

different location to negotiate on role and responsibility especially with regard to basic needs of the victims while they are on same mission.

Similarly, ignorance of early warning sign disseminated by metrologies council to prepare against heavy downpour of rainfall can cause unnecessary risk of flooding and severe damage to live and property and rendered many people incline to certain vulnerabilities [10].

5. Conclusions

The absence of prioritizing action for NGOs during emergency operation is a major setback in achieving the NGOs objectives. Because knowledge on priority action gives NGOs hindsight on how long will the operation last, they also use that opportunity to prepare the resources needed, number of staff to be deployed as well as to make inquiries about what other NGOs are doing or planning about that same issue in order to prevent disharmony among participating NGOs.

However, the result of this phenomenological case study as analysed is showing lack of contingency action plan is another factor that make NGOs very difficult to coordinate, plan, monitor and evaluate the activities of the NGOs in the field, which led to many failures in achieving the aims and objectives of the NGOs and is making members of the community to act often on their own without the necessary qualification and minimal resources. These factors shows the instability amongst NGOs as discovered in North-Eastern Nigeria where the region is facing a stuff challenge in managing the over 2million victims of Boko-Haram Terrorists (BHTs) and the NGOs are leading agents who are there to assist the victims on daily basic .

Therefore, the NGOs framework has to be strengthened by stressing the need for involvement of many stakeholders and research projects in taken actions aims at promoting the capacity of NGOs to build community resilience. Within this context of participation, it is important to note that the involvement of many stakeholders such as INGOs and agencies that have the expertise to give guide on the operational procedures regarding operation at the decision making stage and the strategies that need to be taken in aids of victims will improve the entire process as well as to provide possible solution for lack of capacity within the NGOs.

The future work of this study will focus on advocacy about holding regular meeting in a combine meeting of all the stakeholders to sit together and discuss various roles where

supposed to play by each participating NGOs based on their expertise as strategies of improving priority action to ensure harmony during operations has yielded a good result.

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