COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NGOs TOWARDS DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to explore some comparative advantages of training indigenous groups towards disaster risk reduction. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are non-profit organizations that have been recognized based on their efforts towards uplifting the poor, marginalized, unprivileged, underprivileged, impoverished and downtrodden groups. Based on related works, it is well known factor that on the average, a disaster occurs somewhere else in Nigeria's each day and the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are usually the first or second agents to respond to humanitarian crisis, political, breakdown of the law and order. But it is unfortunate that even the NGOs suffered the same fate with the victims due to inadequate trainings on disaster risk reduction technics in Nigeria as a result of growing number of factors militating against them. The study followed a qualitative research strategy to conduct interviews with pre-tested interviews as key data collection instrument which was used in eliciting responses from10 heads of NGOs randomly selected from the North-Eastern Nigeria to seek information about the main NGOs missions in the region. The paper uses comparative analysis between Nigeria versus Malaysia to evaluate what is working well and what need to be corrected as both countries are party to world conference were global best framework on disaster risk reduction was developed at Sendai, Japan in 2015.

Keywords: NGOs, Capacity building, Disaster risk reduction, Government and Communities

1. Introduction:

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been categorised as the first or second responders after the devastating members of the families or communities affected by the disasters themselves to provide relief assistance to victims of emergencies in Nigeria [1]. The NGOs possess extensive knowledge about information and locations of the disasters as well as numbers of the victims and readily to share their experiences, collaborate and coordinate with other critical stakeholders in Nigeria such as National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Commission for Refugees (NCR), United Nation International Children Education Fund (UNICEF), United Nation High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) and other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in an attempt to meets the humanitarian challenges and the demands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). NGOs have significant roles in assisting the victims of emergencies to break out of the vicious circle of economic degradation and traumas afflicted on the minds of the victims [1], [2].

The major source of the NGOs strength comes from their idealism and values, which include a strong spirit of volunteerism and independence of mind. Most NGOs consider direct government responses to victims of emergencies as waste of time, inadequate and untimely. They always think by building the NGOs capacities is as good to improve the conditions of socio-economic development programmes, skills and empowerment of rural communities to accelerate development during crisis [3].

1.2 Problem statement

Despite the fact that disaster's is a phenomenon that spared nobody whosoever they caught with, But the problem is how the society can deal with this phenomenon in an adaptive way to reduce it risk and damage [4]. As governments alone cannot eliminate vulnerability by removing huge population from risky areas, the mitigation of damage is an alternative action to be taken to reduce real risk management as conducted by many NGOs in the discharge of their primary assignment, sometimes in conjunction with other relevant government agencies.It is usual to assign to such NGOs/agencies the full responsibility for the emergency response action by given them some trainings to build their capacity on disaster risk reduction [1]. The community, in the other hand is often seen as sole victims can also receive step-down training on the same issue from the NGOs as a passive entity towards disaster risk reduction in Nigeria [2]. And such actions are indicated in the conceptual theory as the

crucial factors for building the capacity of the communities, especially in disaster prone areas.

It is therefore pertinent to mention that an in-depth reference on how the existing frameworks, authors and researchers have not advanced their arguments toward building capacities of NGOs on how to generate their income to become self-reliance and to function very well rather than letting them to depend on government assistance on the premise of theories and government framework that was built on the basic of only policy statement and directives has contravene the NGOs missions and objectives [1], [2], [5], [6] & [5].

1.3 Aims of the study

The aim of this paper is to bring out some explanations owed to substantial goal of disaster risk reduction by comparative study between Nigeria's and Malaysian frameworks of disaster reduction and how it works towards reduces the losses of lives and livelihoods as well as provision of health care services, and improve the economic, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries as the goals of present Sendai framework which is the global best practice built to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, cultural, legal, social, health, structural, educational, environmental, technological, political, and institutional; measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery and thus strengthen resilience [4].

However, the international strategies for disaster reduction which was launched in 2000 by UN with over 163 countries in attendance to empower the ownership of the development process of eliminating the risk of disasters by the people themselves [4]. All development stakeholders – government, private sectors, NGOs, donors, philanthropies, communities and other members of civil society were there and they have recognized the important of building capacities, especially the NGOs who are always at the grassroots to offer their services in aid of the poorer's to develop themselves as free, responsible and self-reliant efforts toward disaster risk reduction as indicated by [3] inside the report on 10th IFAD/INGO Consultation, Pune, India, 2000.

2. Overview of the history of Nigerian NGOs towards disaster risk reduction

In recent years, there has been an apparent concentration of efforts by NGOs in Nigeria toward disaster risk reduction by engaging the victims of the disasters to develop

communities resilient and how to respond in case of aggravating emergency within the community or as a result of external forces, such as economic meltdown, natural and man-made disasters, or other threat to human existence and sustainability so that individuals or community can cope or withstand the situation before the necessary interventions come from government or donors. The overview on the history of Nigerian NGOs towards disaster risk reduction were contained in their programmes and projects as a social process of building the capacity for both the NGOs and the communities towards disaster risk reduction [1], [8].

Defining the capacity building as basic ability of a system to adjust its functioning prior to, during or after the emergency occurred following changes as a result of disturbances caused by disasters is at sustaining live after devastating effects of the disasters in communities that require response actions under both expected and unexpected conditions as discussed by many authors [1], [2], [7] & [8] who concluded that the primary use of emergency phases is to build individuals or community capacity as empirical device for researchers and practitioners to address a number of problems upon the categories of emergency striking to improve capabilities. Below are suggestions by previous researchers [8], [12], [7] on best approaches to building capacities towards effective disaster risk reduction with reference to Nigerian case:

i. Identification of Early Warning Sign (ESW): For most types of rapid on-set disasters, a warning system can save many lives. By giving a vulnerable population adequate notice of an impending disaster, they can either escape the event or take a precaution to reduce the dangers.

ii. Preparedness: Here means use of EWS to develop plans by either stockpiling food/non-food items, inventories, trainings, and standby forces/personnel or activities to prevents, sustain, improve capability to prevent, respond, recovery, identify threat for prompt action, task and programs develop prior to an emergency.

iii. Mitigation:- Reduce or eliminate the risk to a person by lessen the actual consequences of an incident or foundation in effort to reduce the loss, vulnerability of damage and the activities taken to reduce the severity or consequences of an emergency.

iv. Response: means provision of timely intervention by presenting adequate relief materials to victims as well as to protect the dignity of humankinds from humiliating.

v. Relief and Rehabilitation: This involves measures usually taken to meet basic needs for food, shelter, water, sanitary and medical care of victims of disasters. Whilst rehabilitation carry out during relief operations refer to an easing traumas, pain,

discomfort, or anxiety, a lightening of a burden, as of oppression or counselling the victims to lessens the tension or strain, or offers a pleasing change, as to the mind or eye, aid in the form of goods or money given, as donated by a government agency, NGOs or individuals to a person's unable to support themselves, a lord off one's mind so as to restore his confident in life after devastated effect of disaster.

vi. Recovery: involves operations and decisions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring a stricken community to its former living   conditions   while   facilitating necessary adjustments to the changes caused by the disaster. Thus recovery mean the activities continues until the system return to normalcy, short term or long term planning recovery restoration/rehabilitation and sometimes it takes a years.

vii. Contingency plan: may involve any planning assumption in anticipation of the disaster. Contingency plans may also include annual work plan, updating and stockpiling the necessary amenities as backup.

The above theories as conversed from government agencies and INGOs is indicating that by building the capacity of individual community or organizations such as NGOs, they will learn about warning sign, prepare, mitigate and response to any disaster immediately and they can also spread the value of providing immediate relief and rehabilitation and quick recovery if there is available contingency plans to contain the disaster's by themselves.

3. Missions of NGOs towards Disaster risk reduction disaster in Nigeria

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are launched with various purposes based on the region or local demand and problems that necessitate it establishment. But over a decade now, the roles of NGOs in Nigeria have changed to new much-desired goal on disaster risk reduction disaster as paradigm shift of conducting their activities. Some of the activities carried by NGOs include saving lives and property as well as providing relief assistance. Followed by complementing government's efforts to provide peace and stability, create community mobilization, offer search and rescue, providing security at, and around the scene, coordination for operational response, and health care services delivery.

Others missions of NGOs include assisting the poor among the victims and suffering people by coordinating the activities that will improve the life of the poor after long suffering and deprived one through formation of co-operative society in a ravaged war or leveraged areas from insurgency. Health and nutrition development, acting as associate of government and no as competitor, creating awareness towards the effects of anti-social vices and helping

out people in coping with the changing environment in the affected areas where there is insurgency [1], [4], [6].

The Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as a guide has a scope and purpose that will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or man-made hazards as well as related environmental, technological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disasters risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors [4].While acknowledging the efforts of NGOs in disaster risk reduction, this paper adopt a comparative analysis and content analysis approach between Malaysia and Nigeria as primary sources that inform us about the ideas of studying the roles of NGOs in Nigeria towards disaster risk reduction.

4. Malaysia versus Nigerian frameworks on disaster risk reduction

Many countries such as Malaysia, Nigeria, Japan, Turkey, USA and Canada etc. had participated in the development of Sendai framework of action as global best practice of disaster risk reduction [4]. The activities carried out by the NGOs in relation to disaster risk reduction have also grown in status in conjunction with building the capacity of stakeholders as the sole concept of establish ing disaster management framework by many countries. But sometime the process it is focuses on the need to abate both the impacts of the vulnerability conditions that brought the issue of developing the strong framework for disaster risk reduction.

The Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction is similar to study of disaster management by [8]as it revealed that disaster is a phenomenon with multiple faces – physical, social, economic, institutional, environmental, and so on. Not only does vulnerability but also the risk reduction which require the different elements to be reduced, but in many cases reducing the interaction between hazards and vulnerability provides the key to successful reduction. That is, if participatory in decision making is often regarded as one of the tactical approaches to disaster risk reduction is requiring strong and responsive institutions, social participation and sensitivity is all part of what NGOs stand for and were all indorsed and agreed by many countries during development of Hyogo and Sendai frameworks for action which was already implemented . However, this study presents only Nigeria and Malaysiaas example of many countries that have vibrant disaster management framework just to showcase [10], [11] & [4].

Adopting a comparative analysis and content analysis approach, this paper examines the primary sources such as Hyogo and Sendai frameworks to compare and contrast the Malaysia frameworks versus Nigeria.

4.1 The Malaysian experience

Malaysia as a party to the World Conference has implemented both the Hyogo and Sendai Framework for Action, but in Malaysia the framework was implemented through the National Security Council Directive No 20. This directive come into existence when there was a need for a policy and a mechanism to integrate, coordinate disasters on land in a systematic manner in Malaysia. The Prime Minister will issue the National Security Council Directive No. 20 from Prime Minister's with the support of much legislation to coordinate various agencies at federal, State and Districts levels [11] & [4].

The Directive defined disaster as "an incident that occurs unexpectedly, complex in nature, resulting in the loss of lives and damage to properties and the environment, as well as interfering in the daily activities of the local community. The incident requires the management which involves resources, equipment, frequency and extensive manpower from various government agencies as well as effective coordination and the possibility of taking complex actions over a long time". But the Directive would not be fully effective as a tool in fulfilling the Hyogo Framework policies, without invoking different legislation that has different roles in disaster management.

Malaysia had also recorded a higher number of flooding in Asian pacific. Therefore the laws says when floods occur, the relief and recovery process is hugely dependent on the National Security Council Directive No. 20 which can only be kicked into action by the National Security Council under the Prime Minister's Department. A variety of statutes, amongst others, the land Conservation Act 1960, Town and Country Planning Act 1976,Environment Quality Act 1974, Local Government Act 1976, Irrigation Areas Act 1953, Drainage Works Act 1954, National Forestry Act 1984, and Uniform Building By-Laws 1984 will have to be invoked. Evidently, without a single legal framework that is concerned with flood risk management, Malaysia will theoretically face problems where solutions are designed to adapt to the needs of local communities.

To facilitate the management of floods as the only frequent case of disasters in Malaysia, policies and priorities have to be consistent when flooding occurs. In planning for measures to prevent and prepare for floods, creating programmes and policies on land use

and restrictions, regulations on planning and building structure taking into account the principles of sustainable development with floods-risk basic, each of these legal instruments that complement the Directive will have to be reviewed, analysed and justified on its own merit [11].

From the variety of laws referred to, there are different components from each Act that need to be extracted to fulfil certain actions or duties. Clear cut responsibilities between the parties involved in flood risk management may be difficult to perceive as there may be overlapping schedule of duty, unclear direction in respect of who hold the authority during operation and provisions because they are separate laws and they are not capable of enforcing anybody who is there to serve on ad-hoc basic outside their primary schedule of duty. However, these shows there may be provisions from different Acts that complement another, but when crisis happen, there may be just not enough time to seek redress [11], [4].

Again, the World Conference had maintained in order to reduce disaster risks there must be an effort to have systematic integrated policies, plans and programs for sustainable development and reducing economic and social losses. The legislation in this direction is a critical component to reduce flood risk in Malaysia but not necessary important to take care of other forms of disasters. It is without doubt that countries that were successful in managing disaster risks and apply disaster risk reduction as paradigm shift for proactive measures are those countries that have made the effort, amongst others, to develop a legislative framework with disaster risk management as a national priority [11].

4.2 Lessons from Nigeria

Nigeria had also participated in the development of Sendai Framework for action on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) where over 173 countries attended from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Japan and that has presented a unique opportunity for many countries such as Nigeria to build the resilience of nations and communities to disaster. Recently, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in collaboration with International Office of Migration (IOM), Abuja Nigeria), UNICEF, UNHCR, USAID, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders have been engaged by the Federal government of Nigeria to conduct a literature review of risk assessment in strategic and practical aspect of disaster Prevention, Mitigation, Response, Recovery, and Reconstruct the areas destroyed by terrorists based on strategies adopted for guidance in Sendai Framework. That is how Nigerian stakeholders are using the Sendai

framework to mitigate the effect of terror attack in the North-Eastern Nigeria as well as to settle many disputes as a paradigm-shift[10].

From 2009 to date, Nigeria suffered one of the worst disasters since it independence when Boko-Haram Terrorists (BHTs) struck and displaced over 2 million people by attacking villages, schools, places of worship and markets in North-Eastern part of Nigeria and worst part of it is how the NGOs and agencies that are responsible for managing the victims suffer the same fate with the victims, may be due to lack of clear guidelines to guide or direct them. However, this comes at a time when government is spending huge amount of money annually to curtail the incident due to pressure at home and abroad by humanitarian organizations on the consequences of this terrorists group [12], [13].

The effect of terrorism as an aspect of man-made on Nigerian citizens and the conflicts onroles and responsibilities among the stakeholders who are supposed to manage the situation very carefully is turning down the progress recorded towards dismantling the terrorists group from their enclave. Therefore, the problem of having various SOPs or none for NGOs while they are on the same mission has remain a challenge as many of these organizations can go from one operation to another without documentation and that makes it very difficult to coordinate their activities, communicate and negotiate on specific roles to play by each NGO during operation [5], [6].

Although, the challenges that have been associated with managing the disasters vary from issues associated with the organization's managing the disasters itself to issues outside the organization. Therefore, the NGOs shall be advice to integrated part of the challenges to develop their prospect by exercising their humanitarian job accordingly. It is also advisable that the NGOs should be warned that if all the challenges listed in this paper were not managed systematically and professionally, it would render the intervening NGOs in a suicide mission.

5.Discussion

The section below presents a historical overview of disaster risk reduction in Nigeria and draws on the reflections of Malaysia and Nigeria experiences as comparative study to give highlights on how the involvement of NGOs has advancement of the disaster risk reduction agenda. It is therefore an important point to mention that by building the capacity of NGOs will definitely work for NGOs to build the community resilience and that will further eliminate the risk of any disaster.

In accentuating on previous studies by [14] had mentioned the names of NEMA and INGOs as the one who contributed immensely in strengthening the capacities of NGOs as well as providing succour to victims of the disaster in Nigeria that shows the country have the strength do deal with many disasters as it appear to be. Therefore training on mainstreaming peace building as well as integrating disaster risk reduction into social, economic and political life of the communities affected by the disasters will give opportunity to equip the NGOs with knowledge about how train the communities on proactive measures of protecting themselves rather than waiting for disaster/emergency to happen just to respond as lamented in the previous study by [5], [10] as a testimony about human resilience in the face of adversity brought by disasters.

The concept of this paper was similarly narrated by many authors [2], [7], [8] & [12] who demonstrated how to use early warning sign to mitigate the impact of many disasters by adequate preparation especially at the communities level, the risk of many disasters can be eliminated quickly through timely response to provide relief and rehabilitation to recover instantly from many devastating impact of the disasters. But all this depend on the availability of contingency plan as a backup.

Conclusion

Nigeria is amongst the luckiest nations in West Africa as it has not been put through some of the most destructive disasters that have visited her neighbours such as poverty, disease and hunger. Niger has had its share of hunger as a result of drought, shortage of rainfall for farming, whilst Chad and Benin republics infertility of the soil for farming and degradation despite the fact that there were no industrial development to cater for the needs of its citizens.

In comparison between Nigeria and Malaysian frameworks has demonstrated that the outwards contribution of having existing law and structure towards disaster risk reduction is most important aspect of reducing the risk of many disasters. Although, we are dealing with NGOs as diverse group of independent organizations that are neither run by government nor driven by profit. But, the enthusiasm of NGOs as a vehicle for development has for a long time been under scrutiny of government and academia but not in poorer countries where receiving official development assistance are increasing in proportion due to the aid being channelled through NGOs.

The future work of this study will focus on the legitimacy of NGOs in a poor state of a nation where the government cannot question the credibility of these NGOs due to its inability to provide what is necessarily needed forits people.

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