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CONTENTS

Volume 3, No.1, 2017

The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa: Revisiting the Sierra Leone Civil War
Oluwadare, Abiodun Joseph (Ph.D.) 1

Environmental, Peace and Security Issues in the Management of Flood Disaster in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
Oyebode Musibau Olabamiji, Ph.D 17

Disasters, Gender Relations and Food Security in Nigeria: The Case of Ibaji LGA, Kogi State
Gabriel, P. O., Omekara, C. L. & Obi-Bisong, N. 33

Boko Haram Insurgency and its implications for food security in Borno State, Nigeria
Okpo Francis Chibuzor And Raji Shittu, Ph.D. 47

Sustainable Industrial Harmony and National Development in Nigeria
Yusuf Noah, Olatunji Abdulganiy and Issah Moshood 59

An Appraisal of support and care to Widows and Orphans in IDP Camps in Abuja FCT, Nigeria: An Islamic Perspective
Suleiman B. Mohammed, Ph.D. & Rafatu Abdulhamid, Ph.D. 76

Trends of Illicit Arms Proliferation in Nigeria and Curtailment Strategies
Olusola O. Isola, Ph.D. 92

Volume 4, No.1, 2018

Motorists' Compliance with the Federal Road Safety Commission's Traffic Rules along Ilorin/Omu-Aran Route in Kwara State, Nigeria
Olatunji, A.G., Olawuyi, B. I.& Afunja, S.I., Tejideen, T. O. 108

Flooding and Guests' Patronage of Hospitality Industry in Lekki, Lagos State, Nigeria
Olawale-OlakunleOlajumoke Elizabeth 126

Health and Safety Needs of Homeless People in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria
Adio-Moses, Ruth Ochanya, Ph.D. 133

Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict and its Effects on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria
Okoro, John Peter 143

The Role of International Committee of the Red Cross in Managing Disasters in West Africa
Adimula, Abiola Ruth, Ph.D. & Bakreen, Abdulrazaq Olasupo 159

Threats to Peace and Security in the Republic of Guinea
Obi Ndifon Neji, Ph.D. 176

Unconventional United Nations Peace Building Interventions in the 2014 Afghanistan Elections and Democratic Transition
Olusola O. Isola, Ph.D & Biodun K. Aiki-Raji, Ph.D 191

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The *Journal of Peace, Security and Development* (JPSD) is published by the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies (CPSS), University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria. It is dedicated to advancing knowledge, deepening understanding and disseminating research findings in all aspects of peace studies, conflict studies, security studies, strategic studies and development studies.

The journal places no restriction on the scope or dimensions that studies can cover but strongly expects prospective authors to show that their papers have academic and policy implications for peace, security and development in the world, in its microcosm or macrocosm. In essence, the articles of the Journal put issues, directly or indirectly connected with peace, security and development in perspectives in both theoretical and empirical models.

Though efforts will be made by the Editorial Board to ensure that no inaccurate or misleading data, opinion or statement appears in this journal, the data and opinions presented in the articles are the sole responsibility of the contributors concerned. Authors are thus strongly encouraged to duly verify the authenticity of their claims and adequately acknowledge the sources of their information.

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Authors may also submit their manuscripts via e-mail, in MS Word. A cover sheet should be provided with the following details: an abstract of not more than 250 words, with a sequence of not more than six key words suitable for indexing and abstracting services; a brief biographical note about each author and each author's areas of specialisation.

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Turshen, M. and Twagiramariya (1998) *What women do in wartime*, London: Zed Books.

Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies

The Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies was established through the approval of the Senate at its 193rd meeting of 20th June, 2008. The Centre, domiciled in the Faculty of Arts for the purpose of certification was established to contribute to the Postgraduate training of the much needed manpower in the areas of Peace, Development, Security and Strategy. It has since been working assiduously to fulfil its mandate. The Centre operates from its permanent building along the Dam Site. It has as tenants, the Centre for International Education (CIE) and Unilorin Archives and Documentation Centre. The Centre, since its inception has had five (5) Directors. These are:

1. Professor Isaac Olawale Albert from the University of Ibadan.
2. Professor Felicia Olabisi A. Olasehinde-Williams from the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.
3. Dr. Joseph Odekunle Fayeye (Reader) from Department of Sociology and later from the Department of Social Work,
4. Dr. Mahfouz Adebola Adedimeji (Reader) from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, and,
5. Prof. Noah Yusuf from the Department of Sociology

The Centre is indebted to Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede (OFR) during whose tenure as Vice-Chancellor the programme took off. His commitment to an intellectually led approach to the pursuit of Peace in a troubled country and world led to the smooth take-off of the programme and its first public convention of a stakeholders forum to pledge to a non-adversarial pursuit of peace and reconciliation from warring communities in Kwara State in 2012, among other laudable Peace initiatives. Also, worthy of note is the unflinching support of Professor Sulyman Age Abdulkareem, the current Vice-Chancellor, who has consistently provided invaluable support to the Centre

The specific objectives of the Centre are to:

(1) make the University of Ilorin a global Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security Studies;
(2) make the University of Ilorin a Centre of Excellence in peace research and documentation;
(3) train manpower in the field of Peace, Conflict, Security and Strategic Studies;
(4) provide students with theoretical and practical skills in peace-making, peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy, strategic planning and management; and
(5) contribute to security strategy and environmental sector management.

Academic Programmes

At inception, the Centre commenced with the M. A. and Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Development Studies. Currently the Centre runs three (3) Academic Programmes at the Master level, viz:

a) M. A. Peace and Development Studies which is offered for regular students;
b) MPhil./PhD in Peace and Development Studies;
c) PhD in Peace and Development Studies;
d) M. A. Peace and Security Studies (under a MoU with the Institute of Security Studies in Abuja and organised solely for Fellows of the Institute (Fsi) who meet the admission requirements for the Postgraduate studies of the University of Ilorin. Admitted candidates spend a semester at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin.
e) M. A. Peace and Strategic Studies is under a MoU with the Nigerian Army (Nigerian Army School of Education, NASE). Candidates for the programme are senior army officers who have completed the Executive Intelligence Management Course (EIMC) in NASE and who meet the admission requirements for the Postgraduate studies of the University of Ilorin. Admitted candidates spend a semester at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin.

Other Activities

To further boost and enrich its academic programmes, the Centre is involved as part of the students curricula, in the following:

a. Annual Peace and Conflict Field Experience and Training (PCFEAT). This was formerly known as Conflict Field Experience and Training (CFEAT);
b. Biennial International Conference;
c. International Peace Day celebrated on 21st September annually; and
d. Conflict Management Capacity Building Retreat (CMCB) formerly known as ADR Retreat;
e. Annual Roundtable on Peace, Security and National Development;
f. Annual CPSS Alumni lecture.

JPSD
Volume 4, No. 1, 2018
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THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS IN MANAGING DISASTERS IN WEST AFRICA

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Abstract

Disaster is an occurrence or situation that brings about shock, displacement, instability and destruction. The incidence usually has psychological, biological, economic, political and physical effects on the victim and zone of occurrence. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) is a proven international humanitarian agency with requisite expertise in disaster management. The objectives of the study were to discuss the concept of disaster management and its relevance in West Africa; to evaluate the establishment and operations of the International Committee of Red Cross; to examine the challenges of disaster management in the sub-region and to suggest ways in promoting ICRC roles in disaster management in the West Africa sub-region. The study relied on information drawn from secondary sources, hinged on System Theory. It concluded that the inability of the national authority and sub-regional inter-government institutions to address disasters effectively, usually account for huge destruction and that disaster management is deficient in the sub-region, leading to an increase in humanitarian crises in the sub-region. The paper recommended a focus on the prevention of disaster and early warning mechanism in order to ensure that disaster are foreclosed or risk of casualties are reduced considerably and an effective cooperation between the ICRC and governments at all levels in the sub-region.

Keywords: Disaster Management, Crisis, Early warning mechanism, Intervention

Introduction

Disaster apparently is a part of human society. It is defined as an occurrence or situation, natural or man-made, sudden or progressive, which impacts high severity that the community or individual has to respond to which often result in displacement (Carter, 2008). The incidence usually has psychological, biological, economic, political and physical effects on the victim and zone of occurrence (Carter, 2008:10) while disaster management system is on addressing the menace of disaster incidences which has claimed many lives. The West African sub-region is more vulnerable to flooding, drought, mudslide, epidemic, famine *inter alia*. While technological disaster is prevalent in the Western world, rapid urbanisation ironically has been identified as a prime mover of disaster vulnerabilities in the

Global South (World Disaster Report 2016:205).

The negative consequences of these two development concerns include emission of pollutants into the ecosystem, unchecked constructions along vulnerable plains, overcrowding and city-slums, and so on. Most poor countries experience intensive aftermath of disaster because of system failures and preponderance of poverty which has made masses more vulnerable. The West African sub-region is therefore on high alert, and must ensure that addressing disaster management system is similar to addressing other development issues such as poverty and violent conflict. Incidentally, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) established in Geneva in 1863 with an objective to ensure protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and strife has made its impact felt in diverse interventions in the West Africa' sub-region. The ICRC is a proven international humanitarian agency with requisite expertise that could assist the sub-region in addressing disaster management. It has the primary role, according to the founder Henri Dunant "to prevent and alleviate suffering wherever it may be found"(ICRC's Mission, 2009:8). This is referred to as the principle of humanity. This principle, including the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence form the foundation of the ICRC (ICRC's Mission, 2009).

Disaster Management

Cambridge English dictionary defines disaster as an event that results in great harm, damage, or death, or serious difficulty: it could also relate to crisis. James and Gilliland (2005) identified with the Expanded Crisis Theory to explain the crises intervention paradigm. They defined crisis as a perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanism. Disaster could take the forms of armed conflict (human disaster), pandemic, and natural disaster (famine, mudslide and flooding).

According to Carter (2008), disaster management could be defined as 'an applied science which seeks, by the systematic observation and analysis of disasters, to improve measures relating to prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency response and recovery.' The application of management science to addressing disaster incidence or potentialities is the concern of disaster management. Furthermore, disaster management applies functions such as planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling to disaster situation. Another major aspect of disaster management is disaster preparedness; this implies "process of critical evaluation of current risks and hazards in conjunction with lessons learnt from past disasters in order to understand where additional support is most needed" (World Disaster Report, 2016:122). Therefore, disaster management focuses on preventive, palliative and alleviative paradigms in addressing crisis. Put differently, disaster management is the conscious attempt to alleviate the consequences of disaster and bring relief to the victims.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC was established in 1863, and it operates worldwide, helping people

affected by conflict and armed violence and promoting the laws that protect victims of war . It is an independent and neutral organisation, whose mandate stems essentially from the Geneva Conventions of 1949, ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and armed violence. It takes action in response to emergencies and promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law. Basically, the main objective of ICRC is "to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and violence and to provide them with assistance" (ICRC 2018).Article 5 of the Movement Statutes states that the ICRC is:

> To undertake the tasks incumbent upon it under the Geneva Conventions, to work for the faithful application of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and to take cognisance of any complaints based on alleged breaches of the law.

International Humanitarian Law otherwise known as the law of armed conflict was solely designed to protect the right of non-combatants and victims of armed conflict during and after war. It also takes cognizance of other preventive means to forestall undue threat to lives and property of civilian population. In addition, ICRC provides humanitarian relief to victim of natural disaster where it has its operational base (ICRC, 2009:11). The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a global humanitarian network of 80 million people that helps those facing disaster, conflict and health and social problems. It is the umbrella body, which consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC 2018).

Overtime, the role of ICRC has been extended to all other areas where humanitarian needs are highly required. This suggests that, beyond the roles given to it by virtue of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols (main sources of international humanitarian law), ICRC also functions in such areas like natural disaster incidence, internal tension/disturbance, prevention and containment of epidermis/viral diseases and so on.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Chaos theory which captures chaotic or crisis situation not as a form of disorderliness but an opportunity for experimentation of possible solutions which could inform positive evolutionary outcomes. The theory was propounded by Henri Poincare and further advanced by Edward Lorenzo in the 20th century. The position of these scholarswas based on the non-linear explanation of human transition. Basically, they agree that happenings in human life are not predictable as against the classical scientists who may concur that considering certain causes and effects, human transition could be predictable and deterministic.

The Chaos theory offers a more adequate model for articulating and understanding a positive, strength-based psychological view of people as

potentially and adaptive system, even in the face of extremely challenging experience. Against the backdrop of unpredictability, uncontrollability and the non-linear dynamic of life transition, therapy given to victims of disasters could take a form of detachment from past experience in order to uphold hope for positive transformation. This theory contends that disorder and lack of control of it constitute a normal part of the transition process. According to Butt (1997:127) cited by Bussolari & Goodell (2009: 100), "chaos is a precursor not to death, but to a more fulfilling life in many cases".

The Chaos theory addresses the pessimism individuals have about disorder that often makes them dissociate with suddenness, unpredictability, spontaneity and disorder. Similarly, when chaos occurs individuals are quick to engage in blame game or self-blame which would allow the crisis to linger or unaddressed. However, the knowledge that chaos is a potential part of life transition, and could result in orderliness when victim follows through the stages; is one of the major contributions of chaos theory to social science. Victims of crisis/disaster, could be helped to directly address their misfortune, emancipating them from the negativity of chaos or disorder, thereby facilitating optimism from the passing of disorder.

The theory provides a better understanding for addressing disaster in the region. It is believed that relative solutions could be derived from the empirical explanations given above. Addressing challenges of disaster management in the region has been a herculean task for the authority. Many of the models available in the region are basically focused on providing an aftermath assessment and palliatives to cushion the effect of the incidence. This apparently is not enough given the number of lives lost and value of property claimed by the various disasters and the meteoric trend disaster incidences have taken.

Principles and Operations of the ICRC in Disaster Management

The operation of ICRC is deeply rooted in Henry Dunant's principle of humanity, that is the endeavour *to prevent and alleviate suffering wherever it may be found.* Against this backdrop, ICRC's operations basically cut across delivering humanitarian services to victims of destruction either because of violence or natural disaster. However, it must be established that ICRC main concerns are with armed conflict, though in many cases it renders relief services to victims of lesser violence and disaster on the basis of its humanitarian initiative. For example, "In Nigeria, ICRC is focusing on preventive activities, humanitarian diplomacy and capacity building of the Nigerian Red Cross Society. ICRC works in cooperation with the Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS) to provide protection and assistance to people affected by inter-communal clashes, urban riots and political violence" (The Humanitarian, 2007).

The ICRC role in natural disaster stems from two main rationales, namely:

i. Natural disaster occurring in location of armed conflict where ICRC already has operation base; and
ii. When complementing other members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

(National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) as per the provision of the Movement Statutes

Natural disaster *per se* occurs usually in situation of armed conflicts. More so, when it occurs it uncovers a number of humanitarian needs that require humanitarian response from ICRC. The ICRC provides the best chance to access victims of natural disaster under the situation of armed conflict because of its fundamental principles of impartiality and neutrality. These principles avail ICRC of trust and confidence from the opposing parties. Also, the excessiveness of destruction occasioned by natural or technology disasters where ICRC currently operates or which is likely to undermine the efforts of National Society (first responder to emergency bind by the Movement Statutes) usually require the expertise and facilities of the ICRC to contain (ICRC's Mission, 2009:11).

ICRC operational functions comprises of activities before, during and after natural disaster. It works in partnership with the National Society and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society to achieve these functions. ICRC role in natural disasters could come in the following forms:

a) **Preventive role:** in anticipation of natural disaster, ICRC runs a disaster risk reduction programme which may include:
   - Improvement of national capacities through the National Society, for example promoting sanitation programme, first aid training. as well as livelihood need assessment.
   - Construction of proper drainage system in areas prone to flooding, as well as pools for collecting water in drought-prone areas i.e Somalia.
   - Awareness programme on hygienic living and vaccination of animal and human.

b) **Provision of relief materials** and other humanitarian service in situation of natural disaster:
   - ICRC provides welfare and medical services to victims of natural disaster like those in armed conflicts.
   - Deployment of logistics and staff through the National Societies
   - Assist in dead body management i.e searching, identifying and managing remains of large number of victims.

c) **Post-natural disaster management** programme
   - Disaster Risk Reduction programme is an integral part of ICRC response to emergency case, and this is readily available to contain devastation of such disaster, for instance construction of typhoon resistance house in post-typhoon Bopha and Haiyan in Philippines.
   - Restoration of family links after displacement by natural disaster.

- Technical and material assistance for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure such as portable water and well equipped health facilities.

The ICRC has performed these roles across the globe in countries such as Tsunami 2011 in Japan, through the Japanese Red Cross , Indian Ocean Tsunami 2005 that affected Sri Lanka and Aceh, provide relief material in Thailand and Philippines, as well as Somalia and South Sudan (2014-2015) in Africa (The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015, Japan).

Disaster Management in West Africa

Disaster management has been described severally by different people, however one common ground is the deliberate or conscious effort directed towards preventing crisis from occurring, application of risk reduction control measures and restoring victims of disaster to pre-disaster equilibrium. In the book titled *Crisis Intervention Strategies*, James and Gilliland, (2005) described environmental crisis as the occurrence of some:

> Natural or human-caused disaster (that) overtakes a person or group of people who find themselves through no fault or action of their own, inundated in the aftermath of an event that may adversely affect virtually every member of the environment in which they live.

Examples of such crisis include; naturally occurring - flooding, mudslide, earthquake, tidal waves, forest or grassland/bush fire, famine and drought; biologically derived – disease epidemic or huge oil spill; politically based – war, refugee crisis linked to ethnic cleansing or severe economic depression(James & Gilliland, 2005).

The above description of disaster is not uncommon in the region. The three categories of possible occurrence are found in states within the Western Region. In some cases, there are interwoven like insurgency resulting in increased IDPs or refugee camps that are vulnerable to disease epidemic. There are states that continue to face the threat of flooding, mudslides, famine and drought across the region. It should be added that these environmental concerns are now a challenge to the international community, and the region could leverage on the expertise available globally to manage the disaster incidences (Carter, 2008:303). Apart from the known fact that nation-states have specific agencies and societies focusing on disaster management, there is the need to bring into fold expert knowledge from the world of science and technology, empirical understandings and existential practice of disaster management (Carter, 2008).

In another attempt to evaluate disaster management from the perspective of environmental degradation, Dutta, Dutta&Pandey(2009)identified the Sahel region among the third world countries as having huge number of environmental refugees due to degradation and disaster. The authors describe the common characteristics of countries in this region as places with high population densities, predominantly rural agriculture, poor soil;

people are extremely poor, suffer malnutrition, food, and water shortage. They overcrowd cities and forced to live on 'bare subsistence'. Environmental disaster is characterised here as an outcome of industrialisation and industrial accidents.

Though, disaster has been with us for centuries, we have been unable to mitigate its negative effect on world population (that is equally confronted with poverty and economic shocks). The traditional threats are growing while new ones are emerging. Upsurge in unconventional armed conflict such as terrorism and insurgency further strain the efforts of responsible authority (Carter, 2008: 4). Industrialisation and urbanisation ironically degrade the environment and make the inhabitants more vulnerable to disasters from air pollution, overcrowding, desertification and so on. Today we now talk about technological disaster such as the Tsunami, hydrological disaster such as typhoon and flooding, geological disaster such earthquake, volcanic eruption, meteorological disaster such as climate change and wildfire, biological disaster such as cholera epidemic, HIV/AIDS, Ebola and so on, 'sociological disaster'- ethnic cleansing, kidnapping, extremism and terrorism (Guha-Sapir, et al 2016).The above dimensions of disaster make presupposes more incidences in the face of lacklustre disaster management system in the region.

Carter explains disaster management cycle focusing on the following aspects:

- **Prevention:** deliberate actions to hinder the occurrence of disaster or preventing its occurrence to having harmful effect on the people. Such action could include construction of dam.
- **Mitigation**: this is closely tied to prevention however different in the sense that, it sets out actions or ethics to be followed in order to reduce the effect of disaster incidence. Such activities include establishing building codes to guide inhabitants, enacting safety regulations and so on.
- **Preparedness:** this explains the extent of measures put in place by the authority and its people in order to address disaster. Measures such as formulating and updating counter-disaster measures and enlightenment campaign. This could equally be divided into – warning, threat and precaution.
- **Disaster impact**: this is focused on the occurrence of disaster and its effect. However, disaster impacts vary according to the type of disaster.
- **Response:** this could come before but usually follow the disaster impact. The main focus is to save lives and property from the harmful effect of the disaster and deal with the immediate disruption and damages caused by the incidence. Activities here include: implementing plans, activating counter-disaster system, search and rescue and so on.
- **Recovery:** this is a process of helping victims return to normalcy, and it usually a protracted process. Major activities here include:

restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

- **Development:** this is focused on creating enduring national policy plan that will reflect on disaster-related scenarios and provide facilities that could address its occurrence. For example, a development plan could introduce improved building system model that will prevent flooding or optimise cooperation with international disaster management assistance such as the ICRC.

The same scholar gives two dimensional pattern of disaster management cycle as thus:

Figure 1: Basic Format of the Disaster Management Cycle

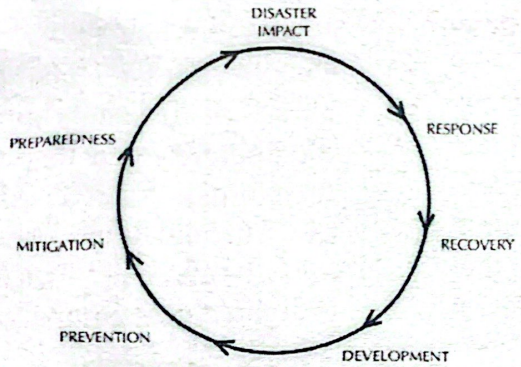
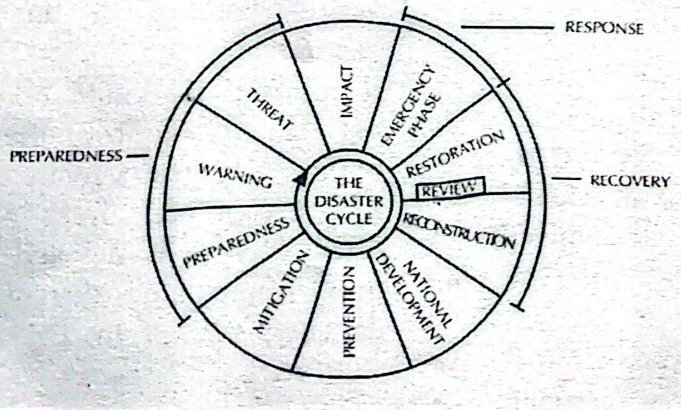


Figure 2: Alternative Format of the Disaster Management Cycle



Source: Disaster Management; a Disaster Manager's Handbook, by W. Nick Carter, Asian Development Bank, 2008.

Subsequently, disaster management is a key responsibility of government at all levels and especially in the West African states, being more vulnerable to disaster, yet have less effective disaster management practice. The West African sub-region consists mainly of countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This regional community

was found on the principle of regional integration and collective efforts toward addressing development challenges in the region. One of the major challenges confronting member-states is man-made and natural disaster. Countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and others have continued to address disaster incidences like disease epidemic, armed conflict, flooding, and mudslide among other things.

ICRC Disaster Management Interventions in West Africa

Reliefweb (2018) reported that, preventing outbreaks of disease is a key priority for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and that stopping an outbreak before it spreads out of control saves lives, protects livelihoods and supports long term development. Thus, the 2014 to 2016 West Africa Ebola virus disease outbreak severely impacted health systems and cost Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone an estimated $2.8 billion, causing 11,000 deaths (Reliefweb 2018). In response to this outbreak, the IFRC mobilised 600,000 community members to bring the epidemic under control. Also to curtail the outbreak of Lassa fever in Nigeria in 2017, Fatiregun (2017) reported that the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) guidelines on outbreak response in Nigeria established a functional state/local government area (SGA/LGA) epidemic management committees which included LGA Chairman, health workers and the Red Cross among others. The roles and responsibilities of committees were to review and approve the plan on epidemics, mobilize resources, coordinate and monitor activities, monitor resource utilization, and coordinate post epidemic evaluation.

In addition, Reliefweb,(2009), reported that many families in West African countries have been displaced from their homes, as excessive seasonal rains continue to exacerbate the widespread flooding of Senegal, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and several other countries. In that report, Mc Andrew being one of the American Red Cross specialists working in Senegal said that:

> The areas that are the most affected are the most vulnerable and have the highest levels of poverty. . . the people that are affected by these floods are already struggling with living conditions.

Together with colleagues from the Danish Red Cross and the Senegalese Red Cross, they assessed the needs and distributed relief supplies to the most vulnerable. Some of the items they distributed included: water containers called jerry cans - so families can collect clean water, blankets, kitchen kits (including pots, pans, plates, knives and forks), Hygiene kits (with soap, detergent, shampoo, toothbrush, and many of the same products most people have at home), Insecticide-treated nets (to protect people from mosquitoes that could transmit malaria), Sleeping mats, Rehydration salts and water purification tablets, Shelter kits to help people repair minor damages to houses, Tents for people who have moved to camps.

Similarly, IFRC (2018) has reported that nearly a quarter of a million households in Nigeria are at risk after heavy rains caused by flooding, causing 141 deaths and 265 injuries. According to the report, the Nigerian Red Cross Society is conducting rapid assessments in coordination with the country's National Emergency Management Agency.

Moreover, WANEP (2017) reported that on August 14, 2017, the region came under the devastative mudslide, largely caused by indiscriminate building of house hinged upon increasing population largely of low-income earners. Destruction from this disaster was meteoric especially when about 1000 homes were buried in mud with families trapped therein. Mothers and children were most affected while about 3000 displaced (ACAPS Briefing Note, August 15th, 2017). According to IFRC, 2017, Red Cross volunteers were digging for survivors and supporting distraught families in the wake of heavy flooding and mudslides that have ripped through Sierra Leone's capital Freetown. The mudslides came following three days of torrential rains.

Imasuen (2015) highlighted the roles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Northeast Nigeria's Boko Haram insurgency torn communities, stating that through the strengthening of its field operations in communities in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, ICRC expanded community-based first-aid programme and the mobilisation of urgent water/sanitation initiatives since 2011 to date; provided medical aid, clean water, food and other essential household items to help meet the immediate needs of displaced persons at various communities of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states; it upgraded the water/sanitation infrastructures in various camps where IDPs commonly sought refuge, delivering long-term community benefits as well as the donation of medical/surgical materials to various health centers; it helped in the coordination with national/state emergency agencies in various sexual and gender-based programmes to help reduce the rate of gender based violence at various IDP camps; it increased the provision of deliveries of supplies and services such as food, shelter, health, water, sanitation and hygiene(WASH) and nutrition to the growing influx of Nigerian refugees in Chad, Niger and Cameroon since 2013 (ICRC,2013); ICRC reunited a seven year old daughter with mother after four year separation (Punch, 2018);they also performed about 4,500 surgeries on victims of Boko Haram attacks between 2015 and 2017 in crisis-ridden Borno and Yobe States (Olugbode, 2018).

In addition to these, Babaomo, a staff of Nigerian Red Cross Society (one of the respondents) confirmed that The Red Cross provided transportation of IDPs to their respective communities for necessary re-integration in 2017; also for transporting and reuniting the Chibok girls returnees with their communities. Other areas of intervention of ICRC in disaster management worthy of note was that between May and June, 2009, about 7000 Red Cross societies across 10 countries in West Africa embarked on immunisation campaign to address the issue of polio in the region. Countries involved included Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leon, Togo and Nigeria (IFRC 2009). Also, in 2010, ICRC in conjunction with the Nigeria Red Cross Society(

NRCS) deployed Red Cross Teams to areas affected by the Jos violence. They provided relief materials to IDPs and detainees, helped victims to get proper medical treatment and supplied first aid kit to Police Staff College (ICRC Newsletter March 2010, Nigeria).

Challenges of Disaster Management in West Africa

The ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Reduction, highlighted the major challenges to disaster management. In November 2010, World Bank's Africa Region Disaster Management Team revalidated these major challenges in its Report. Below are some of the veritable challenges facing West African states in their efforts to address increasing disaster incidences.

- **Financial incapacitation**: the incessant violence in the sub-region and focus on development issues such as poverty compete exceedingly with disaster risk reduction budget so much so that less and less funding space is available to the national disaster management bodies. For example in Nigeria, the counter-terrorism campaign and the north-east reconstruction budget have become a burden to other areas that require ecological fund. The IDP's camps are poorly managed due to reported financial incapacity, thus, accounting for increasing poor health status and epidemics vulnerability among the IDPs.
- **Policy incoherence:** the national authority is yet to completely integrate disaster management mechanism into the national development policy. This implies that limited attention is given to the disaster management cycle. Although, intergovernmental cooperation and agreement exist, very few countries have been able to integrate those agreement into their respective national plan.
- **Deficiency in Assessment Statistics**: there has been low level of reportage of occurrence of disaster or disaster-prone activities especially at the local communities. This further increases the vulnerability of the people to large scale disaster. The data necessary for risk calculation, warning system and mitigation measures are scarcely supplied (source not provided).
- **Inadequate information circulation:** most victims of disaster in the sub-region are either not properly informed or not informed at all. The enlightenment campaign and institutional capacity have been strained with varieties of development issues confronting countries. Disaster management campaign or educational programmes deserve perpetual existence across the sub-region.
- **Poverty:** the sub-region is seriously affected by poverty. Poverty plays key role in increasing the vulnerability of the people to disaster. Many people now cluster in slumps in order to eke a living in the urban centre. Most of these residences are prone to flooding, epidemics and other disaster.

- **Inefficient response system**: the response system that is supposed to follow closely in line with type and nature of the particular disaster is rarely available. Instead, national authorities often misplaced response for cash-for-relief. Areas where psychological, direct economic aid, food supply and so on are required were either neglected or monetised. Monetisation of the response system arguably encourage syphon of public fund meant for relief purpose.
- **Lack of proper urban centre plan:** urbanisation has become a development challenge in the sub-region. Firstly, there is increasing rural-urban migrants in search for livelihood. This encourages population congestion and overuse of limited utilities. Secondly, the urban centres are not properly planned. Strategic facilities and housing structures are often lined up along floodplains or drainage basins, inadequate environmental impact assessment, poor water resource management system *inter alia* are visible in the urban areas. These two aspects increase both the vulnerability to disaster and the number of vulnerable population.

Government's efforts

ECOWAS over the years has rolled out policies and programmes, and cooperated with regional and international bodies like United Nations institutions such as UNDP, UNICEF, and others. The African Union Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) met in 2005 to deliberate on this subject matter, and came up with the African Programme for DRR. Again the Article 22 and 29 of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS enshrined cooperation by members to strengthen existing institutions in order to manage natural calamities, food insecurity, and establish warning system. These all are among the various target attempt by the sub-region to manage disaster.

West Africa is susceptible to the combination of biological, hydrological, meteorological and climatological disaster. Flooding, mudslide and famine could become a common place due to extreme rainfall, rising sea level, deforestation and other anthropogenic activities as well as institutional deficiency. In 2016, flood affected most parts of the sub-region, and it is likely to increase in the future due to climate change and other drawbacks peculiar to developing economies. For example, the 2012 flooding in Nigeria cost an estimated value of about USD$517 million(Guha-Sapir, et al 2016). To combat Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, government budgetary allocation increased tremendously to manage plethora of IDP camps, defend national integrity of the country and to fight the insurgents. Punch, (2017) reported that in the 2017 budget, the army budgeted N5bn for the procurement of weapons to prosecute the anti-terrorism war and that the total budgetary allocation of the army for the anti-insurgency war stands at about N7.5bn.

Conclusion and recommendations

The West African sub-region is faced with natural and man-made(armed conflict) disasters of varying extent and degrees and that the inability of the

national authority and sub-regional inter-government institutions to address the disasters, usually account for huge destruction. There is insufficient policy control mechanism to regulate urban/town planning development. The ICRC, IFRC and national Red Cross Societies and Crescent have rendered disaster management services in their respective jurisdictions to alleviate the suffering of people affected by natural disaster and armed conflict within the sub-region.

ICRC presence in the sub-region is minimal compared to the enormous humanitarian needs. One of the reasons adduced was that ICRC is detached generally from Africa because of the organisation is Eurocentric and face the challenge of African sentiment. However, the functionality of ICRC in global humanitarian relief practice is seriously desired in the sub-region. This study therefore suggests that there is a need for more organised efforts to facilitate cooperation between the ICRC and regional community in order to foster international humanitarian law and other humanitarian functionaries.

Another impeding challenge that needs attention is funding. At the state level, ICRC and national authority should encourage a joint funding of humanitarian services to target victims of disasters. The situation of child soldiering, sexual violence, humanitarian crisis in the IDPs camps and other vulnerable zones requires robust financial commitment. One of the reasons why there has been dearth of ICRC operations in the sub-region is the lack of financial commitment and loopholes for corruption especially from host states.

At the sub-regional level, ECOWAS should rededicate efforts towards cooperation with the International Committee of Red Cross and its sister organisations with a view to expanding the scope of their activities in the sub-region. In doing this, focus should be given to the prevention of disaster and early warning mechanism in order to ensure that disaster are foreclosed or risk of casualties are reduced considerably. It is also suggested that to improve peaceful co-existence within the sub-region, the ICRC operatives that is responsible for peaceful resolution of conflict between belligerent, could be put to work in the sub-region in order to regulate incessant violent conflict.

Moreover, for enhancement of effective humanitarian services, the existing NGOs and civil societies domiciled in the states of the sub-region should cooperate with ICRC and familiarise them with local terrain. By doing this, the ICRC could break the barrier of inaccessibility to remote areas that are in need of humanitarian assistance in affected communities. The regular disaster incidences in the sub-region and the need for knowledge sharing on disaster management cannot be overemphasised. Therefore, it is recommended that ICRC in conjunction with her sister organisations and the Institute of International Humanitarian Law, San Remo, as well as other civil societies, engage academics from the sub-region in their operations with a view to establish fora for knowledge sharing and look into possibilities of establishing an institute for disaster management, which in turn will help stakeholders to address

the existing failures and enhance disaster management system in the sub-region.

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