

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) AND DISASTER  
MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Disaster management aims to reduce, or avoid the potential losses from hazards, assure prompt and appropriate assistance to victims of disaster, and achieve rapid and effective recovery. It is against this background that this study was conducted to appraise the roles of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in disaster management in Nigeria. The study made use of secondary data and content analysis as method of data collection and analysis respectively while utilizing structural-functionalism as a framework of analysis. The findings of this study showed that the NEMA has functioned effectively in enhancing proper disaster management in Nigeria through establishment of Geographic Information System, establishment of the COSPAS-SARSAT, development of multi-disciplinary epidemic early warning system mechanism, establishing Grassroots Emergency Management Volunteer Corps, developing Regional Cooperation For Disaster management, establishment of Disaster Response Units (DRUs) in armed forces, and Provision of Relief and Rehabilitation Materials etc. It was also observed that NEMA is confronted with some challenges which include paucity of logistics, lack of sustained synergy to coordinate stakeholders, inadequate manpower and absence of functional emergency response structures at the other tiers of government thereby making bottom – top approach to disaster management almost impossible in Nigeria. Therefore, it is recommended that NEMA should be more proactive rather than reactive in doling out relief assistance/materials. Furthermore, the Federal Government should support NEMA through improved funding and provision of necessary infrastructures for disaster management in line with global best practices.*

**Key words:** *Disaster, Disaster Management, Emergency, Structural – Functional Theory.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Disasters continue to be of concern in all the countries of the world. Evidence shows that over the last one and half decade (1999-2015), disasters triggered by natural and human induced hazards have claimed more than 600,000 lives and affected more than 2.4 billion people, the majority of them in developing countries like Nigeria (Adeoye *et al.*, 2009).

Nigeria, like other countries in Africa, has had its own share of disasters, from both natural hazards and human induced incidences and all with their debilitating consequences. Indeed, the occurrence of numerous forms of disasters in Nigeria has increased in the last decade, especially in recent times. The range of these disasters includes: frequent oil spills as in the case of Niger Delta, increasing levels of industrial pollution and waste in cities, rise in the number and severity of floods due to climate change, increasing threat of desertification and pest infestation, outbreak of dreaded avian influenza H5N1 (bird flu), droughts and general land use degradation, gully erosion with humanitarian consequences in the south east, plane crashes and rampant cases of fire disasters across the country, oil pipe-line vandalization in diverse communities, increase urban risks like flooding , collapsed buildings, ethno-religious conflicts and threat to oil and gas installations.

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is an agency that coordinates Disaster Management activities at the national level and the agency coordinate the necessary synergy amongst all emergency response agencies like the Fire service, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Armed Forces and nongovernmental organizations like Red Cross (NEMA, 2007). The duty and responsibilities of NEMA is mainly to coordinate resources towards effective and efficient Disaster Management in Nigeria by reaching out to agencies or persons that can help when disaster strikes as well as help in combating the nefarious consequences of disasters. To millions of Nigerians, NEMA is expected to be well equipped, be adequately funded and staffed with necessary work force to face the increasing challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century posed by disaster all over the world occasioned by the impact of climate change and acts of terrorism. (Adeoye *et al*, 2009).

The challenges of NEMA in Disaster Management in Nigeria are enormous ranging from lack of trained manpower, finance and lack of necessary synergy amongst the three tiers of government. For instance, according to NEMA (2004), apart from Lagos and Kaduna states, most other states do not have functional fire services. The few states that have fire services, have staff that lack requisite training, machinery and maintenance culture. Most states structures do not have statutory budget allocation and turf protection even though the money is included in the federal allocation given to states every month; such money is diverted to other uses.

Recognizing the multiplicity of the negative effects of poor Disaster Management in Nigeria, this study will assess the roles of NEMA in the Disaster Management in Nigeria as well as evaluate the various challenges and problems encountered by the agency with the view to proffer solutions to the posed problems. Given the above, the following research questions are formulated: What has been the role of NEMA in disaster management in Nigeria? Does NEMA exhibit any capability in managing disasters in Nigeria from 1999 to date? What are the constraints militating against the functions of NEMA? To what extent has NEMA fared in managing disasters?

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the role of NEMA in Disaster Management in Nigeria. Alongside, the research is built on the following specific objectives:

1. To analyse the capabilities and achievements of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Disaster Management in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015
2. To evaluate the problems militating against the effective performance of NEMA in Nigeria
3. To proffer feasible recommendations that will bring about improvement in Disaster Management in Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS**

The propositions of this study are:

1. NEMA has been very functional in managing disasters in Nigeria.
2. There are problems affecting the effective performance of NEMA in disaster Management in Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This paper made use of secondary sources as a means of collecting data which includes research methodology texts, journals, publications, internet e.t.c. The method of data analysis employed is content analysis. Content analysis was employed because it has the capacity of providing systematic way of examining the content of chosen texts as well as aids in drawing conclusions and making valid suppositions.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

#### **Concept of Disaster**

Disasters represent the inability or the unwillingness of human beings to protect themselves from hazards and associated risks (Adeoye *et al.*, 2009). This inability at first is a consequence of the nature and complexity of hazards. It also results from the lack of knowledge on how to reduce or eliminate physical, social, economic and environmental factors or process, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. On the other hand, the unwillingness to protect against the impacts of hazards may be political, caused by discrimination or lack of proper management of ‘development’ by government to reduce the occurrence of disasters in developing nations (Bekwe, 2009).

According to International Disaster Data Base of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Disaster is a sudden catastrophic situation that causes loss of life, properties and damage to the environment (NEMA, 2007). It can also be defined as a rapid disruption of natural situation and normal human activities causing damage to property and/or injury to people (Ayoade and Akintola, 2009).

### **Classification of Disaster**

Disasters can be classed into three levels, which include: level 1 (minor), level 2 (major) and level 3 (catastrophic).

*Level 1 (Minor)* disaster is disasters that could be handled within the available resources of the immediate community (Bekwe, 2009). In such a situation, the local community is usually responsible for the decision making process to resolve the incident (Ayoade and Akintola, 2009). Examples of minor disaster are small market fire, collapse building, road accident.

*Level 2 (Major)* disasters are disasters whose impact overwhelms the capacity of the local community and required response or assistance from the state or external agencies (NEST, 2009). An event like this usually requires a coordinated efforts and commitment of personal, equipment and resources from the assisting agencies (Adeoye *et al.*, 2009). Examples of major disasters are windstorm, air or rail crashes, dam collapse, disease epidemic etc.

*Level 3 (Catastrophic)* disasters are disasters that occur without warning and whose magnitude is so large to have the president of a country declare it a national disaster (Adeaga, 2009). In such a case all agencies of government, stakeholders and in most cases international community are involved in the mitigation activities. Resource for intervention in this case is requested from all known sources, be it national or international (Hanga, 2004). For instance; earthquake, tsunami, Terrorist attacks, civil disturbance, bomb explosion, toxic gas emissions, nuclear accident etc.

### **Causes of Disaster**

Disasters are classified into natural and human induced disaster (Maigari, 2009). It could be sudden or progressive, of higher magnitude or lesser magnitude both having catastrophic impact to life and properties of communities affected (NEST, 2009). Those caused by nature are called natural disasters; the natural disasters include extreme weather conditions, windstorm, flood, rainstorm, drought, desertification, disease, epidemic, volcanic eruptions, earth quakes, landslide and tsunami etc (Adeaga, 2009). Disasters caused by human activities whether intended or in error are called man-made or human induced disaster. The man-made disasters are air crashes, road and train accidents, boat mishaps, collapse building/structures, toxic chemical accidents, bomb explosions, civil disturbances, terrorism and war (Hanga, 2004).

### **Disasters in Nigeria**

Nigeria, like the rest of the world, is exposed to a wide range of natural or human induced disasters (Ayoade and Akintola, 2009). While some of these disasters are rapid, others are slow-onset, resulting in catastrophic situations leading to loss of lives and properties, degradation of environment. These disasters occur in form of drought, desertification, flooding, epidemics, coastal erosion, dam failure, building collapse, oil spillage, maritime collision or accident, act of terrorism, communal clash, fire, air crashes and boat mishap, amongst others (NEMA, 2007).

Historically, salient disasters in Nigeria include the yearly epidemics such as cholera, measles and cerebro-spinal meningitis (CSM). There was drought in the Sudan-Sahel zone of the country in 1972 - 1973, which culminated in the establishment of National Emergency Relief Agency (NERA) by the then military government in 1976 (Bekwe, 2009). There were flood disasters in Ogunpa (Oyo State) in 1982, Lagos Bar Beach in 2001, Shiroro and Kaduna in 2003, Gombe in 2004, Jalingo in 2005, e.t.c (DHA, 2004). Others include, the 2008 landslide in Agwu LGA (Enugu state); and 2005, 2006 & 2009 landslide in Agwagune (Cross River State). Also, Nigeria experienced numerous ethnic, political and religious violent conflicts in Kaduna, Lagos, Kano, Plateau, Bauchi, Borno, Taraba, Benue, Delta, Anambra, Ondo, Osun, Ogun e.t.c (Maigari, 2009).

In addition, there were technological disasters ranging from, the 2002 Ikeja bomb explosion (Lagos State); the 2002 West African Rubber Product Company fire in Ikorodu (Lagos State); the 1992 Hercules C-130 military air-crash at Itokin (Lagos State); the 2002 ADC air-crash at Ejirin (Lagos State); the EAS air-crash in Kano State; the 2005 Bellview air-crash in Lisa village (Ogun State); the 2005 Sosoliso air-crash in Port harcourt (Rivers State); the ADC air-crash in Abuja (NEST, 2011). Other technological disasters include the several pipeline explosions and vandalization in the Niger Delta, series of road traffic crashes and outbreak of Ebola in 2014, killings by Boko Haram among others. Beyond these events, threats posed by frequent oil

spills and irreparable damage to environmental and coastal biospheres, increasing levels of industrial pollution, waste and unprecedented climatic changes, and its negative consequences make Nigerians to be increasingly at risk to a wide number of new and emerging hazards (NEMA, 2007).

The vulnerability of Nigerians to hazards is a function of several factors; these include the level of poverty; population growth and distribution; and the condition of human settlements and their infrastructure. Other causative factors include the level of environmental degradation, level of public awareness, the dynamics of public policy and environment on Disaster Management.

### **Disaster Management**

Disaster Management is the organization, management of resources and the responsibility for dealing with all aspect of emergencies (involving disaster prevention and mitigation) but especially disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation (UN/ISDR, 2002).

Disasters and how they are managed, have become the subject of increasing research and debate in recent years. This heightened interest signifies that the world has become a more dangerous place for its inhabitants who are becoming more vulnerable to disasters. Data gathered worldwide over the last three decades suggest that, while the number of people killed by natural disasters has levelled out at around 80,000 per year, the number affected by disasters and associated economic losses have both soared (AU/NEPAD, 2004). In the 1990s, an annual average of about 200 million people were affected by natural disasters nearly three times higher than during the 1970s (DFID, 2006). Economic losses from such disasters in the 1990s averaged US\$ 63 billion per year which is nearly five times higher in real terms than the figure for the 1970s (UNDP, 2002) Disaster Management therefore, refers to the process of dealing with disasters, whether before, during or after they might have occurred (Ojo, 2004). In operational terms, it involves the combined efforts of various organizations towards preventing them, preparing for them, responding to them and recovering from their effects (UN/ISDR, 2004). However, in order to achieve a proper Disaster Management, the following structures must be put in place: Planning and forecasting hazards, Disaster Alerting or early warning mechanism, Disaster prevention and control measures, Disaster mitigation activities, Past disaster damage assessment, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery efforts.

*Planning and forecasting of hazards* involve processes put in place to prevent hazard which are potential harm resulting into disasters (DFID, 2004). *Disaster Alerting or early warning mechanism* could be seen as systems or arrangement put in place to determine or predict occurrence of an activity that could lead to disaster (AU/NEPAD, 2004). Such occurrence includes volcanic eruption, oil spillage, pollution, desertification, flood etc. The early warning system is usually put in place for a quick or improved reaction time to Disaster Management. *Disaster prevention and control* involves activities aimed at disaster risk reduction such as awareness campaigns, control/response involve actions aimed at mitigating or limiting injuries, loss of life and damage to property and the environment (Ojo, 2004).

Disaster Management is a process or strategy that is implemented when any type of catastrophic event takes place (UN/ISDR, 2004). Sometimes, it is referred to as disaster recovery management, the process may be initiated when anything threatens to disrupt normal operations or puts the lives of human beings at risk (UNDP, 2002). Governments on all levels as well as many businesses create some sort of disaster plan that make it possible to overcome the catastrophe and return to normal function as quickly as possible.

One of the essential elements of Disaster Management involves defining the types of catastrophes that could possibly disrupt the day- to -day operation of a city, town, business, or country (DFID, 2004). Identifying those potential disasters, it is possible to create contingency plans, assemble supplies, and create procedures that can be initiated when and if a given disaster does happen. A truly comprehensive Disaster Management plan will encompass a wide range of possibilities that can easily be adapted in the event one disaster sets off a chain reaction of other types of disasters in its wake (NEMA, 2007).

Because of the need to continue functioning in emergency situations, Disaster Management plans are often multi-layered and can address such issues as floods, hurricanes, fires, bombings, and even mass failures of utilities or the rapid spread of diseases (UNDP, 2002). The disaster plan is likely to address such as important matters as evacuating people from an impacted region, arranging temporary housing, food, and medical care (Ojo, 2004). It is not unusual for the plan to also work toward containing and possibly neutralizing the root causes of the disaster if possible.

In recent years, many government agencies stretching from the local to the national level have taken steps to revisit the structure of their disaster plans and run computer simulations to identify weaknesses in the plans, and refine them so they can operate with more speed and efficiency (UN/ISDR, 2004).

### **Evolution of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nigeria**

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established via Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999, to manage natural and man-made disasters in Nigeria (NEMA, 2007). It formulates policies on all activities relating to Disaster Management, coordinates the plans, and programmes for efficient and effective response to disasters at national level. NEMA is an agency of the Federal government directly under the supervision of the presidency whose core mandate is to manage disasters in Nigeria (Maigari, 2009). According to NEMA (2007), the responsibilities as specified in NEMA Act of 1999 are to: Formulate policy on all activities relating to Disaster Management in Nigeria, Coordinate the activities of other stakeholders in Disaster Management, Co-ordinate plans and programmes for efficient and effective response to disasters in the country, Co-ordinate and promote research activities relating to Disaster Management in the country, Monitor the state of preparedness of all organizations and agencies which may contribute to Disaster Management in Nigeria, Collate data and report from relevant agencies to enhance forecasting, planning and field operations of Disaster Management, Educate the public on disaster prevention and control measures, Work closely with State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC) to assess and monitor where necessary the distribution of relief materials to disaster survivors and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, and those adversely affected by mass deportation and repatriation from any other country as a result of crises, disasters or foreign policies, Co-ordinate and support the activities of non-governmental organizations and development partners engaged in Disaster Management in the country, among others.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Disaster Management seeks to mitigate those risks and protect society from disintegration following the aftermath of terrible destruction. Understanding it requires a look at the theoretical assumptions that underline current approaches and future changes in the field. Effects of extreme events on systems are complex and long-lasting. When a city or a community encounters the post-extreme event on its environment, there is no "unitary" decision maker. There are hundreds or thousands of decision makers, only some of whom are public policy makers.

A similar development in emergency management theory also evolved in response to the need for theories, concepts and proven practices in response to the devastating impacts of hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and chemical spills. Management theory provides a sound basis for supporting the emergence of emergency management theories utilizing the management process from planning, organizing, leading and controlling (Fayol 1916, Mintzberg 1973, Katz 1974, Koontz 1984; as cited in Sadeghi, 2006).

There are various theoretical approaches employed in order to explain how best to mitigate the risks as well as protect against the dangers of disasters. Some of the management theories utilized are: Contingency Theory, Systems Theory, Chaos Theory, Structural-Functionalism Theory, etc. Thus, the framework of analysis within which this study operates is the **Structural-Functionalism Theory**.

*Structural-functionalism theory* is a framework of analysis that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Gerber, 2010). This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole (DeRosso, 2003). This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. This theory addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole (John, 2000). In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system". For Talcott Parsons, "structural-functionalism" came to describe a particular stage in the methodological development of social science, rather than a specific school of thought (Parsons, 1975). The structural functionalism approach is a macro-sociological analysis, with a broad focus on social structures that shape society as a whole.

According to Structural-functionalism (often paraphrased "Functionalism"), society is: An organism, a system of parts, all of which serve a function together for the overall effectiveness and efficiency of society. Structural-functionalism is a consensus theory; a theory that sees society as built upon order, interrelation, and balance among parts as a means of maintaining the smooth functioning of the whole. Structural-Functionalism views shared norms and values as the basis of society, focuses on social order based on tacit agreements between groups and organizations, and views social change as occurring in a slow and orderly fashion. Functionalists acknowledge that change is sometimes necessary to correct social dysfunctions (the

opposite of functions), but that it must occur slowly so that people and institutions can adapt without rapid disorder.

Relating this approach to the study, it is evident that Nigeria as a social system is made up of various structures (i.e institutions) with specific functions to be performed. Succinctly, all the Nigerian institutions emerge and exist to perform certain functions. This implies that structures can be identified according to certain functions. These structures also consist of specific set patterns of behaviour which have become standard features of the social system.

Therefore, an effective appraisal of Disaster Management in Nigeria can only be carried out in the light of the institution set up for that purpose vis-à-vis its functions. An x-ray of NEMA being the statutory institution handling emergency and disaster issues in the country can provide us with an exhaustive analysis of how NEMA has fared over the years. In a nutshell, NEMA and its functions in the Nigerian social system constituted the framework of appraising Disaster Management in Nigeria.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS**

**Research proposition 1:** NEMA has been very functional in managing disasters in Nigeria.

In examining the functionality of NEMA in Disaster Management in Nigeria, the following activities are reviewed:

i. Development of Geographic Information System: The Geographic Information System (GIS) is a decisive system for the effective Disaster Management by NEMA. Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer based information system used to digitally represent and analyze the geographic features present on the earth surface and the events (non spatial attributes linked to the geography under study) that takes place on it.

NEMA has established the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for collating, storing, analyzing and displaying disaster data for prompt and efficient management of disaster at all phases. The database collates data from search and rescue, relief and rehabilitation also plans for better decision making. The information collated forms the basis for forecasting and early warning while also helping in search and reporting various disasters. The display and data analysis also helps in better understanding of disaster and planning for mitigation and risk reduction.

ii. Establishment of the COSPAS-SARSAT, an international programme for support of the Search and Rescue using the satellite aided tracking equipments: The COSPAS-SARSAT provides distress alert and locational information for Search and Rescue in the aviation and maritime industries worldwide. Presently, the operational capability of the equipment has been upgraded to Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and Final Operational Capability (FOC). Nigerian Mission Control Centre (NMCC) the COSPAS SARSAT equipment is use for the detection of distress alert radio beacon signals from distress aircrafts and ships. It provides distress alert and location information for search and rescue in the Aviation and marine industries worldwide.

iii. Development of multi-disciplinary epidemic early warning system mechanism: The Multi-stakeholders committee on the Early Warning Mechanism for Epidemics was constituted in 23rd July, 2009 to examine the existing early warning mechanisms in Nigeria. The objective was to develop a multi disciplinary, workable and sustainable early warning mechanism for the country in order to reduce morbidity, mortality and disability due to major communicable diseases through the establishment of a functional early warning alert for epidemic preparedness and responses (EPR).

iv: Grassroots Emergency Management Volunteer Corps: Grassroots Emergency Management Volunteer Corps (GEVC), initiated in 2008, as at 2009 NEMA annual report, so far spread to 23 states with 6408 registered volunteers who were intended to extend Disaster Management services to the grassroots. The objective of GEVC is to provide Disaster Management training and skills to volunteers at the grassroots, to enable them provide assistance to all phases of Disaster Management-prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.

v. Establishment of NEMA/NYSC Emergency Management Vanguard: In its efforts aimed at reducing disasters through awareness raising campaigns, the agency in 2006 established a partnership with NYSC using corps member to carry out sensitization campaign in schools and communities of their primary assignment for the purpose of disaster risk reduction in the country.

vi. Regional Cooperation For Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Response: In this era of globalization, Disaster Management has a lot of trans-border and regional cooperation imperative. Most of the hazards starring at the West African Sub-region are trans-border in nature and can be better addressed through cooperation and coordination among the countries concerned. NEMA has used its reach and experience to

galvanize countries in the region for a win-win regional and bilateral cooperation on disaster assessment, risk mitigation, forecasting, early warning generation, early warning communication and response.

vii. National Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Plan: The existence of Nuclear Research Reactor (NIRR-1) and radiotherapy using Linear Accelerator (LINAC), Co-60 (Teletherapy) and Cs-137 (brachytherapy) demands that NEMA has a commensurate National Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Plan to cope with emergencies arising from the widespread use of radiation sources in medicine, industry and research and teaching.

viii. Establishment of Disaster Response Units (DRUs): Disaster Response Units (DRU'S) which are designated military formations spread across the country. They are charged with the responsibility of providing necessary response that will reduce loss of lives, properties and human suffering during natural and human induced disasters.

ix. Establishment of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Zonal Offices in 2006

Viii: Provision of Relief and Rehabilitation Materials: In the area of relief and rehabilitation, the response and assistance to victims of natural and human induced disasters has increased tremendously in the past ten years, there is no state of the country that has not benefitted from NEMA relief assistance to victims of disasters such as fire, flooding, wind/rainstorm, erosion, landslide, communal/religious clashes, bomb blast, pest invasion, drought, pollution etc.

Ix: NEMA/ World Bank Collaboration

**Research Propositions II:** There are problems affecting the effective performance of NEMA in disaster management in Nigeria.

The Act establishing NEMA makes it somewhat toothless bulldog, being that it has coordinating role/powers but lacks the authority to enforce sanctions. Equally, the Act provides that the States establish States Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the Local Governments to have Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC), but there is no enabling law to compel them to do so. The administrative set up of NEMA is based on Civil Service structure with all bureaucratic bottle necks which affect the prompt and timely intervention in Disaster Management. The appointment of the head (Director General) which is political is affecting the general output as the Agency is supposed to be professional and technical outfit, which requires a technocrat.

The following challenges militate against the smooth operations of NEMA in managing disasters in Nigeria: insurgency (terrorism) and its attendant effect, political and ethno-religious interest has been a bottleneck to the effective running activities of NEMA especially in the areas of relief intervention, Inadequate skilled personnel in the various aspects of Disaster Management especially in project management and medical emergency services among others; this is further worsened by poor remuneration for staff, Inadequate funding of disaster management activities at other levels of Government (states and local Government). Lack of resources provided by these tiers of government has crippled disaster management activities. The 20% budgetary allocation from the federal share of ecological fund is grossly inadequate for Disaster Management in a country of over 150 million people. (NEMA Act 1999).

Finally, inadequate operational vehicles and ambulances to facilitate easy and swift response to emergencies in the country. This has led to delay in the distribution of relief materials to persons affected by disasters.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Based on the preceding analysis, it has been observed that since the promulgation of the decree, NEMA has been active in some of its activities and has proposed a National Contingency Plan for Disaster Response in order to put national response to disasters on a sound footing (Adeoye et al., 2009). The range of activities of the Agency includes search and rescue; life and property protection; securing law and order; mass care response; restoring the disaster affected area (recovery); and reducing vulnerability to future disasters (Adeoye et al, 2009).

it was observed that NEMA co-ordinates and organizes special programmes for its stakeholder on ways of responding to disaster over the last decade but the efficiency of its response is largely determined by the largeness of the country-Nigeria. Most people in the rural areas are not even aware of the most of the special programmes organized by NEMA on Disaster Management. Unlike FEMA, NEMA has no effective means of communication through which people in some rural areas contact them in cases of emergencies/disaster. For instance, FEMA has prompt and effective emergency telecommunication numbers through which every citizens of United States alert them in case of emergency. So also NEMA has no established training programme in Television and Radio operations which is meant to educate the masses more on the disaster response, mitigation, preparedness and prevention, and this is meant to be conducted monthly as is usually observed in the cases of FEMA.

Another remarkable achievement of NEMA in the past years was the establishment of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for collating, storing, analyzing and displaying disaster data for prompt and efficient management of disaster at all phases. The GIS operates in similar ways as the Emergency Management Information Systems (EMIS) of the FEMA. GIS helps NEMA in assessing the spatial values and attributes such as disaster type, disaster group, number of deaths and number of displaced, frequency of occurrence, estimated damage and nature of damage, and as such, GIS will be effective in managing disasters effectively in Nigeria.

However, the findings of the study showed that NEMA established international program for support of the Search and Rescue using the satellite aided tracking equipments called COSPAS-SARSAT, which is another remarkable achievement towards Disaster Management in Nigeria and a host of other achievements. However, in the present study, it has been observed that NEMA had no Personal Preparedness Management Unit except when disasters occur. The absence of this unit (Personal Preparedness Management Unit) in NEMA will deter its prompt activities towards managing emergencies and disasters.

As revealed by the findings of the present study, NEMA as an organization is faced by many challenges. NEMA does not have a full complement of fire-fighters, security personnel, road marshals amongst other outfits to combat such related disaster-outbreaks, like fire, flooding, landslides, epidemics, communal crises. This is displayed during the last communal crises in Jos, landslides in Cross River, Flooding in Kwara and Market Fire in some states by coordinating the evacuation of displaced people and providing succour to them in the forms of relief items. The agency adopts the lead agency approach in coordinating stakeholders' i.e. Fire Service is the lead agency in fire disaster while Federal Road Safety Corps is the lead agency in road crashes. Furthermore, it was observed that NEMA devotes more energy on relief, other than preparedness, mitigation, planning and forecasting. Other factors identified by the study as stumbling blocks to hitch-free activities of NEMA in Nigeria, are: absence of a coordinated synergy among the various stakeholders, leading to disagreement on major issues like decisions that will impact positively on the persons affected by disasters, lack of data bank of all technical equipment/vehicles and ambulances to facilitate swift movement of emergency personnel and volunteers greatly hampered coordination of efforts among various stakeholders.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Disaster Management requires multi-disciplinary and pro-active approach. This study has examined the roles of NEMA in Disaster Management in Nigeria. The findings of this study show that the NEMA has worked effectively in the past years to enhance proper Disaster Management in Nigeria through Provision of Geographic Information System, establishment of the COSPAS-SARSAT, an international program for support of the Search and Rescue using the satellite aided tracking equipments, development of multi-disciplinary epidemic early warning system mechanism, establishing Grassroots Emergency Management Volunteer Corps, developing Regional Cooperation For Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Response, enhancing the National Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Plan through the existence of Nuclear Research Reactor (NIRR-1) and radiotherapy using Linear Accelerator (LINAC), Co-60 (Teletherapy) and Cs-137 (brachytherapy), establishment of Disaster Response Units (DRUs) of the armed forces, establishment of Seven (7) zonal offices and Provision of Relief and Rehabilitation Materials. However, it has been observed that NEMA is plagued with myriad challenges ranging from paucity of logistics to lingering insurgency/terrorists activities and host of other natural disasters.

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Nigerian Meteorological Agency should be well equipped with the necessary facilities to enable it meet up with the challenges of weather forecasts. This will also include increase in the number of weather observatory stations and network so as to be able to issue a flood early warning system with the capability to deliver reliable, timely and effective flood or any other natural disaster information at an appropriate response time.
2. The Act establishing NEMA should be revisited to give the Agency some more powers especially in the areas of monitoring and enforcement. The Agency should in future have powers to sanction. The Agency should also focus more on preparedness, mitigation and prevention activities rather than dispensing much energy on relief activities.
3. The appointment of the head (DG) should be more of a professional/Technocrat, which will go a long way in reducing waste and promote prompt action. With Political will, the state should have functional SEMAs and the Local Governments LEMC. This will enhance the existing synergy between the National, States and the Local Councils.



4. The study also recommends effective and efficient coordination of activities between NEMA and all the stakeholders in Disaster Management issues. This will enhance prompt response to emergency disaster situation in any part of the country.
5. It is recommended also that the required and necessary logistics should be provided, such as communication gadgets, vehicles, ambulances; and capacity building through the training of personnel to enhance efficiency in Disaster Management response.
6. There is need for adequate funding of the agency to enable them cope with challenges of emergency Disaster Management. This could be achieved through direct increase in budgetary allocation to the agency. The activities of the agency could be improved by the establishment of local emergency management committee to cater for emergency disaster situation in areas where it occurs.

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