

**ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN RESPONSE TO DISASTER
EVENTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study focuses on the assessment of government agencies in Response to disaster events in South-South, Nigeria. The study cut-across Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta and questionnaires were distributed among National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in the study area. From outcome, 51% (456) of the respondents strongly agree that Government agencies presence are not felt during disasters, while 47% (428) of the respondents agree that Government agencies presence are not felt during disasters in the study area 2% (16) of the respondents disagree that Government agencies presence is not felt during disasters. . There should be a collaboration between faith-based organizations and government agencies during times of disaster relief as this will enable both to act in the same direction making their presence felt in the grassroots territory.

Keywords: National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Disaster Response, SEMA, Flood, Government Agencies

Introduction

The Collaborative Disaster Risk Administration Framework guarantees better joint effort between states, the private sector, civil society, the scholarly world, and communities in danger. The key triadic institutions, namely the government (the state), the private sector

(business/market), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (civil society), have been gradually transforming their ecosystem in the context of modern disaster risk reduction systems to utilize more proactive disaster response strategies, armed with professional staff and technical experts and social and humanitarian imperatives to reduce disaster risks. In Nigeria, according to (Adefisoye, 2015), in managing disaster, there is National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) at the Federal level; State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) at the State level; and the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA) at the local level.... Every tier of government shall build the capacity of its emergency management institution to prepare for, prevent against, respond to and recover from disaster events (Adefisoye, 2015; Adefisoye, 2018; Adefisoye, 2020a).

The response phase begins immediately after a disaster strikes and encompasses both immediate response (relief) and medium-term response, the latter of which attempts to begin to re-establish functionality of systems and infrastructure. Once a disaster has taken place, the first concern is effective relief—helping those affected to recover from the immediate effects of the disaster. Such relief work includes providing food, clothing, shelter, and medical care to victims. For rapid onset disasters, such as earthquakes, this phase may last for weeks or a few months. For slow onset disasters, such as droughts, it may last months or even years. • Medium-term response takes the first steps toward recovery by assessing damage to infrastructure, communities, institutions, industry, and business and by planning measures necessary to restore these to previous levels or better. There is an overlap between the response and the post-disaster phases, and projects or programs may span both.

Ogundele et al. (2019) evaluated the efficacy of emergency and disaster management in the Sixteen Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. Results from the study showed that; the estimated financial cost of loss is significantly enormous across different age groups and educational background of citizens in the State. Adejuwon and Aina (2014) investigate the emergency preparedness and response to Ibadan 2011 Flood Disaster in Oyo State, Nigeria. Although the various emergency agencies within the state and the country fairly responded

when the flood occurred, the disaster could not be managed due to lack of adequately trained personnel for response and rescue operation and inadequate equipment for rescue operation (Adejuwon and Aina, 2014). Alaci et al. (2017) examined Nigerian government approach to handling disaster issues from the point of view of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) approach to disaster management. The finding showed that the socio-economic losses from flood across the country have not abated. Consequently, the need for the adaption of some global/international framework for disaster management is recommended.

Method and Materials

Study Area

The South-South Region of Nigeria is located on 4°21' 43.2''N, 7 ° 40' 52.8'' N and longitude 5° 8' 42''E, 9°30'7.2'' E (Figure 1) protruding towards the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic coast of West Africa (Shittu, 2014). The region is a densely populated area in Nigeria. Its population is about 31 million people. The land mass extends over about 70,000 km², and make up 7.5 percent of Nigeria's landmass. The region consists of Akwa- Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross- River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states. The region lies within the Wet equatorial climate; high cloud cover and fewer sunshine hours cause damp weather conditions throughout most parts of the year.

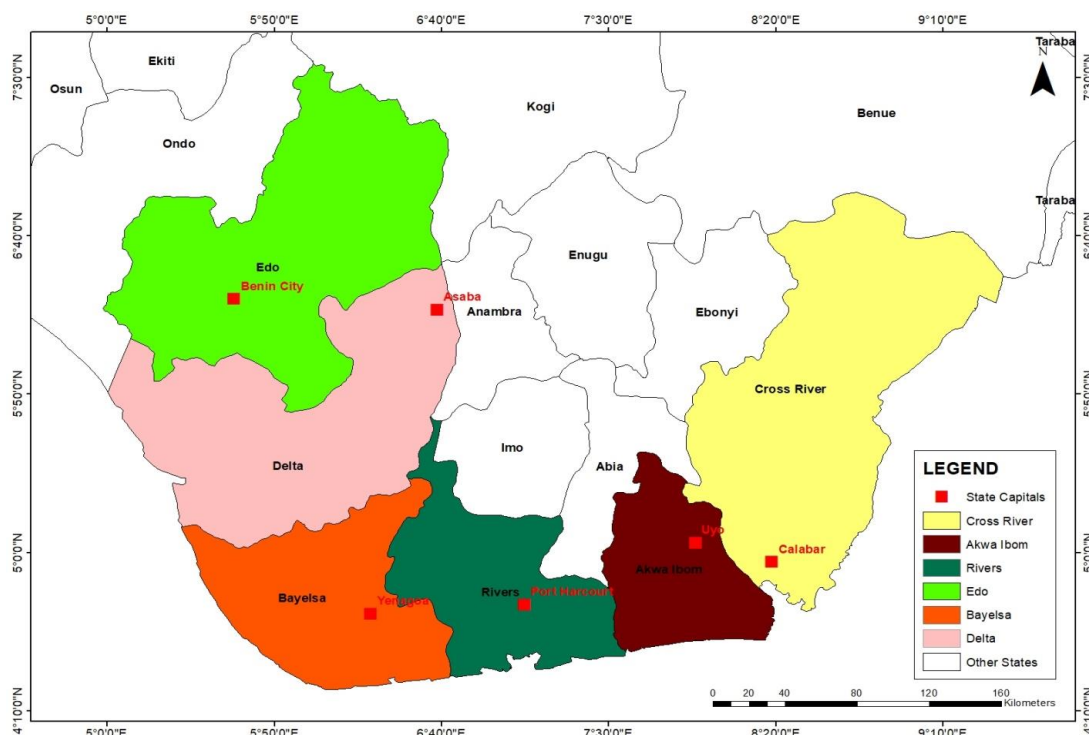


Figure 1: Overview of the Study Area

Study Design and Sample Size

The survey research method was adopted to carry out the study. Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a sample of elements drawn from a well-defined population through the use of a questionnaire (Visser, Krosnick & Lavrakas, 2002). This method was adopted because it is a suitable and efficient way of studying large population. The population of the study comprised of all NEMA staff within the selected states of study which include Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta State. However, for the purpose of the study based on the eligibility criteria, the population of the study was twenty-three (23) and distributed among NEMA staff in the study area. The Faith-Based organisations in this region amounted to three- namely Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Carithas Internationalis, Save the Children, the Salvation Army, and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

Data Analysis

The retrieved copies of questionnaire were coded and subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-21) for proper analysis. The data of the study were analysed through descriptive statistics tool such as frequency counts and

percentages of response were adopted for the analysis. The use of such statistics allows the researcher to present the evidence of the study in a way that can be understandable and makes conclusion concerning the variables of study.

Result

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic details of the respondents were presented in Figure 2. From the outcome, out of which 46.6% are men while 51.4% are women, while 2.0% never indicated whether they are male or female. This implies that we have more women gender respondents than those men. The age of the respondents ranged between 18 to 45yrs and above. 22.8% of the respondents are between 18-25yrs, 29.6% of the respondents age are between 30-35yrs, between 25-30yrs of the respondents amount to 22.7% , while 15.3% of the respondents age ranges from 35-45yrs and finally 45yrs and above amongst the respondents age amount to 9.7% . This implies that there are not many older people among the respondents and the highest percentage of the respondents is mostly young people between 30-35 years old respectively. The marital status of the respondents is quite unique, 48.9% of the respondents are married. This implies that a good number of the respondents are responsible, while 30.2% of the respondents are single people, while 11% of the respondents are separated, which means they were once married but are currently separated. The widow that responded are 2.1% and widowers are 3.0% and also divorced are 3.0% respectively.

The academic qualification of the respondents in the study area shows that 46% of the people are educated to the level of the first degree, which implies that almost half of the respondents are educated, while 28.4% of the respondents are educated to the level of diploma and 11.2% of the respondents has senior secondary school educations, while 10.2% are educated to the level of second degree either in sciences, arts or in education, and we have 4.1% of the respondents did not indicate or responds to their academic qualifications. The Consultants within the study area are 5.8% and the respondents in the Private sector are 5.1%, the self-employed are 3.9%, and the unemployed are 1.7%. The Implication of this is that the

population of the study area is very active, i.e., all the respondents are engaged in one economic activity or the other. The segment of the population not very active is unemployed, which is very minimal at 1.7% in all. The distribution of the state of the occupations of the respondents. There are no responds from 67% of the respondents as to which categories of workers they belong, 21% of the respondents work category falls under management staff, while 12 % of the respondents falls under Casual staff as work Category respectively. This implies that the majority of the respondents did not disclose which categories of workers they belong.



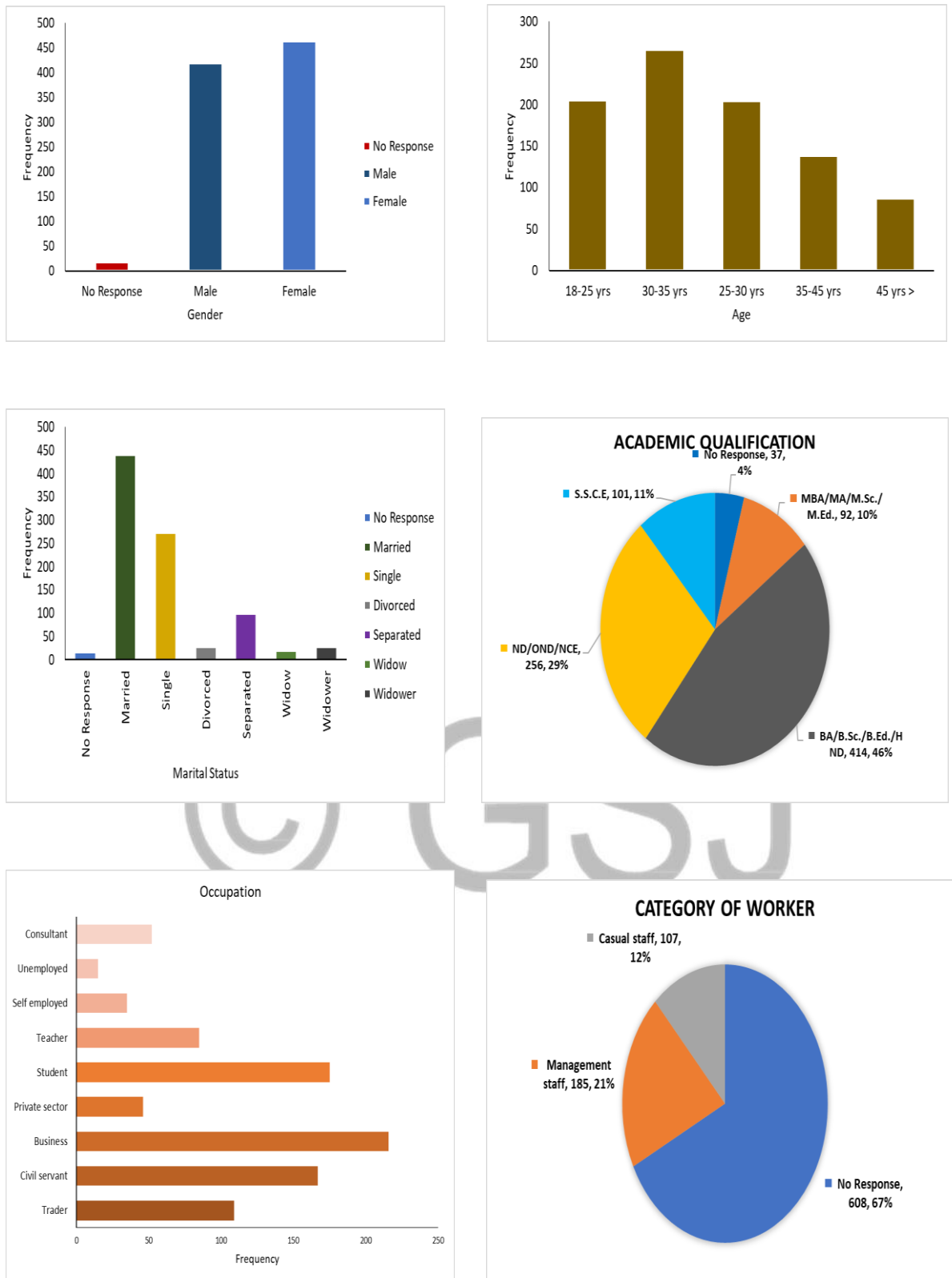


Figure 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In evaluating the activities of Government agencies in response to flooding or in the covid-19 pandemic, it will be illogical to evaluate the activities of Government agencies when their presence is not felt in times of disasters. The figure below shows the response of the people in the study area. 51% (456) of the respondents strongly agree that Government agencies presence are not felt during disasters, while 47% (428) of the respondents agree that Government agencies presence are not felt during disasters in the study area 2% (16) of the respondents disagree that Government agencies presence is not felt during disasters.

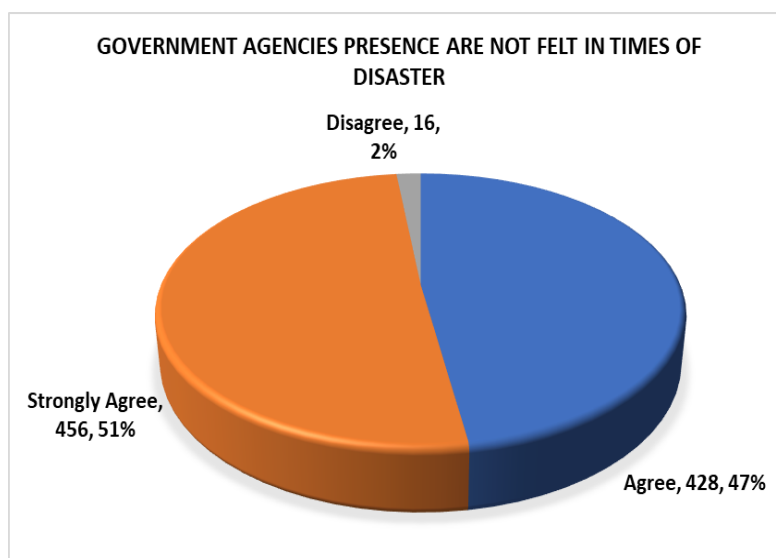


Figure 2: *Government Agencies in Response to Flooding and Covid-19*

Conclusion and Recommendations

The government of Nigeria has evidently put into effect some guidelines, laws, frameworks and regulations via various agencies with the sole purpose of limiting the damaging impact of disaster nationwide. There should be a collaboration between faith-based organizations and government agencies during times of disaster relief as this will enable both to act in the same direction making their presence felt in the grassroots territory.

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