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Disaster Management Framework for the Protection of Collection of Higher Institution of Learning Libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

While the state of disaster management practice (DMP) is popular knowledge in some libraries of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, little is known of the existence of comprehensive and acceptable framework for the practices of disaster management in most libraries. This paper, therefore, attempts to bridge the gap by proposing a comprehensive framework for the management of disaster in libraries of higher institution of learning in Nigeria. Two important stages of Risk Assessment (RA) and DMP were outlined. RA stages emphasize the identification of exact threat disturbing a library as well as identification of cause of the threat in the library. DMP emphasizes deployment of measures, equipment and Disaster Training (DT) based on the type of a threat and cause identified in the first stage affecting a library. The model also highlights monetary challenges, inadequate modern disaster equipment, indifferent attitudes of both users and librarians, adumbrative bottleneck as some of the issues mitigating effective disaster management practices in Nigerian libraries. However, the model also offered use of internally generated fund from printing and photocopying services, use of personal money, administrative pressure and use of prior experiences as solutions to the problems mitigating effective disaster management in Nigerian libraries.

Keywords: Disaster, Disaster management, Framework, Nigerian libraries

Introduction

In the past disasters were considered as inevitable events, which are beyond human control. In recent times however, they are no longer perceived as sudden eruptions that are to be handled by emergency response and rescue services but as incidents that can be predicted, prevented or significantly reduced through effective Disaster Management (DM). Libraries as important institutions that provide information to users of all disciplines are not immune from the catastrophe of natural or manmade disaster that can struck the libraries and its collection without prior notice. Disaster threatens such vital institutions, thereby endangering their building, resources and services delivery (Marfo & Borteye, 2010). Therefore, to maintain their position in society as vital institutions of providing information, it has become necessary for the management of the libraries to make sure that the libraries are safe for users to come, for the staff to work and for services delivery. This requires coordinated efforts of activities geared toward prevention, and response to any event that could trigger the loss of lives or destruction of library and its collection.

According to Nikhbashi and Farahami (2011), DM in library can be defined as "set of process or processes designed to be implemented before, during and after disaster to prevent and mitigate their effects" the process or processes involves adequately planning for the disaster before the disaster occurrence as well as responding to the disaster during its occurrence and recovery from the catastrophe.

Libraries in Nigeria face increasing frequency of varieties of disaster; hence the need to reduce the risk disaster may post on the library and its collection through thorough and careful management of the situation. DM is significant as it can mitigate the effect; assure prompt and appropriate assistance to the victim of disaster, achieve rapid and effective recovery. However, for a successful Disaster Management activity in libraries, there is need for a comprehensive framework that will guide the conduct of the activities in the libraries; a framework so rich that will not only highlight the roles the staff or librarians are to play for the prevention of disaster but also guidelines and procedure for successful mitigation or prevention of the disaster. However, there is no comprehensive and acceptable framework for the management of the disaster in libraries. The closets were those developed for management of disaster in other environments completely different from libraries and none of the model comprehensively and adequately captured all the stages of disaster management in libraries.

As Ashagar *et. al*. (2021) observed, ''different disaster models can fit into the following main categories: logical, integrated, causes and other". Logical model provides simple definition of disaster stages and emphasizes the basic events and actions which constitute a disaster. Integrated models characterize the phases of disaster by the evolution of functions such as strategic planning and monitoring. Cause models emphasize the causes of disaster with little concentration on the management aspect of the disaster. Lack of comprehensive and acceptable models for disaster management in libraries has critically impaired research in the area. This paper, however, attempts to provide all encompasses framework for the management of disaster in libraries in Nigeria.

Disaster Management Framework for the Collection Protection of Libraries

Any attempt to develop plan or framework for comprehensive DM in library or other environment must reflect the phases nature of disaster; before, during and aftermath of disaster. DM activities short of plan for any of the phases or stages are not adequate for the protection of the collection of libraries. Thus, the framework adopted by this study for effective DM activities in libraries in Nigeria for collection protection is divided into two main stages of RA and DMP.

Disaster Risk Assessment

This is the first stage of Disaster Management activities in libraries. Disaster Risk Assessment (DRA) is a process of determining the nature and extent of such risk by analysing hazard and evaluating existing condition of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and environment on which they depend (Bansal, 2015). Similarly, Khaili (2014) sees DRA as comprehensive study where potential hazards that may give damage building occupants as well as collection are outline and measures for the mitigation of the risk. Relating DRA closely to library and information center, Kuzuluglu (2014) said Risk Assessment is a study that involves an investigation of which may constitutes a threat to library, collection or even building of the library and what measures are best suitable to address the identified threat in a manner that such risk would no longer pose threat in future.

A risk could be a faulty electronic appliance left unattended. Risk could also in library come in form of leaking roof that could wet the library valuable collection if not identified and fixed. Disaster risk assessment involves painstakingly an identification of any threat in a library with the possible mitigation of such risk in future. This stage, however, involves further two important activities necessary for effective DM in libraries: identification of type of disaster affecting library and the causes of the unwanted event in the libraries.

(a) *Identification of Disaster Nature*: This involves identifying the type of disaster affecting a particular library for development of activities and equipment that will match the type of disaster affecting the library. Categorically, disaster could be natural, or man-made. The later comprises cause by or as result of human error or negligence such as fire incidents, leaking roof, rodent attack, theft and mutilation. A disaster is said to be natural on the other hand when its cause is natural or environmental hazard Such disaster includes flood, hurricane, earthquake, tornadoes, heatwaves, fire, tsunami, cyclone, drought, flood, lahars, epidemic, and famine or even harmattan.

(b) *Identification of Possible Causes of Disaster*: When a threat is identified through carefully planned study or observation, the next step is an identification of possible causes of the threat for the deployment of procedures and equipment that can rightly arrest the threat. Disasters can be commonly caused by fires started by arson or an electrical fault, water from burst pipes or flooding because of heavy rain, poor storage and environmental conditions, inadequate security leading to breaking and theft, and poorly maintained buildings (Eden & Matthews, 1997, cited by Marfo & Borteye (2010). Poor electrical installation and inadequate inspection of the building or library could be major reason of fire outbreak and often the consequence is destruction of library's collection. A faulty electrical appliance may be left unattended for quite long of time due to poor maintenance culture. These and other factors could be responsible for many disasters in Nigerian libraries and an identification of exact possible cause of a threat in a library plays significant roles for the subsequent deployment of managerial activities in the library.

2. *Disaster Management Practices*: This is the second stage of the model that entails details step by step explanation of various activities, equipment and procedures for the successful management of the identified nature and causes of threats identified in the first stage. Thus, the stage involves:

(a) *Disaster Management Measures*: Disaster management measures are those activities which are taken to reduce human and property loose caused by a potential hazard. Activities such as awareness campaigns, strengthening the existing structure, preparation of disaster management are examples of Disaster Management Measures. Disaster measures include any strategies or activities such as provision of disaster plan, mounting security at the entrance and exits doors, daily inspection of library building etc that can complement the work of disaster equipment by ensuring total protection of a library and its collection. Scheduled electrical inspection, when adequately done reduces the chance of fire hazards or conflagration, security checks can prevent vandalism, and fumigation will reduce any hazard posed to books by bookworms and other destructive organisms.

On comprehensive note, Tukur (2021) called for categorization of disaster measures for collection protection according to phases of Disaster Management or Disaster Management Cycle. He further outlines measures such as daily inspection of library building, provision of adequate training and equipment as measures required for phase one or before the disaster. Second phase or During the Disaster Phase required measures like evacuation of library resources, and firefighting and the After Phase with measures such as drying and segregation of library resources after a disaster. Tukur's position was earlier echoed by Verma and Shahele (2018) when they proposed strategies and activities needed to manage disaster in libraries. According to them, "Disasters events cannot be prevented but different measures can be adopted by the libraries for reducing the possibility of the trouble" therefore such events could effectively have managed if measures are aligned according to the disaster phases.

(b) *Provision of Disaster Equipment:* Absent of disaster equipment is akin to poor disaster preparedness practices. Absence of the equipment may further heighten the vulnerability of libraries in developing countries to various forms of disaster. For a Disaster Management to be effective, availability of equipment prior to incidental occurrence is sacrosanct. In fact, disaster equipment should be provided before disasters occur so they can be curbed. Matthews and Eden (1996) stressed the need to maintain stocks of equipment and materials required to combat disaster. Consequently, Schneid and Collins (2001) recommended the installation of smoke detectors as well as the appropriate positioning of fire equipment where they can be used by all staff in case of emergency. Shedding light on the importance of controlling fire incidences, Corrall and Brewton (1999) affirmed that the spread of fire can be reduced through the availability of fire suppression equipment, which includes devices such as extinguishers, hose, assemblies, imaging devices and, access equipment such as ladders, cranes, cutting and spreading tools. Many libraries acquired different equipment and devised measures for disaster management. However, most of the libraries lack comprehensive plans for acquisition of good and functioning equipment suitable to their scenario. This was so evident in a study conducted by Abereh (2014) in which he discovered that most libraries in North-east part of Nigeria had fire extinguisher, but their state of functionality is far from desirable.

(c) *Disaster Management Training for Collection Protection in Libraries*: Disaster management involves efficiently and effectively training staff in advance to save lives and information materials in the event of disaster. Disaster can be well managed and even prevented if members of staff are trained and are equipped adequately with basic of what to do to prevent disaster and what not to do when there is disaster. On what disaster training should involves, Corral and Brwaton (1997) see awareness talk, briefing session, hand on practices, simulation exercise and video presentation as some of the

exercise disaster management should comprise. Thus, for any library to prepare for disaster, there must be trained and continuous sensitisation of staff on various issues relating to Disaster Management. The training according to Uwakwe (2019) enables staff to be conversant with existing and emerging technologies for control of disaster in libraries.

This is in tandem with Obokeh (1991) cited by Marfo and Borteye (2010) submission in his study on coping with flood disaster of university libraries, that there is need for a library staff to be trained periodically on disaster rescue operation. Krion (2014) further opined that "training personnel on how to manage disaster is critical part of disaster recovery planning" its pertinent emergency response team or staff are trained to know their response team or staff are trained to know their responsibilities or what to do in the event of disaster. He further recommended five ways to effectively train personnel on Disaster Management in general:

- ✓ Develop and schedule training activities for emergency response team members.
- ✓ Schedule and conduct periodic exercise to ensure that the team members know their roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Schedule and conduct evacuation drills for the employee.
- ✓ Invite representatives from responder organisation to review and critique exercise as well as critique team members following an exercise.
- ✓ Work with human resources to have emergency response team activities built into team member annual employee performance plan attending training session and participating in exercise.

Narrowing the situation to disaster training in libraries, Mathews and Eden (1997) reported that disaster training in libraries should comprehensively cover certain areas or the programmeme should focus on the following:

- Aims and objectives
- Target in training
- Content
- Method of delivery
- Training of aids and materials
- Outcome and evaluation
- Financial and other resourcing implications

The aim and objective of the training is to create appropriate awareness to staff about safety and security of their lives and library collection and what they need to do in the event of disaster. The training also should not have targeted all libraries staff at the same time rather significant numbers of staff or disaster committee should be targeted for such training at a time. Training needs to be targeted at individuals or groups of individuals according to their roles in the libraries or the roles they perform in the libraries. Meanwhile, the content of the training should extensively reflect the aims and objectives of the training. Also, the content of the training should cover different types of disasters, especially disasters frequently associated with the libraries.

Similarly, areas such as prevention, response and recovery must be given utmost priority in the content. Method of delivering the training according to them should comprise practical workshops and exercise in relation to handling disasters such as fire and flood in the libraries; demonstration on how to handle certain equipment and how to remove items quickly from the affected library or building. However, the most important method is disaster 'practice run' where staff is tasked to perform as if there is disaster. Although very difficult to organise its essential in training staff to prepare ahead for eventualities. Contents and method of delivery

are not enough without training aids and materials that will help the staff to conduct seemingly successful disaster prevention, response and recovery in the libraries.

Materials such as video slides and photographs of libraries that suffered disasters, training pack and handout summarizing the main points can help the staff to understand the importance of disaster management and assist them to manage their library effectively against disaster. However, financial capability of the libraries should come into focus when organizing disaster training in libraries. Financial capability of libraries will determine the level of training libraries organize. It is always pertinent for a library to start a programmee that can be completed.

Challenges Associated with Disaster Management in Libraries

Disaster management practices in libraries could be hampered by number of obstacles that could be partly responsible for poor preparedness of the unfortunate event by libraries. Lack of funds to the disaster team for extensive training and purchase of adequate equipment for Disaster Preparedness is one factor that can seriously affect effective Disaster Preparedness and Response plan of library, Nonchalant attitudes and poor leadership on the part of staff or disaster team could also spell doom for any disaster planning in libraries. According to Kolawole *et. al.* (2015) numbers of challenges could hamper library effective disaster management.

Some of these challenges according to them could be nonfunctional firefighting equipment, inadequate facilities, technophobia, financial incapability and carefree attitude of library staff. This assertion was echoed in Issa *et. al.* (2012) that discovered absence of disaster plan team or committee, lack of budgetary allocation for disaster preparation due to inadequate funding, lack of adequate modern facilities for disaster prevention as impairments to effective disaster management in Kwara State libraries. Similarly, Akor (2013) lamented financial constraint and poor user attitudes as the major problem facing Benue State University Library effort to tackle book theft and mutilation disaster, "photocopies machines are not adequately provided in the library; hence it gives room for mutilation and thief of rare materials in the library.

Solutions to the Problems Affecting Disaster Management in Libraries

Disaster management challenges in libraries are not without solutions to some of the challenges. Libraries are improvising measures that could provide solutions to some of the obstacles affecting their effective disaster management. Use of internally generated revenue and personal money are some of the solutions of the monetary challenge of disaster management in libraries. The money generated by libraries from photocopy and printing services or even fine charges over dues, disaster management activities like roofing maintenance and fumigation exercise are being taken care of by the libraries. This could help significantly in providing temporary solutions to the problems facing disaster management activities in Nigerian libraries, which include bureaucratic bottleneck process their disaster management activities demand from the management of library, school or Ministry could also develop an administrative pressure policy where a constant reminder would be sent to the concerned authority. The reminder could be in an official format or even informal in person. Constant reminder could accelerate release of necessary resources needed for disaster management activities in libraries.

Conclusion

Disaster Management requires coordination and integration of all activities necessary to build, sustain and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, or mitigate against threatened or actual natural or man-made disasters. Disaster Management is therefore significant as it can save lives and property. It is even more imperative in Nigerian libraries considering the organic nature of the library's material. However, the absent of framework for the conduct of activities for managing disaster in the libraries is proving obstacle for effective disaster management in libraries in Nigeria. This paper however, proposed a comprehensive framework for the management of disasters in Nigerian libraries. The framework, if followed religiously can ensure successful disaster management activities in Nigerian libraries.

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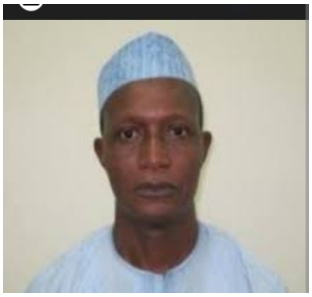
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