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CHAPTER TEN

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES IN NIGERIA

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1.0. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for fostering peace, stability, and development. However, in times of crisis such as armed conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics, and forced displacement this right is often disrupted, leaving millions of children and young people vulnerable. Education in emergencies (EiE) refers to the provision of inclusive, quality, and protective learning opportunities for individuals affected by emergencies and protracted crises. It

is designed not only to restore a sense of normalcy, but also to safeguard children from exploitation, trauma, and long-term social exclusion.

In Nigeria, the need for education in emergencies has become increasingly urgent due to persistent security challenges, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises. The Boko Haram insurgency, farmer–herder clashes, communal conflicts, and banditry have displaced millions of children from their homes and schools, particularly in the North-East and North-West regions. Additionally, floods, epidemics, and other environmental shocks continue to disrupt educational access, compounding pre-existing structural problems such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and poor funding. According to reports from international agencies, Nigeria is home to one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children in the world, with emergencies further exacerbating the crisis.

Thus, this chapter is discussed under the following subheadings.

1. Concept of Education in Emergencies
2. Scope of Education in Emergencies
3. Importance of Education in Emergencies
4. Problems facing Education in Emergencies in Nigeria
5. Sustainable Strategies to enhance development of Education in Emergencies in Nigeria

2.0. Clarification of concepts

Concept of Education in Emergencies

According to the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), education in emergencies (EiE) encompasses the provision of “quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education. Education in emergencies provides physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives (UNESCO, 2025).”

The concept goes beyond the notion of immediate emergency education response, which is a key component of EiE, also referring to the longer-term role which education plays in crises to recover from shocks and build future economic stability and development, offering a sense of normalcy, stability, and structure throughout crises and beyond. Education in Emergencies (EiE) is a field of study that focuses on providing education to individuals and communities affected by emergencies

such as conflicts, natural disasters, and pandemics. EiE aims to ensure that children and youth continue their education despite the challenging circumstances they face. It also promotes the protection and well-being of learners in emergency situations (UNESCO, 2025).

In recent years, the number of children and youth affected by emergencies has been on the rise, making EiE a crucial field of study and practice. The education provided in EiE is not limited to traditional subjects but also includes life skills and psychosocial support. This ensures that learners are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to cope with their current situation and build a better future. There are various approaches to EiE, including formal education in temporary learning spaces, non-formal education through community-based organizations, and distance learning through technology. The choice of approach depends on the context and the needs of the affected population.

Education in Emergencies is a discipline that focuses on delivering quality education to individuals and communities affected by crises such as armed conflict, natural disasters, and epidemics. It aims to ensure that disrupted education systems are restored and maintained, and that children and youth in emergency situations have access to safe, inclusive, and quality education. This approach recognizes the critical role education plays in helping children and youth cope with and recover from crisis situations, as well as in promoting peace and stability in affected communities. It encompasses a range of interventions, such as providing access to formal and non-formal education, teacher training, psychosocial support, and safe learning environments. Education in Emergencies is a rapidly growing field that requires collaboration, innovation, and adaptability to effectively respond to the diverse and complex needs of crisis-affected populations. EiE has proven to have significant positive impacts on learners and communities. It not only helps to mitigate the negative effects of emergencies but also contributes to long-term development and peacebuilding efforts. The field of EiE continues to evolve and improve, with ongoing research and innovations that aim to provide the best possible education for those affected by emergencies

How do emergencies and crises affect education?

According to Education Cannot Wait, 234 million school-aged children are affected by crises and in urgent need of quality education support. It is estimated that 72 million of these children are out of school. Some of the ways by which emergencies affect education, learners and educators, include:

Closure of educational institutions: Formal and non-formal educational institutions, including schools, universities, and technical and vocational education spaces, may be forced to close for reasons linked to safety, resource constraints, or broader societal disruption. They may be damaged

or destroyed, including by targeted attacks in cases of armed conflict, or repurposed for military use, or as emergency shelters for crisis affected populations.

Lack of alternative learning modalities: When physical learning spaces are affected, alternative learning modalities such as digital and distance learning may not be available due to a lack of infrastructure, resources, or capacity, or may not be inclusive or accessible to all learners. **Impact on health, safety, and well-being:** In crisis settings, students, teachers, and education personnel are exposed to heightened risks of abduction, harassment, injury, or death. School closures further jeopardize physical and mental well-being by cutting off access to essential health and nutrition services, including school meals the only reliable source of nutrition in a day for many children.

Psychological impacts: Learners, teachers, education personnel and wider affected communities may experience severe psychological and mental health impacts, affecting all aspects of their lives, including education.

Funding and planning: Government and multilateral institutions may reduce and reallocate education funding to support other urgent humanitarian needs. Crises also hamper governments' ability to plan ahead, which has longer term repercussions on the quality of education provision (UNESCO, 2025).

3.0 Scope of Emergence education

The scope of education in emergencies is vast and crucial for providing support and aid to affected populations. It involves providing education in times of crisis, such as natural disasters, conflicts, and displacement, to ensure children and adults have access to quality education and continue their learning journey. Additionally, the scope also includes addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by vulnerable populations and ensuring inclusive education for all. Through innovative and adaptable approaches, education in emergencies plays a crucial role in promoting resilience, preserving cultural heritage, and building stronger and more sustainable communities. By understanding and addressing the scope of education in emergencies, we can better prepare for and respond to crises and ultimately contribute to building a more peaceful and educated world.

4.0 Importance of Emergence education

Education is an essential aspect of human development, and it plays a crucial role in emergencies. In times of crisis and disasters, education is often neglected, yet it is a fundamental human right that must be protected and upheld. The importance of education in emergencies cannot be overstated, as it has a significant impact on individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

One of the critical benefits of education in emergencies is its role in promoting and preserving a sense of normalcy and stability in times of conflict and crisis. In the midst of chaos and uncertainty, education provides a structured and safe learning environment for children and youth, helping them to cope and process their experiences. It also helps to restore a sense of routine and structure, which is crucial for psychological wellbeing.

Moreover, education in emergencies has been proven to be a powerful tool for enabling individuals and communities to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of disasters. It equips people with the necessary skills and knowledge to not only survive, but also thrive in challenging circumstances. This includes basic skills such as reading, writing, and math, as well as life skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and resilience.

In addition to its direct impact on individuals, education in emergencies also has broader societal benefits. It promotes social cohesion and inclusion by bringing together children from different backgrounds to learn and grow together. It also helps to prevent the loss of future human capital, as children who are out of school are more vulnerable to exploitation, child marriage, and other forms of abuse.

5.0 Problems facing Emergence education in Nigeria

Inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate modern facilities, poor participation of private institutions, corruption and attack of internal displaced communities

Inadequate Funding

The lack of funding for education in emergencies is a major issue in Nigeria. This problem has been ongoing for years and continues to affect the education sector in the country. Despite efforts to improve the situation, many schools in Nigeria still lack proper funding, leading to a decline in the quality of education. Inadequate funding has a significant impact on the provision of education in emergencies. It affects the availability of resources such as textbooks, school supplies, and infrastructure. Many schools in Nigeria are unable to provide these essential resources due to limited funding. As a result, students are often left without the necessary materials to learn effectively. Moreover, inadequate funding also affects the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. Many teachers in Nigeria are not paid a sufficient salary, which leads to a high turnover rate. This further contributes to the decline in the quality of education as students are constantly faced with new teachers who may not be as qualified or experienced. In addition to these consequences, inadequate funding also affects the overall learning environment. With limited funds, schools are unable to maintain proper facilities, leading to poor sanitation and hygiene. This

not only affects the health and well-being of students but also creates a barrier to learning (Ogunode, Musa, Yahaya & Ajape 2021).

Shortage of professional teachers

The shortage of professional teachers has become a growing concern in the education sector, particularly in emergencies faced by Nigeria. This issue has greatly impacted the quality of education in these areas, with many students lacking access to well-trained and experienced educators. This shortage has also resulted in overburdened teachers, leading to an unfavorable student-teacher ratio and thus hindering effective teaching and learning. In addition, the lack of professional teachers has resulted in a decline in the overall education system, affecting the academic performance and future opportunities of students in these emergency situations (Ogunode, & Abiola, 2021).

Inadequate modern facilities

According to recent studies, inadequate modern facilities are a major problem facing education in emergencies in Nigeria. This issue has been found to significantly impact the quality and accessibility of education in these emergency situations, leading to further challenges for students and educators alike. The lack of modern facilities, such as computers, textbooks, and proper classrooms, makes it difficult for students to engage and learn effectively. In many cases, students are forced to learn in unsafe and unsuitable conditions, further hindering their academic progress. Inadequate modern facilities also affect the quality of education that is being provided. Without proper resources, teachers are limited in their ability to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum. This hinders the development of critical skills and knowledge needed for students to thrive in a modern society. The lack of modern facilities also affects the accessibility of education. In emergency situations, where families may have lost their homes or livelihoods, it becomes even more challenging for students to attend school. Without proper facilities, students are less likely to see the value in education and may drop out, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty and lack of education.

Poor participation of private institutions

The poor participation of private institutions in the education system in Nigeria is a major problem facing education in emergency situations. This lack of involvement from private institutions greatly hinders the provision of quality education to students affected by emergencies. There is a lack of awareness and understanding among private institutions about the importance and impact of education in emergencies. Many institutions may not be aware of the dire need for education in these situations and therefore do not prioritize it. This leads to a lack of support and involvement

from private institutions in emergency education initiatives. One of the main reasons for this problem is the reluctance of private institutions to allocate resources for education in emergencies. Private institutions are profit-driven and may not see investing in emergency education as financially beneficial. This results in a lack of funding and resources for education programs in emergency situations. Moreover, the ongoing conflict and instability in Nigeria make it difficult for private institutions to establish and maintain a presence in affected areas. This further limits their ability to provide education and support to students in emergency situations.

Corruption

In Emergencies in Nigeria, corruption is a prevalent issue in the education system. It poses a significant problem as it impacts the quality and accessibility of education for children in crisis situations. The misuse of funds allocated for education leads to inadequate resources and facilities, hindering the learning process for students. Additionally, corruption creates a barrier for vulnerable populations, such as internally displaced persons, to receive proper education opportunities. This not only perpetuates poverty and exacerbates the effects of emergencies, but it also hinders the overall development and progress of the country (Ogunode, & Adegboyega 2021).

Attack of internal displaced communities by bandits

The attack of internal displaced communities by bandits is a significant issue that has greatly impacted the education system in Emergencies in Nigeria. This problem has caused many challenges and obstacles for students, teachers, and educational institutions, hindering their ability to provide quality education to those affected by the attacks. The continuous violence and displacement of communities have resulted in the closure of schools and the displacement of teachers and students. As a result, many schools in affected areas are struggling to maintain operations and provide educational resources. The mental and emotional toll on students and teachers who have experienced these attacks has greatly affected their ability to focus and learn effectively. This has led to a decrease in academic performance and an increase in dropouts. The attacks have also caused a shortage of qualified teachers in affected areas, making it difficult for schools to provide quality education to their students (Oluremi, 2015). This not only affects the current students but also has long-term consequences on the education system in these areas. These issues have made it challenging for the Nigerian education system to provide accessible and quality education to those affected by these attacks. It is crucial for authorities to address this problem and provide support to the education sector in these Emergencies in Nigeria to ensure that students have access to quality education and can continue their studies without any disruptions (Ogunode 2021).

6.0 Sustainable Strategies to enhance development of Emergence education

Introduction Sustainable strategies are essential for the development of emergency education in Nigeria. The following are the seven key strategies that can help enhance the education system in times of crisis and emergencies.

Adequate Funding:

Adequate funding is a sustainable strategy that play a critical role in enhancing the development of emergent education. Adequate funding ensures that schools and educational institutions have the necessary resources to provide quality education, while provision of adequate facilities creates an environment conducive for learning and growth. Without adequate funding, schools may struggle to provide necessary resources such as textbooks, technology, and qualified teachers, which can hinder the development of emergent education.

Provision of adequate facilities

The provision of adequate facilities is a crucial factor in the development of sustainable strategies for emergence education. By ensuring that students have access to necessary resources and infrastructure, educators can foster an environment conducive to growth and development. This not only benefits individual students but also contributes to the overall success of the education system. One key aspect of providing adequate facilities is meeting the physical needs of students and teachers. This may include well-equipped classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other spaces that support learning and research. By investing in high-quality facilities, educators can create a more engaging and productive learning environment. The provision of adequate facilities also encompasses the use of modern technology and digital resources. With technology playing an increasingly important role in education, it is essential that students have access to the latest tools and equipment. This not only enables them to keep up with technological advancements but also prepares them for the demands of the job market.

Collaboration and Coordination:

One of the most crucial strategies for sustainable development in emergency education is collaboration and coordination. This involves working together with all stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community leaders, to ensure that education services are provided in a coordinated manner.

Capacity Building:

Another important strategy is building the capacity of teachers and education providers to respond effectively in emergency situations. This can include training on disaster risk reduction, first aid,

and psychosocial support. By equipping educators with the necessary skills, they can better address the unique needs of students during emergencies.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is also a crucial strategy for sustainable development in emergency education. This involves ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, have equal access to education services during emergencies. This can be achieved through the provision of specialized support and accommodations.

Flexible Education Programs

During emergencies, traditional education methods may not be feasible. Therefore, implementing flexible education programs, such as distance learning or mobile schools, can ensure that education continues despite the crisis. These programs can also be tailored to meet the specific needs of different communities.

Community Engagement:

Engaging with the community is an important strategy for sustainable development in emergency education. This can involve involving parents, community leaders, and local organizations in the planning and implementation of education programs. It also helps to build trust and support for education initiatives during emergencies.

Long-Term Planning

Finally, long-term planning is essential for sustainable development in emergency education. This includes developing emergency preparedness plans and incorporating education into disaster risk reduction strategies. By planning ahead, education systems can be better equipped to respond to emergencies and ensure the continuity of education services.

Conclusion

Education in emergencies in Nigeria represents both a pressing humanitarian need and a critical development challenge. The country's experience with recurring crises ranging from insurgencies in the North-East, banditry and communal conflicts in the North-West, to environmental disasters such as flooding and epidemics has revealed the fragility of its education system in times of instability. These emergencies not only deprive children and young people of immediate access to learning but also expose them to heightened risks of exploitation, abuse, early marriage, and long-term social and economic marginalization. The disruption of education in crisis contexts therefore

extends beyond the classroom; it undermines human capital development, weakens national cohesion, and threatens the broader goal of sustainable development.

Despite these daunting realities, education in emergencies also presents opportunities for resilience, innovation, and reform. The efforts of government agencies, civil society organizations, and international humanitarian actors have shown that learning can continue even in the midst of disruption. Mobile classrooms, temporary learning spaces, psychosocial support programs, radio and digital learning initiatives, and community-led interventions have all contributed to keeping hope alive for learners affected by crises. Moreover, the global frameworks such as the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies and the Sustainable Development Goals have provided Nigeria with guiding principles for ensuring that education is prioritized during humanitarian responses.

However, sustaining education in emergencies requires more than short-term interventions. It calls for strong political will, inclusive policies, adequate funding, and strategic partnerships between government, international agencies, and local communities. Building resilience within the education system must involve investment in teacher training, school safety measures, flexible curricula, and integration of technology to bridge learning gaps during crises. Most importantly, there must be deliberate efforts to ensure that vulnerable groups particularly girls, children with disabilities, and internally displaced persons are not left behind.

In conclusion, education in emergencies in Nigeria is not just about restoring disrupted schooling; it is about protecting children's rights, preserving their futures, and strengthening the foundation for peace and recovery. By embedding emergency preparedness into education planning and prioritizing inclusive, quality learning for all, Nigeria can transform its emergency response into an opportunity to build a more resilient and equitable education system. Only through such comprehensive and sustained efforts can the country ensure that even in times of crisis, no child is denied the transformative power of education.

Revise Question

1. Define Emergence education
2. List the Scope of Emergence education
3. Discuss five Importance of Emergence education
4. Highlight five Problems facing Emergence education in Nigeria
5. Discuss Five Sustainable Strategies to enhance development of education in emergencies in Nigeria

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