

KENYA'S NEGLECTED INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS). THE TALES OF FLOOD DISASTER VICTIMS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILIAL NETWORKS IN NYANDO RIVER BASIN OF WESTERN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Communities faced with continuous climate-related disasters such as drought and floods have often crafted and deployed traditional ways of responding to such calamities based on their understanding of changes occurring in the environment. While government-led interventions have been spending huge sums of money on interventions aimed at helping flood victims cope with such disasters, traditional practices deployed by the local people in response to extreme weather events have never been taken on board. Moreover, scanty information is available regarding whether social-cultural practices related to conservation of the environment are still maintained especially among communities faced with climate change-related flood disasters such as the Nyando River Basin. This study explored the misfortunes facing families during and after flood events in Nyando River Basin, and analyses the role played by local networks such close and extended families in providing support systems to cement social resilience of the affected households. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were analysed through thematic analysis and presented in narrative forms. Findings showed that family networks described as Od Wadu and JokaNg'ato plays significant roles in response to flood disasters. Alarm raised of rivers/streams breaking their banks often arouse myriads of actions among the villagers collectively aimed at managing the impacts of the floods such as salvaging properties and protecting human lives. Modern forms of communicating the on-set of flood disasters through mobile phones would be more efficient than shouting, screaming or wailing as an alert mechanism for disseminating disaster information.

Keywords: Adaptive capacities; Climate Change; family support networks; Flood Disaster; Nyando River Basin

INTRODUCTION

Extreme weather forms one of the most severe threats facing the world besides climate action failure as well as infectious diseases, according to the Global Risk Report by the World Economic Forum (2023). Extant literature exist on life-threatening and existential of extreme weather risks because of damages associated with such conditions including economic losses and fatalities across the globe (Pielke, 2021; Huggel et al. 2022; Jonkman, Curran & Bouwer, 2024). According to Aliyu, Liman-Hamza and Lawal (2023), flooding is the leading natural environmental disaster worldwide, posing a major challenge to a number of countries across the world in the 21st century. Across the globe, there has been increase in frequency and intensity of flood events, causing significant destruction to the environment and negative impacts on economies as well as human activities (Tazen et al, 2019). Aliyu et al (2023) observes that serious socio-economic challenges are caused by floods each year, claiming about 20,000 lives and adversely affecting approximately 20 million people worldwide. The

Emergency Events Database report for 2023 highlights that alone accounted for 38.7% of all incidents, 6.2% of deaths and 43.0% of the population affected by all disaster caused by natural hazards in the world during 2010-2019 (Delforge et al, 2023). Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) is perhaps one of the regions that has been most devastated by flood over the years. Torrential rains and flooding affected 600,000 people in 16 West African countries in September 2007, with the worst-hit countries being Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, and Niger (Aliyu et al, 2023). Following this event was the 2007 floods that displaced more than a million people in Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, and Niger and claimed over 500 lives (Kellens, Terpstra & De Maeyer, 2013). The Eastern part of Africa seems to have experienced more adverse impacts of flood disasters in the recent past. Since the “long rains” season started in March 2020, more than 13 million people have been affected by flooding in East Africa with about 981,000 displaced (C40 cities Finance Facility, 2020). During the same period, 200 people were reported dead as a result of overflowing rivers and mudslides in Kenya with over 40,000 displaced (Aliyu et al, 2023). The Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2024) reports that by May 10, the March-April-May (MAM) floods had submerged homes, destroyed houses, and displaced more than 280,000 people across Kenya.

The epicenter of flood disasters in Kenya is perhaps experienced in western part the country particularly in Budalangi and the Nyando River Basin. In the Nyando River Basin, the total area annually predisposed to flooding is between 15,000 and 20,000 hectares, comprising of the Kakola, Onjiko and Kochogo locations in Nyando Sub County; Ombeyi location in Muhoroni Sub County, and Gem Nam location of Nyakach Sub County (Opere, 2013). Each year, over 5,000 people are displaced by floods in the area during April-June (long) and October-November (short) rainy season (Masese, Neyole&Ombachi, 2016). Further reports highlight that for the first time since recorded climate data commenced 120 years ago, water levels of Lake Victoria reached the highest point, displacing thousands of people, and flooding homes around the Nyando River Basin, with the destruction of infrastructure and roads (Jones, 2020; OCHA, 2020). Although the Nyando River Basin’s internally displaced persons’ miseries has been a yearly discussion among media houses and scholars, response mechanisms available from local networks especially family members and relatives has not been highlighted. The aim of the article was to assess the role of familial networks as a shared social value in enhancing recovery from losses incurred by victims of flood disasters during and after their displacements from their residential places in Nyando River Basin of Western Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the social resilience theory advanced by Holling (1973). Social resilience is the capacity of a people to actively cope with and recover from a disaster (Hall & Lamont, 2013; Claridge, 2018). Saja, Goonetilleke, Teo and Ziyath (2019), on their part, view social resilience as the ability of a social entity to effectively anticipate, mitigate and cope with disasters and implement recovery measures for minimizing disruptions occasioned by such disaster. Huge interest has erupted over the years in understanding how local communities and various actors have developed coping mechanisms in the wake of rising global climate-related disasters (Carmen et al, 2022). This interest arise from the fact that local communities have always come up with numerous strategies for addressing their miseries long before the arrival of support from outside: from the state and other humanitarian agencies (Abdurrahimetal, 2019). Extant literature over the last two decades has

focused on the concept of social resilience (with an aim of providing an understanding on how local communities accost challenges in their environment and on their own (Hall & Lamont, 2009; Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Khalili, Harre & Morley, 2015; Islam et al, 2022). The argument advanced by these social resilience researchers is that shared social values, collective imaginaries (the overarching narratives that embody people's identity), social capital, and social knowledge collectively held by a particular community form the resources which help them to live healthy, secure and fulfilling lives (Leap & Thomson, 2018). This study was interested in unraveling these resources collectively held by the Nyando River people which have helped them during their displacements occasioned by flood disasters.

Empirical Literature Review

Prewitt and Dayal (2008) explored psychosocial support forming key component of the recovery and reconstruction efforts among a disaster disturbed community in Australia. They specifically sought to identify whether 'place' as a physical parameter in which human competence is achieved and whether it forms a strategy deployed to overcome the trauma of displacement related disasters. They found that psychosocial support identifies survivors as the main actors in the reestablishment of 'sense of place' and as an internally-focused process by which survivors prioritize their activities to plan, establish, and coordinate responses to protect and improve their own psychosocial well-being, instead of relying on outside help. Norris, Friedman and Watson (2002) investigated the views of 60,000 victims of diverse disaster events in the USA to gauge their experiences and coping mechanisms. Outcome from 160 samples was coded to reveal type, disaster type, disaster location, outcomes and risk factors observed, and overall severity of impairment. The authors revealed that being a youth, being national of a developing country, and having experienced mass violence such as terrorism or shooting sprees predisposes one to vulnerabilities.

Weldegebriel and Amphune (2017) examined the determinants of resilience and vulnerability among rural households facing recurring floods in Ethiopia. This was a cross sectional survey which collected data from 284 households via questionnaire, two focus group discussions, and 12 key informant interviews. Results showed that being in possession of large farmlands and farm oxen, being credit worthiness, and having social networks to draw help from are most important determinants of household resilience to floods.

In Kenya, Willett and Kvam (2019) used qualitative approaches to explore community resilience experiences to environmental disasters including 19 poor communities in ten urban neighbourhoods in Nairobi, alongside three isolated rural communities. They revealed 3 mutual support systems determining resilience. These include uptake of non-skilled paid labour locally known as *kibarua*, community based financing schemes locally termed as *merry-go-rounds* and community-based financial donations for supporting vulnerable individuals locally referred to as *asharambees*. In another study done in the same area as the current research, Masese, Neyole and Ombachi (2016) collected data from 384 community members using questionnaire, questionnaire as well interviews with NGOs to assess adaptation mechanisms to flood risk in Lower Nyando Basin of Kenya. This correlational survey research revealed that locally-adopted measures have been critical in addressing flood disasters. These include relocating family and valuable goods away from home briefly to safer places, constructing trenches which divert floods, as well as seeking relief from the Government and other agencies.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design

The study used descriptive cross-sectional design with mixed-methods, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (Poth & Munce, 2020). This design enabled the researchers to use quantitative approach to measure some aspects of the phenomenon under study and qualitative methods for others (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). This had the advantage of providing complementarity in data collection, analysis and interpretation (Shorten & Smith, 2017).

Study Setting

The research was conducted in Nyando River Basin that traverses Nyando, Muhoroni and Nyakach Sub-counties of Kisumu County. The study area covers an area of 3500 square kilometers in Kisumu County, straddling the equator along longitudes 34°45' 0' E and 35° 21' E (Masese et al, 2016). The Nyando River Basin is prone to between 3 to 7 years flood return frequency, with an average scale of 400 cubic meters per second. The Nyando River remains the most notorious source of frequent flooding in the area, resulting in social distress, health hazards, disruption of human settlement, loss of harvests, building and infrastructures and a general malaise that affect over 5000 people annually (Opere, 2013; Masese et al, 2016).

Study population and Sampling Strategy

The target population of this study included 1,728 households (Muhoroni=482; Nyando=1, 246) which have frequently been predisposed to floods each year (Onyuro, 2020). Officers from the Ministry of Interior (the chiefs and their assistants), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) operating in the study area, local community health workers, and local disaster committee members were also targeted.

This study adopted Yamane's (1967) formula to calculate the sample size of households which have been predisposed to flood disasters as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Yamane formula is best suited for overcoming difficulties in obtaining a good estimate of population variance at confidence coefficient of 95% and a population proportion of 0.5 (Adam, 2020). Through the formula, the computed study sample size was:

$$n = \frac{1728}{1 + 1728(0.05)^2} = 324$$

Proportional stratification was further employed to distribute the sample size in location through the formula:

$$n = \frac{f}{N} \times n$$

Where n is the sample calculated from each location, f is the population of the location, N is the target population of the area, and n is the computed sample size.

Using the same formula, samples size for other locations in the study area (Kakola, Kochogo, Wawidhi and Ombeyi) were also computed. Table 1 presents the distribution of the study sample stratified based on target population (Muhoroni=90; Nyando=234).

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size

Sub County	Locations	Flood affected Households	Sample Size
Nyando	KabonyoKanyagwal	396	75
	Kakola	359	67
	Kochogo	252	47
	Wawidhi	239	45
	Total	1246	234
Muhoroni	Ombeyi	482	90
	Total	482	90
Total		1728	324

Similarly, the study purposively selected healthcare practitioners and government officials for interviews and Focus Group Discussions until saturation was attained.

Instrumentation, Validity and Reliability

The first author administered semi-structured questionnaires consisting of both closed and open ended questions to collect data from the sampled household heads alongside in-depth interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) guide. Interview schedule as well as FGD guide was also used for gathering information from Officers from the Ministry of Interior (the chiefs and their assistants), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) operating in the study area, local community health workers, and local disaster committee members.

Construct and content validity index (CVI) were employed to ensure validity of the study instruments. For purposes of ensuring construct validity, we took care through operationalization of the research variables while for content validity index (CVI) where four experts from Maseno University were asked to rate each question item in terms of its relevance to the underlying constructs using a 4-point ordinal scale: 1=not relevant; 2=somewhat relevant; 3=quite relevant; 4=highly relevant. We adopted the formula stipulated by Davis (1992):

$I-CVI = (\text{agreed item}) / (\text{number of expert})$.

This yielded a CVI of .78, which is a high rating in terms of instrument relevance to research phenomenon.

On the other hand, reliability was checked through split-half method using data collected during pilot study from 32 households from Lower Nyakach Division selected through purposive sampling technique. Similarly, 4 officers, one each from the interior ministry, community health workers, community elders, and CBOs. The computed correlation coefficient was 0.86, signifying that the instrument was of high reliability.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained using questionnaire was analysed via descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics enabled generation of frequencies and percentages which was essential for interpretation of quantitative results. Under descriptive analysis, quantitative results were interpreted using the key: 6-*Very Frequently*; 5 - *Frequently*; 4 - *Sometimes*; 3 – *Occasionally*; 2 - *Very Rarely*; 1- *Never*. Similarly, thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data obtained from open ended questions in the questionnaire, interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

Ethical considerations

The researchers obtained clearance to conduct the field study from Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC) and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). An assent form was designed and signed by the household heads. For purposes of confidentiality, participants were asked not to exclude their identities from the research instruments.

RESULTS

The study managed to collect data from 324 household heads (Male = 51.9%; Female= 48.1%). Six FGDs were done with the community elders (3), community health workers (3), while three interviews were done with interior ministry officials.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the study population

Most households (37%) had a household size of between three and four members, while 35.5% had a size of 5 – 6 members. Similarly, the highest number of the household heads (38%) had a monthly income level of below Kshs. 5, 000.00, while 29.9% had a monthly income level of between Kshs. 5, 100.00 and Kshs. 10, 000.00.

Local Connectedness and Adaptive Capacities

Local connectedness are often seen in the form of mobilisation of resources for accomplishing shared goals. This study sought to establish whether local networks have helped the people living in the Nyando River Basin to respond to flood disasters over the years. The responses obtained from respondents were analysed through frequencies, percentages (%), mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Networks and Response to Flood Disasters

Local Networks	1(%)	2(%)	3(%)	4(%)	5(%)	6(%)	M	SD
Networks of family members	20 (6.2)	25 (7.7)	29 (9.0)	21 (6.5)	73 (22.5)	155 (47.8)	4.76	1.59
Networks of relatives	23 (7.1)	25 (7.7)	41 (12.7)	80 (24.7)	92 (28.7)	62 (19.1)	4.17	1.45
Networks of friends	22 (6.8)	17 (5.2)	65 (20.1)	78 (24.1)	84 (25.9)	57 (17.6)	4.10	1.41
Mean							4.34	1.48

Findings in Table 2 illustrates that local network (Mean=4.34; SD=1.48) have been more occasionally relied upon by the members of the community during flood disasters. Specifically, networks of family members (M=4.76; SD=1.59) is the most preferred response mechanism by the households in the study area. Others are networks of relatives (M=4.17; SD=1.45) and networks of friends (M=4.10; SD=1.41) which are also regarded as response mechanisms when flood disasters hit the families. The importance of family members towards recovery of flood disaster victims also appeared in the qualitative data obtained during an FGD session, where a female community elder stated:

The on-set of the rainfall season often sees my sons and daughters living in towns away from the area call us to enquire whether floods have invaded our home. All efforts are made by them to ensure that we cope with the flood disaster when it happens. They

will also call other close relatives to ask for whatever assistance that might be helpful to us before and after flood events (female community elder: FGD discussant).

Family structures and connections appear in the limelight with regards to how it assists the people of Nyando River Basin to cope with flood disasters was also highlighted by one male discussant's flood experiences during an FGD as:

The family chairperson (JakomAnyuola), immediately the floods ceased, summoned a big family meeting to assess how the floods had affected us. Houses belonging to more than seven households were destroyed and a number of families lost (Cham) grains. One of our family member had also lost a five-year old baby girl due to malaria and pneumonia associated with floods. Members, in their tradition, agreed to contribute and raise fund to rebuild the destroyed houses, support the members who lost their grains and set off funeral expenses for the young one. It was a difficult time for our family (Community member/elder FGD discussant).

The sentiments of the above mentioned community elder demonstrate that there is structured social connectedness embedded in family units in the area which is key in helping out the members during and after the flood disasters. Families in this area, with office-like structures, have put in place rules that obligate members to make specific contributions to a member who has fallen victim of a catastrophe such as flood disaster – a finding that is also supported by quantitative data (see table 2). Family connectedness was also captured in an interview with one of the assistant chiefs who is also a member of the community, where the male officer stated:

For those with children working in bigger cities such as Nairobi or Mombasa and earning large amounts of salaries, coping with flood disaster becomes easy and they do not have to rely on help from relatives and friends. The same applies to those with daughters and sons abroad: in the USA, Germany of UK. Their children often ensure that they put up for them homes at safer grounds from floods. However, for families without sons and daughters who are earning sufficient salaries in bigger cities and abroad, their fate is dependent on the goodwill and support of neighbours and friends. Those who are widows and with meagre incomes are also dependent on friends and well-wishers for responding to flood disaster (Male interior ministry official interview).

Family members' efforts in helping their kin in recovering from flood disaster desolation appear to be helping a number of households in the Nyando Basin to restore a sense of place in this area. Family networks therefore appear to be a significant component of resilience that has enabled households of the Nyando River Basin to cope with continuous flood disasters over the years.

Further analysis to explore whether reliance on family members is associated with low income among families living in Nyando River Basin was done. A comparison of income level and reliance on family networks as well as household size and family network reliance are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Average Income Level and Reliance on Family Members

Monthly Income	Relying on Family Members						Total 9%)
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	6 (%)	
Below 5,000	9 (7.4)	4 (3.3)	2 (1.8)	6 (4.9)	19 (15.6)	82 (67.2)	122 (37.9)
5,100-10,000	4 (4.2)	9 (9.4)	9 (9.4)	6 (6.3)	33	35	96 (29.8)

					(34.4)	(36.5)	
10, 100 – 15,000	3 (5.8)	4 (7.7)	10 (19.2)	6 (11.5)	12 (23.1)	17 (32.7)	52 (16.1)
15, 100-20,000	2 (8.3)	4 (16.7)	5 (20.8)	1 (4.2)	3 (12.5)	9 (37.5)	24 (7.5)
20, 100-25,000	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	4 (30.8)	13 (4)
25,100-30,000	0	3 (33.3)	1 (11.1)	0	1 (11.1)	4 (44.4)	9 (2.8)
30,100-35,000	0	0	0	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)	4 (66.7)	6 (1.9)
Total	20 (6.2)	25 (7.8)	29(9.0)	21 (6.5)	72 (22.4)	155(48.1)	322 (100)

Table 3 illustrates that 82.8% of 112 respondents who earn an average of Kshs 5000 and below frequently rely on family members for responding to flood disasters. Similarly, 70.9% of the 96 respondents who earn an average monthly income of Kshs 5, 100.00 – 10, 000.00 frequently rely on family members for response to flood disaster. This finding depicts that the lower the monthly income, the more reliance on family members for response to flood disaster. Correlation between household size and reliance on family members is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Household Size and Reliance on Family Members

Household Size	Relying on Family Members						
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	6 (%)	Total 9%)
1 – 2	4 (19.0)	2 (9.5)	0	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)	13 (61.9)	21 (6.5)
3 – 4	7 (5.9)	11 (9.2)	19 (16)	6 (5.0)	24 (20.2)	52 (43.7)	119 (37.0)
5 – 6	2 (1.8)	6 (5.3)	7 (6.1)	9 (7.9)	28 (24.8)	62 (54.4)	114 (35.4)
7 – 8	6 (10.7)	2 (3.6)	3 (5.4)	3 (5.4)	17 (30.4)	25 (44.6)	56 (17.4)
9 – 10	0	0	0	1 (20)	1 (20)	3 (60)	5 (1.6)
Above 10	1 (14.3)	4 (57.1)	0	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	0	7 (2.2)
Total	20 (6.2)	25 (7.8)	29(9.0)	21 (6.5)	72 (22.4)	155(48.1)	322 (100)

Findings in Table 4 illustrate that 79.2% of the 114 respondents who had a household size of 5 – 6 frequently rely on family members as a response mechanism to flood disasters. Similarly, 63.9% of 119 respondents with household size of 3 -4 rely on family members. The people of Nyando River Basin therefore seem to have relied on familial networks for survival and recovery in most of the several flood disasters over the years. Based on these findings, it could be deduced that friends and relatives in the study area have formed strong social networks which have in turn facilitated collective actions to respond to flood disasters. The significant role played by families, neighbours as well as local institutions in response to flood disasters highlighted by quantitative data in Table 5.1 also emerged in qualitative findings during FGDs. In one session of the FGDs, it came out that response to any particular flood event is so coordinated that an alarm raised by one ‘whistle-blower’ of an over-flow of a river or a stream, for instance, would activate successive ring of activities across the village

aimed at mitigating the anticipated impact of the disaster. One female community health worker had this to say during an FGD session was:

AroyiOkore (not real name), *an elder in Karanda village residing close to River Nyando banks, often shouts using his loud voice, that NyandoOmwomo (Nyando has broken its banks). Such message often sends horrid memories across the entire village since it happens almost every year. Immediately the voice is heard in the village, youths would take gabion bags, tarimbosand every available tool and head to the river to rebuild the dykes; women would pick buckets and start “constructing” Ndiri (mounds-like dykes and ridges around their homes and houses; and children would rise up to any assignment given to them* (female community health worker FGD discussant).

Horrid memories appear to dominate the minds of the people of Nyando Basin with regards to sudden arrival of floods particularly in the night. Such shared memories also emerged in another FGD with a group of village elders, where one elderly widow said:

Arrival of flood event is normally accompanied by weird happenings. I remember of an instant when in the night when I was asleep, my room was uncharacteristically warm and I had a very deep sleep. I was suddenly woken up by unique mooing of cows and unfamiliar chirping of chicken. On alighting from the bed, I landed on warm water, tangling my feed on moving sufurias and utensils. On such nights, all domestic animals would make scaring and bewildering sounds that sends chilling shivers in one’s spine. It is like the shadows of death has engulfed the entire village. What would then follow is collective efforts to move anything that you can carry to the nearby evacuation center (a primary school, church building, or a government evacuation centre) (a female elder FGD participant).

Unpleasant experiences the people of this study area have had over the years when floods occur probably signify the understanding among members of this community of the fact that their existence lies in the collective existence of the entire Nyando River Basin community.

DISCUSSION

Findings have revealed that based on low average income and large household sizes (of between 3 and 6 members), households in this study area see family members as nearest refuge to rely on in hard times such as during flood disasters. Past studies in the context of among the Luo community similar to where the current research was conducted have revealed the existence of strong kin-based support systems where people from one lineage extend assistance to each other during difficult times (Nyambedha, 2004). Similar to this, a study done across four counties of western Kenya (Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori, and Siaya) dominated by the Luo community by Adingo (2020) also revealed that the Luo support system characterised by *Winjruok* (understanding each other’s situation) and *romruok* (togetherness or equality) are essential features of egalitarianism as they strengthen oneness and solidarity. Earlier anthropologist such as Parkin (1978), Cohen and Odhiambo (1989), and Ocholla-Ayayo (2000) have highlighted various forms of help available in times of disasters of any kind within the Luo clan wherever they were settled in (be it in the city or small urban centers). For instance, the spirit of *Winjruok* (understanding) and *romruok* (equality) would ensure that the community takes care of feeding the deceased person’s guests when one is bereaved, and pools resources together to give one of their own a befitting send-off (Parkin, 1978; Cohen & Odhiambo, 1989).

Families appear to be critical networks in the flood disaster arena upon which victims most often rely upon for coping. This finding is an illustration that the community plays a crucial role in an individual's acquisition of full personhood, a perspective akin to the *Od Wadu* concept among the Luo people that describes group solidarity which is central to the survival of the community with especially during misfortunes (Ojijo, 2012). According to Ojijo (2012), *Od Wadu*, conceptually meaning 'your neighbor's house is your house' in Luo community, calls on each person to believe and feel that 'your' pain is my pain, 'my' wealth is 'your' wealth, and 'your' recovery is 'my' recovery. Opande, Onyango-Ouma also argue Subbo (2022) that failure to feel the pain of your kin makes his or her blood to follow you or your descendants and, bringing with it untold suffering. *Od Wadu* is therefore one of the coping strategies that the people of Nyando Basin have formed to remain resilience to flood disasters in the area.

The arrival of flood events in the Nyando Basin especially during night times is established to arouse horrid memories which is shared across households residing in this area, and this brings the people of this area together as a family faced a common threat, a theme similar to *JokaNg'ato* concept (Adingo, 2020). Furthermore, study results highlight that individualistic ideals are discarded by the myriads of actions taken members of the Nyando River Basin immediately an alarm is raised concerning arrival of a flood event, akin to articulations advanced in African socialism by earlier scholars such as Mboya (1965). Based on various activities aroused by the messaging of flood arrival, every member of the Nyando Basin society, picks up a role aimed at protecting the entire village. This seems to be born out of the understanding that one is only safe from the dangers posed by floods if the entire village is safe. In other words, Ojijo's (2012) concept of *Od Wadu*, which implies that a person is a person through other persons, appears to be the social norm widely adopted by the people of the study area to enable them build adaptive capacities to flood disaster.

The foregoing observation highlights the spirit of community-self displayed by the people of Nyando River Basin in response to flood disaster. This is a sign of collective actions developed through creative social relationships aimed at addressing a common problem, something relevant to articulations in social resilience theory (Adger, 2006). The people in this area, in their effort to cope with flood disasters, have deployed social support systems such as families and wider community, social mechanisms including understanding emerging flood risks, and coping, adapting, and transforming (CAT) capacities (Saja et al, 2021). Indeed, based on the social resilience theory originated by Holling in 1973, a family is one of the social entities in the disaster contexts with the ability to utilise resources and processes to anticipate, cope with, and recover from stressors such as flood events (Kwok et al, 2016). In turn, these efforts have made them to become socially resilient to the impacts of flood events over the years by developing abilities to recover from its impact as well as well as to mitigate its future effects. In essence, the people of this area are not only prepared for these flood events, but see past it in terms of recovery, a perspective articulated in diverse lengths by social resilience scholars (Norris et al, 2008; Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013). It could therefore be concluded that to ensure that their household goods are not lost in floods, the people of Nyando River Basin seems to have been depending to a large extent upon relatives and friends for recovery after each flood event over the years.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that households in the study have formed collective approaches for responding to flood disasters. These approaches have been born out of weird nostalgic

memories with which they associate the arrival of flood events, such as the mooing of cows, often when the Nyando River breaks its banks. The study also concludes that local networks has been more occasionally relied upon by the households for flood disaster response, with reliance on family members' support (*JokaNg'ato*) being one action that has strengthened connectedness and sense of place. This has been significant in enabling the people to rebuild themselves after the disasters. Further, it is concluded that alarm raised of rivers/streams breaking their banks often arouse myriads of actions among the villagers collectively aimed at managing the impacts of the floods such as salvaging properties and protecting human lives.

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