

Flood Disaster and Family Disorganization in the Niger Delta

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Abstract

Flood disasters are natural calamities that exert devastating impact on communities and families. These events often result in the loss of lives, destruction of property, and displacement of individuals and families. The perennial nature of this menace in many countries around the globe, including Nigeria has attracted attention from scholars and other concerned institutions. However, its propensity to disorganize the proper functioning of the family which is of the basic unit of society has not been fully examined. Thus, this work examined the relationship between flood disaster and family disorganization in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Based on the Family Stress theory, the study relied on secondary sources of data. The Study finds that flood disasters have wide-ranging effects on families, often resulting in family disorganization in the region. The loss of homes, disruption of social networks, financial strain, psychological trauma, and the disruption of education and healthcare services all contribute to this disorganization. In view of the above, support from government and community resources, counselling services, and disaster relief organizations can play a crucial role in helping families navigate the difficulties associated with flood disasters and facilitate the process of restoring stability and organization within the family unit.

Keywords: Flood, Disaster, family, disorganization, Niger Delta

Introduction

One persistent issue that has a terrible impact on many facets of life all over the world is flooding. A state of flooding occurs when a sizable region is totally submerged in water. Floods may be predicted by looking at patterns of water flow and rainfall. But occasionally, typhoons or levee leaks can cause floods to occur very quickly—a phenomenon known as flash floods.

Essentially, flood events are the product of climate change. Recent history shows that extreme weather events are occurring more frequently even in areas that have not experienced such in the past (Hettiarachchi, Wasko & Sharma, 2018). Escalation of rainfall and their increasing volume has been linked to the higher temperatures expected with climate change (Wasko & Sharma, 2015 cited in Hettiarachchi et al, 2018). This increase in extreme rainfall and its intensification creates a higher risk of damaging flood events that cause a threat to both life and the built environment, particularly in urban regions where the existing infrastructure has not been designed to cope with these increases (Hettiarachchi et al, 2018).

Apparently, climate change has influenced recurring incidence of flooding in different parts of the world. In 2011, severe floods were reported in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda in Africa; Brazil, Columbia, Mexico and the United States in the Americas; and Cambodia, China, India, Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand in Asia, with fatalities in each flood exceeding 50 (over 1000 in the Phillippines and Colombia) and high material damage, in particular in the developed countries from the list above (Kundzewicz Z. W., Kanae S., Seneviratne S.I., Handmer J., Nicholls N., Peduzzi P., Mechler R., Bouwer L.M., Arnell N., Mach K., Muir-Wood R., Brakenridge. G.R., Kron W., Benito G., Honda Y., Takahashi K. & Sherstyukov B., 2014)).

In 2012, “killer floods” occurred Bangladesh, China, India, North and South Korea, the Philippines and Russia in Asia; Argentina, the United States and Haiti in the Americas and Madagascar, Niger and Nigeria in Africa inducing more than 50 fatalities each country (Kundzewicz et al, 2014). This event repeated similar feat in Nigeria in 2022.

Perennial flood disasters in Nigeria have put individuals, communities, and establishments in danger. Millions of people have been displaced from their homes as a result of it, and it has also damaged businesses, contaminated water supplies, raised the risk of disease in different regions of the nation etc. (Baiye, 1988; Akinyemi, 1990; Nwaubani, 1991; Edward- Adebiji, 1997).

Since disasters amplify preexisting inequalities and upend established institutions and social norms, natural disasters like floods fundamentally have social dimensions (Klinenberg, 1982). Flooding’s tendency to destabilize families adds another layer to its destructive effects. Family disorganization is the term used to describe the dysfunctional dynamics within a family. Divorce, spousal, and parent-child conflicts are a few examples. Though not as severely as in the case of spousal conflict, tension between parents and children can lead to significant adjustment problems. When a marriage fails, which is crucial for a family to survive, the family becomes disorganized (Ukssay, nd).

Families sprang up to meet some of man’s most fundamental social, psychological, and biological needs. Family organization affects both personal and social structures. As a result, the family has a big influence on how a child develops and becomes who they are. The family is the root of all altruistic behaviors, including cooperation, universal brotherhood, love of all living things, self-sacrifice, and service to humanity. When these needs are not met, the family becomes disorganized (Sreekumar, 2017).

Disorganization within the family influenced vices in the wider society. The breakdown of the family, which serves as the fundamental pillar of human society, is one reason why crime rates are rising in our society. Numerous studies have linked family disarray to a variety of socially unhealthy behaviors, including poor academic performance, criminal behavior, and drug abuse (Bakare, 2013; Odebode & Fatusi, 2016). Young people may seek alternative sources of direction and belonging as a result of family disorganization, which can lead to a lack of parental supervision and support in the context of crime (Akinola & Akinola, 2019). In Nigeria, the enormous negative effects of family disorganization are more pronounced than in other nations. Researches have proven that 70% violent and other social, economic issues such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other related social problems today are as the result of family crisis that exacerbated to uncontrollable defect on the youths (Oyeshola, 2005).

While factors such as role conflict, urbanization, and economic crises, have been identified to cause family disorganization (Solomon, Mohammed, & Agwadu, 2020), there is little or no work in existence that specifically examine the relationship between flood disaster and family disorganization. In this light, this study seeks to unravel the nexus between flood disaster which have become a perennial problem and its proclivity to propel family disorganization. The study aims to bring to light the propensity of flooding in disrupting homes, occasion economic hardships, emotional distress, and the loss of social support systems, the result of which can lead to family disorganization. This become crucial to enable communities and governments recognize these challenges faced by families in the aftermath of flood disasters and provide adequate support and resources to help them recover as well assist in restoring stability and resilience within affected communities.

Families in the various states of Nigeria are frequently faced with the challenging task of managing the aftermath of the annual flooding problem. Such unanticipated events cause a crisis for families, regardless of the nature or length of the disaster. In addition to the regular everyday stressors that all

families experience, families affected by disasters must deal with both the immediate and long-term effects of the disaster. Specifically, this work is intended to unravel the nature of flooding in the Niger Delta, examine the Impact of flood disaster, canvass the nexus between flooding and family disorganization in the Niger Delta and give possible solutions to mitigate the impact of flooding on the family.

Literature Review

Flooding in the Niger Delta

There are three main types of flooding in Nigeria: coastal flooding, river flooding, and urban flooding (Nwokoye, Uwajumogu & Ezenekwe, 2014). Coastal flooding affects the low-lying belt of mangrove and freshwater swamps along the coasts. While flash floods are associated with rivers in inland areas where sudden heavy rains can quickly transform them into destructive torrents, river flooding occurs in the flood plains of the larger rivers. Urban flooding is a common occurrence in settlements with flat or low-lying terrain, particularly when surface drainage is either poorly or completely neglected or when it is obstructed by waste materials from the local government, household trash, and eroding soil sediments. In Lagos, Maiduguri, Aba, Warri, Benin, and Ibadan, extensive urban flooding is a common occurrence during rainy seasons (Nwokoye, Uwajumogu & Ezenekwe, 2014).

According to Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team, NEST (1991), the following regions in Nigeria are disproportionately impacted by floods:

- a. Areas that are low-lying and have very heavy annual rainfall in the southern parts of the country.
- b. The area of the Niger Delta.
- c. The floodplains of the larger rivers like the Niger, Benue, Taraba, Sokoto, Hadeja, Cross River, Imo, Anambra, Ogun, Kaduna etc.
- d. Flat low-lying areas around and to the south of Lake Chad which may be flooded during, and for a few weeks after the rain.

The Niger Delta is by far the largest area in Nigeria impacted by annual flooding due to its topography as a low-lying, swampy area of alluvial deposition through which the tributaries of the Niger meander (Agbonkhese, Agbonkhese, Aka, Joe-Abaya, Ocholi, & Adekunle, 2014)). It serves as the catchment area's ineffective outlet to the sea and a natural reservoir for the Niger-Benue. Its rivers are bordered by levees, and when these rivers flooded, the levees are overtopped and extensive areas are submerged. The area is vulnerable to two different types of flooding: rainy season floods brought on by rain in Nigeria and, in particular, rain in the delta region itself, which can range from 2000 mm to 4000 mm annually and is concentrated in a few months (Agbonkhese et al, 2014). The other type of flood is a river flood, which is almost always brought on by water that originates as far away as Guinea's Fouta Djallon Highlands. Most of the water is rainwater from the previous year's rainfall in these highlands, which is slowly making its way down to Nigeria. Almost every area of the Niger Delta experiences flooding at some point throughout the year, with the exception of the northern regions. Bayelsa State's Sagbama and Yenagoa regions frequently experience damage to towns, villages, and agricultural lands (Agbonkhese et al, 2014). Parts of the riverine regions of the states of Edo, Delta, Cross River, and Akwa Ibom are frequently impacted as well.

Impact of Flooding

According to Othman, Sharip, Kasim, Kamdari and Baharuddin, 2022 psychological morbidity, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, are linked to flood events. Regardless of

prior flood experiences, ongoing flood risk is regarded as a significant stress factor. Some survey participants in their study expressed anxiety even just about the possibility of a future flood event and showed low self-efficacy, which led to feelings of helplessness when it came to preparing for flood risk (Fothergill, 1999). The anxiety and resilience of those who did not assume the flood risk were also higher.

Senarath's (2011) research indicated that many kids who are exposed to natural disasters go through psychological distress, anxiety, and physical problems both immediately and later. According to Randeniya's (2018) study on the impact of flood disaster on teenagers, 88 percent of them feel uneasy during periods of persistent heavy rain. They fear that they might have to endure another unpleasant experience. The respondents were found to have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of this.

The majority of flood victims are extricated from their homes by the government or local authorities and brought to temporary shelters. While others might choose to stay at the shelter, some might visit their family members or close friends there. In both situations, it's likely that the victims will feel uneasy. They could be socially threatened by issues with privacy, crowding, and inadequate basic facilities.

As they would miss work until the flood subsided, their regular schedule would also be impacted (Yusoff & Kadir, 2017). In the end, some of the victims might go back to their homes, while others might not because the flood completely destroyed their homes. In the vast majority of cases, even if they are able to save their houses, their personal belongings might be destroyed. Enrico and Quarantelli (2005) found that disaster victims go through four stages of rehoming, including: 1) the temporary rescue center, which is the place they go to right away after being saved from the disaster, 2) the rescue center, where they would stay overnight with food supplies and basic necessities provided, and 3) the location where the victims will build or rebuild their home, either at the original location or a new one and 4) the permanent home where they would have to settle down regardless of their preference. These various phases take time and might seem terrifying to the victims. The victims' regular schedule would also be disturbed. They would be heartbroken by the drastic changes and the prospect of living without any of their previous possessions.

Additionally, flooding harms victims' health. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Floods and Health Fact Sheets for Health Professionals (2014), damage to infrastructure, ecosystems, food and water supplies, or social support systems can have a negative impact on people's health whether it happens directly through contact with floodwaters or indirectly through those same processes. After the floods have subsided, these effects may start to show up right away or days, weeks, or even months later. Over the course of a flood, drowning accounts for two thirds of all fatalities, while the remaining third are caused by physical harm, heart attacks, electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning, or fire (Othman et al, 2022).

According to a study conducted in Nigeria (Olanrewaju, Chitakira, Olanrewaju, Louw, 2019), diarrhoea outbreak affects 47.1 percent of the study participants who were affected by flooding. This is mainly due to contaminated drinking water from destroyed sanitary infrastructure and sewer systems. Following the end of the flood season, flooding not only causes an increase in the frequency of meals and dietary variety, but also in the incidence of diarrhea and fever (Sajid & Bevis, 2021).

Due to inadequate infrastructure and scarce financial resources, flood events compromise access to essential health services, according to Bich et al. (2011, cited in Othman et al. 2022). The findings also indicated that the two main causes of injuries during flood events are falls and drowning. The prevalence of dermatitis and pink eye among the populace is also highlighted.

Impact of Flood on the Family

During a flood, families might discover that their regular routines have been completely changed. Additionally, complicated issues like the loss of an income source or a family farm may force parents to deal with them. In some cases, parents may need to change jobs. In order to find work, it might even be necessary for parents or the entire family to relocate to a different city. In order to help with the financial hardships caused by the disaster, a nonworking parent might need to go back to work. Young people might discover that they are sent to live with relatives while the disaster's damage is being fixed.

These kinds of changes necessitate choices that are challenging and frequently distressing for the entire family. In addition, these adjustments frequently mean less time is spent with kids, which deprives them of much-needed emotional support. It is understandable that the family system may no longer be able to function as it once did given the complexity and serious consequences of these decisions to each family member (Gordon, Farberow, & Madia, 1999). It is crucial to understand that these situations could result in family system changes that last long after the disaster has passed. These alterations within the family may consist of:

1. Dysfunction or disarray in the parenting.
2. A family member using drugs or alcohol more frequently.
3. Increased hostility or violent actions between family members or between family members and others.
4. Relocation (including alterations to the local school).
5. Job loss.
6. Parents are less present physically and emotionally.
7. Loss of children's social networks or the chance to engage in regular routines and activities (American Academy of Pediatrics Work Group on Disasters, 1995; Ebata & Borden, 1995).

Every year, families in various states of Nigeria, including the Niger Delta, are forced to deal with the consequences of a natural disaster like flooding. Such unanticipated occurrences put families in a crisis, regardless of the disaster's type or length. Disaster-affected families must deal not only with the short- and long-term effects of the disaster, but also with the usual daily stressors that affect all families.

Additionally, existing literature suggests that flood disasters disrupt family harmony and lead to violence against intimate partners. First, disasters heighten trauma and uncertainty from a social psychological standpoint (Frankenberg, Jed, Thomas, Nicholas, Robert, Iip, Rifai, Sikoki, Steinberg, Sumantri, Suriastini, & Thomas, 2008), which may result in more volatile relationships and substance use (Powell & Holleran Steiker, 2012), outcomes that are positively related to intimate partner violence (Gage, 2005). Similar to this, a protracted feeling of uncontrollability can heighten a person's desire to exert control over their immediate surroundings (Shapiro, Schwartz, & Astin, 1996), which may have an impact on men's use of violence as a form of control. Families who experience a high level of destruction, such as losing a family member or suffering property damage, are likely to experience these effects of trauma and uncertainty the most strongly (Harville, Taylor, Tesfai, Xiong, & Buekens, 2011; Larrance, Anastario, & Lawry, 2007).

Men's and women's personal resources as well as the household economy are negatively impacted by flooding. Men who view violence as an acceptable means of persuasion in the absence of alternative resources may use force more frequently as a result of reductions in men's material resources

brought on by disasters (Goode, 1971). Women's personal resource bases may be diminished to the point where they are unable to support themselves and become more dependent on their partners (Kalmuss & Straus, 1982). Changes in household income may result in financial stress, which raises the level of conflict (Fox, Michael, Alfred & Wyk, 2002). In the wake of a disaster, women may additionally experience more restricted access to friends and extended family. This might happen if catastrophes increase men's desire to monitor their partners' whereabouts, if adverse household economic shocks make it difficult for women to pay for childcare or transportation, or if catastrophes cause the loss of or forced relocation of family and friends.

Disasters may alter habital patterns in a way that raises the risk of violence against women. For instance, if one partner lost a home in a disaster, unmarried couples may be more likely to cohabitate. Unhappy married or cohabiting couples may, however, continue to live together following a disaster if changes to their financial situation prevent one or both partners from leaving the home. Disasters have the potential to limit the options available to public institutions that are intervening to protect vulnerable groups (Fothergill, 1999). This can make it harder for women to leave abusive relationships.

The risk factors for child abuse, such as caregiver stress, food insecurity, poverty, economic hardship, mental health disorders, displacement, family separation, and alcohol and other substance abuse, are increased by natural disasters like flooding (Cerna-Turoff, Fischer, Mayhew, & Devries, 2019). Evidence suggests that family members are most likely to abuse children, with male children more likely to be the target of violence while female children are more likely to suffer serious injuries (Seddighi, Salmani, Javadi, & Seddighi, 2019). Women are more likely to abuse children psychologically than men physically. Domestic violence was one factor contributing to the rise in psychological issues among Indian children and adolescents during this pandemic (Ghosh, Dubey, Chatterjee, & Dubey 2020). Family violence can cause immeasurable harm and have long-lasting effects due to the physical and psychological toll it takes, as well as the suffering it brings from the disaster.

Family Disorganization and Consequence

In Chauhan's opinion (2016), the following factors contribute to a family's value: a process of socialization and life balance; emotional, financial, and social support; cooperation between roles and functions; satisfaction of needs; equality of attitudes and values; unity of purpose; ambition and personal growth; and future plans and support. However, family become disorganized when there is a negative functioning of the family in view of the above mentioned. Children and parents, husbands and wives, and other relationships could all experience conflict. Although not as complex as those between husbands and wives, tensions between children and parents can lead to complex adjustment issues. When the marital bond, which serves as the main support structure for the family is broken, the family breaks down (Ukssay, n. d). According to Hood (what year? cited in Sreekumar, 2017), family disintegration is the breaking of familial bonds. Hood divides family breakups into five (5) categories:

1. Lack of a father-husband or mother-wife role is referred to as illegitimacy in this type of disorder. Illegitimacy is brought on by family members who are unable to carry out their responsibilities, such as the mother and father.
2. Annulment: In this kind of separation, one spouse decides to leave the other, leading to a divorce without carrying out their respective roles' obligations.
3. Vacuum Family: A type of family breakdown in which a couple resides under the same roof but has little communication and lacks the crucial emotional support of one another.

4. One partner's unintentional absence: This kind of separation causes havoc in the family. One or more family members' physical, mental, or emotional disorders are a catastrophe.
5. Divorce is the final stage in the process of a family breaking up. Divorce refers to the severance of family relations or the legal recognition of divorce.

According to Chauhan (2016), marital discord is the cause of family disorganization. This is the dissolution of pacts and loyalty, the dissolution of current relationships, the loss of family consciousness, and the onset of divorce. He cites a number of factors that contribute to disorganization, including changes in status and roles, role diversity, and role conflict; the effects of industrialization and urbanization; economic crises, problems, and tensions; physical and psychological issues; temperaments that are conflictual; unemployment; excessive parental and other family interference; professional tension; age inequality; and variations in cultural environments. The survival and continuity of the family are in jeopardy if they are not organized.

The negative effects of family disorganization on its members include stress, anxiety, and other mental disorders or illnesses, hopelessness, a sense of insecurity and loneliness, low self-esteem, stubbornness, criminal and social evils, emotional and mental disturbance, unemployment, family tension, and physical and psychological issues (Akinlawo & Adetula, 2008; Okunola, 2002; Ekiran, 2006 & Oakley, 2007).

Theoretical Framework: Family Stress Theory

Family Stress theory was developed by Reuben Hill in 1949 when he studied the impact of separations and reunions on families after World War II. To explain the circumstances leading up to a family crisis, he discussed the interactions of a number of variables. A family crisis develops in a predictable way, according to Hill (1958), when A (the event) interacts with B (the family's crisis meeting resources) and C (the definition the family gives to the event), to result in X (the crisis).

Hill's research solidified family crisis as a topic of interest and launched a tradition of theoretical and empirical research into family stress. After Hill's (1949) initial presentation of the ABCX Model, a number of theoretical articles on family stress (e. g. Hill, 1958; Hill and Hanson, 1964) appeared. However, Burr's (1973) adaptation of the ABCX Model and integration of family stress research into a theoretical framework reignited interest in the area and provided the impetus for further theory-building.

Burr focused on factor X, the crisis, as opposed to Hill who focused on factors B and C, contending that there had not been a methodical analysis of how and why the crisis varies. The degree of crisis, variation in the degree of disruption, and disarray that have resulted from a family's inability to stop change in the family system have been redefined as the X factor. Two ideas were thought to be essential to a family's ability to respond to a crisis: (a) vulnerability, or the capacity to withstand the initial impact of a stressor depending on the family's resources; and (b) regenerative power, or the capacity of the family to recover after a crisis.

Within the context of this theory, it can be deduced that flood disaster (A) cause immense stress and upheaval within families. The sudden loss of belongings, displacement from home, and the disruption of daily routines can all contribute to a sense of chaos and disarray. Without factors (B) such as social support networks, access to financial resources, and community cohesion which act as protective factors, it can lead to increased conflict, strained relationships, and even breakdowns in communication (C). This outcome produces family disorganization (X). Thus, it is crucial to recognise the profound effects that flood disasters can have on families and to provide support and resources to help them navigate through this difficult time. By understanding the dynamics of family stress

and its connection to flood disasters, we can work towards building resilience and promoting the well-being of families in the face of adversity.

Methodology

Materials for this study are obtained secondarily from textual works accessed from the internet, national newspapers, reports and materials from the library were also scrutinized to lush the work. These materials were textually analysed with the hope accomplishing the objectives of this work which borders on the nexus between flood disaster and the family disorganization.

Discussions

The Niger Delta terrain which comprises nine (9) states of the federation (Cross River, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Abia, Imo, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Ondo) is highly prone to flooding. This is because the area is the recipient of over 90% of all the water of the Niger-Benue River systems and 100% of all water from streams rising in the Delta Region. It is also bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. The terrain is flat and settlements are along the river systems, hence, the high vulnerable of the area to flooding (NEST, 1991).

Apart from its propensity to displace residents, destroy lives, property and infrastructure, flood also disorganise families. This finding is consistent with the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics Work Group on Disasters, (1995) and Ebata and Borden (1995) which indicated that disasters like flood can cause abnormal functioning in the home. Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta, PIND (2022) reported that as at October 12, 2022, over 3,200 households were displaced in Delta State, the same being applied to other Niger Delta States like Bayelsa, Edo, Imo and Rivers during the 2022 flood. It also reported that over 100 communities were displaced. This occurrence is challenging for the family as it alters its proper functioning and hampers the family's socio-economic and moral support system (Borden, n.d; Gordon et al, 1999). Due to the perennial nature of flooding in the region, almost every year families in the Niger Delta are adversely impacted leading to the increasing rate of family disorganization. This disorganization obviously is reflected in the rise of crime and social vices bedevilling the area (Wokocha, Mark & Obafemi, 2023). This is because the family performs an integral function and when once it is disorganised it leads to all manner of vices in society as it is witnessed in the region (Oyeshola, 2005).

The fact is that flood disasters disrupt the normal functioning of communities and families in Niger Delta region, causing significant stress and trauma. The sudden and unexpected nature of floods lead to a sense of helplessness and fear among family members. The loss of homes, personal belongings, and even loved ones can have a profound impact on individuals and their ability to cope with the aftermath of the disaster, all affecting family cohesion.

Essentially, family disorganization after a flood disaster in the region is birthed by the disruption of social networks and support systems (American Academy of Pediatrics Work Group on Disasters, 1995; Ebata & Borden, 1995). Floods often result in the displacement of families, forcing them to leave their homes and communities. This separation from familiar surroundings and the loss of social connections can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Without the support of extended family, friends, and neighbors, families may struggle to meet their emotional and practical needs, further exacerbating the disorganization within the family unit. Physical displacement/relocation also disrupts the family normal routines, stability, and sense of security within the family unit. It can lead to feelings of disorientation and uncertainty, making it challenging for family members to adjust and maintain a sense of normalcy.

The economic consequences of flood disasters also play a significant role in family disorganization in the Niger Delta. The 2022 flood which was adjudged as the worst in the region destroyed many farmlands, business and other sources of livelihood amounting to trillions of naira (Chukwu, 2022). The destruction of homes and property also lead to financial instability and hardship. In this setting, families face difficulties in accessing basic necessities such as food, water, and healthcare. On a general note, the loss of employment or income-generating opportunities (Yusoff & Kadir, 2017) further compounds the financial strain, making it challenging for families to recover and rebuild their lives. This financial stress causes tension and conflict within families, leading to disorganization and breakdown of relationships.

Expectantly, flood disasters often require families to adapt and take on new roles and responsibilities. For example, parents may need to take on additional tasks related to recovery efforts, such as dealing with insurance claims, coordinating repairs, or finding temporary housing. These changes in roles and responsibilities can create role strain and disrupt the balance within the family, leading to disorganization (Chauhan, 2016).

Another aspect to consider is the psychological impact of flood disasters on family members. Witnessing the destruction and loss caused by floods can result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues (Frankenberg et al., 2008). Individuals may experience symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances, which significantly affect their ability to function within the family unit. Family members may struggle to effectively communicate and support each other during this difficult time. The emotional toll of the disaster can strain relationships, causing family members to withdraw or become irritable, argumentative and engender intimate partner violence, further contributing to family disorganization (Powell & Holleran Steiker, 2012). Also, floods can result in the loss of personal belongings, including cherished possessions and essential documents. This loss can be emotionally devastating for individuals and families. Rebuilding and recovering from such losses can be a lengthy and overwhelming process, which can further disrupt family organization.

Due to the dislocation/displacement caused by flooding children may be sent to live with relatives until the damage from the disaster is repaired. Changes such as these require decisions that are difficult and often emotionally painful for all members of the family. Moreover, these changes often result in a decrease in time spent with children to provide much needed attention, care and support which may snowball into maladjustment and unwholesome development of children. Given the complexity and serious ramifications of these decisions to each family member, it is understandable that the family system may no longer be able to function as it did previously (Gordon, Farberow, & Madia, 1999).

Furthermore, the disruption of education and healthcare services during and after flood disasters can have long-term consequences for families (Bich et al, 2011 cited in Othman et al, 2022). Children may be unable to attend school, leading to a disruption in their education and social development. Lack of access to healthcare facilities and medical services can also have adverse effects on the physical and mental well-being of family members. These disruptions can lead to a loss of routine and stability within the family, further contributing to disorganization.

It is a discovered reality that family disorganization is not only problematic to the social, economic and psychological health of family members but also determines the functionality of the whole society. This points has been corroborated by various researches which indicate that family disorganization in Nigeria and in the Niger Delta have resulted in poor academic performance, violent and criminal behaviour, drug addiction as well as socio-economic issues such as cultism, kidnapping and other related social problems bedevilling the region (Bakare, 2013; Odebode & Fatusi, 2016; Oyeshola,

2005). The tremendous negative effects of family disorganization in Nigeria are more notable compared to that of other countries.

Conclusion

Flood disasters have wide-ranging effects on families, often resulting in psychological, social and economic disorganization of the family. The loss of homes, disruption of social networks, financial strain, psychological trauma, and the disruption of education and healthcare services undermine the harmony, stability and the family support system, leading to disorganization. Recognizing and addressing these factors is crucial in providing support and assistance to families affected by flood disasters. By understanding the impact of flood disasters on family dynamics, policymakers, communities, and aid organizations can work together to mitigate the negative consequences and promote resilience within families.

Recommendations

Since flooding has become a perennial problem that is wreaking havoc and ravaging lives, property, infrastructure, livelihood etc., all adversely affecting the family to the point of disorganizing it, serious attention is required from government, non-governmental organisations and citizen to address the menace headlong. Thus, it is recommended that:

1. **Education and Awareness:** Governments and community organizations should invest in educational campaigns to raise awareness about flood risks and preparedness measures. This includes teaching families about evacuation plans, emergency supplies, and the importance of having an emergency kit readily available.
2. **Early Warning Systems:** Establishing effective early warning systems can provide families with sufficient time to evacuate safely. Governments should invest in advanced technologies such as weather radars and flood monitoring systems to provide accurate and timely information to residents in flood-prone areas.
3. **Community Engagement:** Building strong community networks can play a vital role in curbing family disorganization during flood disasters. Encouraging residents to participate in community organizations, neighborhood watch programs, and emergency response teams can foster a sense of belonging and enhance communication channels.
4. **Clear Communication Channels:** Governments and local authorities should establish clear communication channels to disseminate information before, during, and after flood events. This includes utilizing multiple platforms such as social media, text messages, and public announcements to ensure that families receive accurate and up-to-date information.
5. **Mental Health Support:** Flood disasters can have a significant impact on the mental health of affected individuals and families. Governments should allocate resources to provide mental health support services, including counselling and therapy, to help families cope with trauma and stress.
6. **Temporary Shelter and Basic Necessities:** In the aftermath of a flood disaster, families may lose their homes and belongings. Establishing temporary shelters equipped with basic necessities such as food, water, and hygiene supplies is crucial to ensure the well-being of affected families. Governments and humanitarian organizations should work together to provide immediate assistance and support in these situations.

7. National disaster and emergency policies should be strengthened to facilitate effective disaster preparedness and response. This approach will not only save lives and livelihoods, but it will equally reduce vulnerability to flood menace.

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