

## **ABSTRACT**

### **People's Vulnerability Dimensions to Disaster Risk: The Case of Flooding in Adama District, East Shawa Zone, Oromia Region**

**By**

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The central objective of the study was to identify causes of people's vulnerability to flood risk in the flood zone of Adama District. While its specific research objectives were to identify the underlying and immediate causes of flooding in the study area; to discover root causes and dynamic pressures which let people to unsafe conditions; to explore the existing local coping strategies and mitigation practices; and to examine whether there are policies that would improve their livelihood. To achieve these objectives, two flood prone *kebeles* were deliberately selected and household survey; FGD, and KIG were conducted. Secondary data were also collected from pertinent bodies. The data were analyzed using SPSS.

The immediate cause of flooding explored is overflow of Awash River due to spilling/discharge/overflow of Koka Dam reservoir during rainy seasons. Even though the severity of the flood hazard varies, it occurs every year since 1995. Other causes the flooding include siltation of the reservoir, poor soil and water conservation practices, decrease of vegetation coverage, population pressure, deforestation, expansion of farmland, lack of land use policy, costly nature of siltation removal and prevention, poor forecasting capacity, and global climate change which caused irregularity of rainfall. Elements at risk include people, farmland, crops, environment, grazing land, livestock, bridges and roads, irrigation schemes, large farm sites and factories in the district and neighboring districts, and in general the livelihood resource base of the respondents.

Immediate cause of the vulnerability is location of livelihood resource base of households' for instance farmland of the households in risk zone due to shortage of farmland induced by population pressure. Demand of renting-in land and its availability only in the risk zone and temptation of high return from the flooding area are among the dynamic pressures which let people to unsafe area. Poor forecasting capacity, recurrent flooding itself which is economically weakening the households, less diversified income sources, poor economic status to afford prevention/mitigation activities, absence of saving and credit institution/micro-credit, poor saving culture of the households, population pressure, economic quest to supply electric to the nation, lack of risk transfer strategies in the area. In addition, the communities feel powerlessness. Likewise, the people are in the risk due to lack of options/alternatives.

Existing coping strategies in the communities include decreasing size of meals, eating relatively cheap food items, borrowing money from neighbors, not visiting health professionals even when required, Selling livestock, migration of able household members to neighboring towns to look for money, engaging on other unaffected households farm as daily laborer, withdrawing children from school, postponing social commitments like wedding ceremony to relatively good years, selling household productive equipment like agricultural tools, selling drought oxen, renting-out farm land with cheap price to better-off households, and borrow money from better-off households with interest (araxa).

Poor implementation status of the National Policy on disaster Prevention and Management (response and preparedness has got more attention and implementation than other aspects such as addressing underlying cause roots of vulnerability and hazard) and tendency of the policy to focus on certain hazards like drought could also be mentioned as underlying causes of people's vulnerability to flood hazard as it is not addressing risks. Developing land use policy, monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, capacity building of forecasting institutions, family planning to check population pressure, afforestation, availing access of livelihood resources in the safe area, availing access like micro-credit, insurance, and saving and credit institutions, improved land management are among the recommended points.