

**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT  
IN UGANDA.  
A CASE STUDY OF TESO SUB REGION**

**BY  
SAFARI K. FRED  
BMC/3689/32/DF**

**SUPERVISOR  
MR. SIMON PETER ONGODIA**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL  
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF A  
DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION OF KAMPALA  
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY.**


**SEPTEMBER 2007**

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my parents Mr. Daniel Safari Ngowa and Mrs. Joyce Shida Ngowa for all their abided effort and support for my education for all the years up to this level.

## APPROVAL


This research report by SAFARI K. FRED, which has been written under the title "**The Role of the media in the management of disaster in Uganda, case study of Teso sub region**" and has been supervised by me, is now ready for submission with my approval.

SUPERVISOR:..... SPONGODU  
SIGN:.....   
DATE:..... 31 OCTOBER 2007

## DECLARATION:

I SAFARI K. FRED, declare that this research report is original and is from my findings and has never been submitted for the same award in any institution of higher learning.

NAME: SAFARI KADHULLA FRED

SIGN: 

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: S P O N G O D U

SIGN: 

DATE: 31 October 2007

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I would like to congratulate those who positively contributed toward the completion of this research work. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr Ongodia whose contribution through supervision by way of guidance and their patience made this report a success. Great thanks go to my father Mr. Daniel Safari Ngowa who endeavoured to finance this research work, which made it too to be successfully accomplished despite the many challenges. I cannot also forget my friends Mr. Dennis Wandera, Mr. Francis Waweru, Mr. Eric Kariuki, and Mr. Erick Bashengezi and to all others whom I haven't mentioned for the encouragement they gave me which boosted my morale.

My appreciation also goes to all management and staff of KIU especially those in the faculty of social sciences whose unlimited effort made this report a success.

May God bless you all.

## **ABSTRACT:**

This study focused on the impact of the media in Uganda on the management of disaster in Uganda, taking Teso region as the case study. The region covers the districts of Soroti, Kumi, Bukedia, Amuria and Kaberamaido. The last one month has seen economic activity in most of the region almost halting because of the heavy rainfall, estimated by the weather authorities to be the heaviest in the last thirty years.

The Development has attracted a lot of media attention from Uganda and beyond, and opened up debate on the role of government in managing disasters in Uganda vis a viz, the role of the press.

For this reason, the researcher developed interest in the survey into the present situation about the role of government wanting specifically to do an assessment of the extent to which the press has energised interest in the disaster.

The main theme for undertaking the study was to establish the role the press has played in focusing interest and attention to the regions affected by the disaster.

The study will be of benefit to government and the entire media fraternity as well as the entire Ugandan public, by way of highlighting how government can efficiently handle situations like this in the future.

Therefore, in order to achieve the aim of the research, the hypothesis put forward was: **'the media has played a positive role in the management of disaster in Uganda.'**

The research report was sectioned into five chapters.

**Chapter 1** dealt with the general introduction of the topic.

**Chapter 2** gave the review of related literature extracted from various publications.

**Chapter 3** presented the design and methods used in the data collection.

**Chapter 4** concentrated on the data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

**Chapter 5** summarized the research report by presenting it discussion, conclusion and recommendation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Dedication:.....	1.
Approval:.....	3.
Declaration:.....	5.
Acknowledgement:.....	7.
Abstract:.....	9.
Table of contents:.....	10.

### CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction.....	12.
1.1 Background to the study.....	12.
1.2 Statement of the problem:.....	13.
1.3 Purpose of the study:.....	14.
1.4 Significance of the study:.....	15
1.5 Scope of the study...../...	15
1.6 Research questions .....	16.

### CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Review of related literature:.....	17.
2.2 Hypothesis.....	

### CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology used to gather information.....	18.
---	-----



3.1 Research design..... 18  
3.2 Sample design ..... 19.  
3.3 Scope of study ..... 19.  
3.4 Limitations of the study..... 21.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

4.0 Data presentation, analysis and interpretation..... 22.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

5.0 Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation..... 30.  
5.1 Introduction..... 30.  
5.2 Relationship between systems and performance..... 31.  
5.3 Costs related disaster management..... 31.  
5.4 Role of the media..... 32.  
5.5 Recommendations..... 33.

Budget.....

Appendices.....

Appendix one.....

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter of the research report portrayed the design of the study carried out on “**the role of the media in the management of disaster in Uganda**”. It also covered the statement of the problem, the purpose, the significance and the scope of the study. The research work covered a period of study from Jan to March 2007.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The geo Teso is located in the eastern part of Uganda, bordered by Karamoja in the northeast, and Lango in the North West. To the south, Bugisu borders the region.

The region is home to iteso and the kumam, a group of nilotic speaking peoples, whose roots can be traced back, according to folklore, to the Ethiopian highlands. Their way of life is a mixture of traditional animal husbandry, and peasantry. the people in the region are a peaceful lot who have however had to suffer the brunt of incursions by their traditional enemies and neighbours, the karamojong, and most recently the LRA.

Government has put in place well planned strategies to secure the region by recruiting a local militia commonly known as the

`arrow-boys'. This has led to relative peace in the region, which has led to the locals returning back to their homes away from the concentration camps. This `honeymoon` has however been short lived by the current torrential rains that have caused may hem in the region, literally grinding economic activity to a halt. Government response to the disaster has been fair, culminating in the recent declaration of the region as a disaster area. Pundits however think that government response has been less than appropriate, leading the researcher to asses whether the press has done enough to attract government attention to the disaster, and whether therefore the media has a role in such situations in the future.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In this sub chapter of the research report, the researcher has pointed out some of his experiences with the topic under study, which required investigation through this research.

Basing on the prior data obtained from the region, the researcher discovered that government has tried through the ministry of disaster preparedness to address the plight of the people affected by the floods. The assistance has mainly been in form food medicine and technical assistance to keep the roads barely passable. This has however been very pathetic, ``too little, too late' according to Soroti woman MP, Alice Alaso.

This has led the researcher to ask why a whole ministry of disaster preparedness, well structured and facilitated by government could have failed to predict this level of disaster before hand. Do they have an early warning system, do they have the technical ability to respond to disasters of this magnitude. And even then? Why did it take the ministry too long to respond? Did the press play any role in `jump starting` government to take action?

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This research was carried out to establish the following objectives.

- i. The effect the media has on the performance of government in disaster management.
- ii. The effect that the recent/ on going floods have had on the economic activity in the Teso sub region.
- iii. The problems faced the ministry of disaster preparedness in the management of disasters in Uganda.

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research study had the following significance;

- i. To equip the researcher with the knowledge and skills of data collection.
- ii. To produce a research paper that will be used by other scholars as a reference.

- iii. To enable the researcher get a degree in mass communication.
- iv. To expose the researcher to problem identification in different situations as this would be useful to him when gets to the field.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted to cover the period ranging from August to September 2007 in Soroti. The study included peasants in the villages of Gweri Atiira Asamuk and Ajeluk, a few of the counties most affected by the disaster in Soroti district. It also included interviews with the staff and councillors of the district headquarters.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the disaster management systems employed by the ministry of disaster preparedness?
- What is the relationship between the media and the government in disaster management?
- What is the role of the media in disaster preparedness in Uganda?

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY USED TO GATHER INFORMATION:**

This section focuses on data collection methods, which were used, and how they were analysed to reveal existing relationships.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research was carried out in Teso sub region in the villages of Gweri Atiira Asamuk and Ajeluk. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain data about the current flooding and the available management systems employed by the ministry of disaster preparedness. The researcher used descriptive and explanatory research designs based on the results from the questionnaires and interviews designed to collect data.

#### **3.2 SAMPLE DESIGN:**

The sample was selected from villages that were had hit by the floods. Respondents were also taken from the ministry of disaster preparedness.

### 3.2.1 Sample Size:

The study took 11 respondents from the different villages.

**Table 2: The table shows the distribution of numbers of respondents.**

Village	Number of respondents
GWERI	5
ASAMUK	8
ATIIRA	6
AJELUK	4
TOTAL	23

*Source: Primary Data.*

### 3.2.2 DATA COLLECTION

Under data collection, the source of data, method and instrument used were discussed.

Accordingly, data was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data included,



observation whereby the researcher directly observed what was going on in the villages, questionnaires and interviews. Among the secondary sources of data was information got from the ministry headquarters.

### **3.2.3 Data collection and Analysis:**

After the data was collected, it was analysed and scrutinised to eliminate all possible errors to ensure consistence and accuracy. The data was processed, analysed and tabulated.

## **3.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **3.3.1 Subject Scope**

The research was focused on how the media has covered the recent floods and what impact if any it has had on the management of the floods in the Teso sub region

### **3.3.2 Time Scope**

The research covered the period at the end of August and the beginning of September.

### **3.3.3 Area Scope**

The research was carried out in Soroti in the counties of Gweri Atiira Asamuk and Ajeluk. Emphasis was on whether the media coverage has had an impact on the efficiency of the existing disaster management system by the line ministry.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

- The researcher lacked funds especially for travelling and gathering relevant data and information.
- In addition, information was not easily available since the line ministry is relatively new..
- Time was also limited because of pending course work tests and final examinations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main objective of this section is to present and discuss the researcher's findings. The findings were according to the researcher's objectives.

#### 4.0.1 Table 3: Response according to Gender

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	15	65
Female	8	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

65% of the respondents were male and only 35% were female.

#### 4.0.2 Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	5	22

30-35	10	43
35-40	5	22
45 and above	3	13
Total	23	100

Source: Primary data

According to the analysis, most respondents were between 30 – 35 years, which accounted for 43%, 13% above 45 years and the rest sharing out 22% each.

#### 4.0.3 Table 5: Level of Education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Primary level	18	78
Secondary level	4	18
Diploma or other	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

Most of the respondents, accounting for 78% were primary dropouts. 18% had secondary school education while only one person was found to possess a diploma.

#### 4.0.4 Table 7: Type of Media Studied.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Print	3	50
Electronic	2	33

Other	1	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

50% of the respondents stated that the print media, notably the local newspaper known as ETOP. The New Vision was mentioned severally, does the most pronounced coverage. This was attributed to the ability of the respondents to appreciate the language in which the newspaper is printed. The electronic media also featured prominently accounting for 33% of the total coverage.

#### **4.0.5 Table 8: Systems of Disaster Management.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Early warning	1	8
Rapid response	2	16
Relief	9	68
Resettlement	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

68% of the findings stated that relief items were fairly adequate and efficient compared to early warning and resettlement, which at 8% each, accounted for the lowest ministerial disaster systems recorded. At 16%, rapid response fared fairly well in the interview.

The inefficiency of early warning systems and resettlement systems contributed to the probable ineffectiveness of the ministry disaster management system.

#### 4.0.6 Table 9: Response after Disaster

Response	Frequency	Percentage
After three weeks	8	73
Once a month	2	18
Once a week	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

Responses in relation to response rate and speed of government interventions were varied. From the analysis table above it came out clearly that government intervention mechanisms always come in late. Of the 11 people interviewed, 8 of them, representing 73% of the total response rate confirmed this fear. Ministry officials that the researcher managed to reach attributed this to the several logistical problems that the ministry is faced with.

This shows the ineffectiveness of the government's disaster management mechanisms and systems used and as such addressing the first objective of the research.

#### 4.0.7 Table 10: Effectiveness of media types used

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Print	12	63
Electronic	6	32
Other	1	5
	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

63% of the respondents pointed to the print media as the most prominent method of coverage of the disaster. This was as compared to the electronic media usage that accounted for 32%. Other rudimentary methods were also used to cover the disaster e.g. OB vans.

#### 4.0.8 Table II: Effectiveness of government and the press intervention mechanisms.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Perfect	1	9
Very good	4	36
Fair	6	55
Poor	0	0

<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>
--------------	-----------	------------

Source: Primary Data

According to the analysis, 55% of the respondents believed that the government disaster mechanisms were fairly adequate as opposed to 36% who were satisfied with the government intervention mechanisms. From the analysis, it is clear that the press and the government interventions were less than adequate.

#### 4.0.9 Table 12: Regularity of the press coverage and the government intervention mechanisms.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Regular	7	64
Irregular	4	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

The interventions were mostly regular, which accounted for 64%. This situation is a manifestation of how the government has reacted this time around, which resulted in the recent declaration of the area as a disaster area. Despite this however, 36% of the respondents still thought that the interventions were less than adequate.

#### 4.0.10 Table 15 Rank of factors

Response Rate	y	x	Rank	Rank	d	d <sup>2</sup>
---------------	---	---	------	------	---	----------------



			Y	X		
Great extent	73	33	3	2	1	1
Less extent	20	57	2	3	-1	1
Not at all	7	10	1	1	0	0
Total	100	100	6	6	-	2

Source: Primary Data

Y = Government Interventions.

X = Press Interventions.

Using spearman's rank analysis correlation,

$$R = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

$$1 - \frac{6*2}{7(49-1)}$$

$$1 - 12/60 = 0.8, 0.8*100 = 80\%$$

According to the analysis, there is a strong relationship between press and government intervention systems and the management of disasters in Uganda. This relationship accounts for an 80% extent. By any standard, this is a strong positive relationship. This addresses the second objective of the study and establishes the relationship between media and government intervention systems and disaster management practices. However, other factors also

contributed to organisational performance though to a small extent.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to research findings, the print media was the most commonly used tool to cover the disasters in Uganda. Most of the respondents echoed this sentiment in the interviews conducted in the Teso sub region. The study also confirmed the role of the press in highlighting the plight of the victims of the disaster and hence attracting the attention of government and other donor agencies. And indeed, it is this role that eventually set the stage for the declaration of the region as a disaster area.

## **5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYSTEMS AND PERFORMANCE**

The researcher established that there is a strong relationship between the media systems and the government. This goes ahead to fortify the argument that the press is actually the `forth estate`.

The vibrant media system if properly handled and managed can act as an effective tool of managing disasters in the country, because it takes the role of the un official `whistle blower` that directs public opinion on the best disaster management practice.

## **5.3 COSTS RELATED DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

According to research findings, the ministry incurred a lot of costs in the management of disaster. These include costs of running the ministry, costs of publicity, rapid response expenses, costs of resettlement, transportation, relief food, among others.

These were significantly high, as compared to the existing budget, which could explain the poor performance of the ministry over the past few years.

It was further established that almost 40% of the ministry's budget is donor funded, meaning that most of the funds are tied. The ministry's hands are therefore tied at certain times since spending the funds on unauthorised expenses would amount to breach of the ministry-donor relationship.

In fact, this explains why the ministry has gone on a worldwide fund raising campaign to raise additional funds to supplement the meagre ministry resources.

#### **5.4 ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

It was established that the ministry depended on the media both print and electronic in pursuing its agenda. This had a tremendous impact on performance and efficiency of the ministry.

The ministry should therefore strive to cultivate a smooth relationship with the press so as to take advantage of the `whistle blower` capability that it offers.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were suggested basing on the study so as to improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of the ministry's disaster management function.

The ministry should strengthen its disaster management systems and probably introduce new methods.

Coordinating and linking it with metrological department should spruce up the ministry's early warning systems. Staff should be sponsored for further training in modern early warning systems. Government should specifically allocate more funding in this area.

The ministry's rapid response mechanism should be revamped and equipped with the necessary machinery to enable quicker response to disasters whenever and wherever they occur.

The ministry should constitute an arm or department in each district head quarters to act as a liaison office and each of the districts should constitute a disaster management committee.