

# Social Work Services and Flood Disaster Victims Recovery in Cross River State, Nigeria

Betebekeh, Kendery Akongfe & Atuaka Eunice Bedaungielushuye

Disaster Unit, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Calabar, Cross River, Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.1215000138P>

Received: 15 August 2025; Revised: 24 August 2025; Accepted: 28 August 2025; Published: 03 October 2025

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State, Nigeria. One research question, one research objective and one research hypothesis were used to guide the study. Literature review was drawn from both domestic and foreign works in relation to the topic and there were also both empirical and theoretical in context. This study relied on one related theory viz: problem-solving theory. The explanatory sequential design was adopted for this study. The study population was 600;382 was taken to represent the study sample while the stratified and purposive sampling technique were utilized for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to perform the statistical testing of  $H_{01}$  at 0.05 level of significance. Data for the study were obtained using questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs). The findings of the study uncover that; there is a significant relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery. On the basis of this, it was concluded that social work services have a significant role in flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State. Based on the strength of the finding and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that social workers should be empowered to adequately involve more in flood disaster victims' recovery process.

**Keywords:** Social work, flood, disaster, victim, recovery.

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the fact, flood disaster, causes multifaceted damage on the emotional, physical, economic and social level. Social work services are essential in helping flood disaster victims receive the resources they need. As stated by the (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2021). Social work services crucial role in assisting with flood disaster victims' recovery efforts in the restoration of public health, healthcare and social services networks to enhance the ability to recover, maintain good health and improve the overall welfare of individuals and communities affected by flood disaster (Dominelli, 2008).

Critically, social workers must possess the capability to address flood disaster as the most common, frequent and devastating form of natural disaster globally, in Nigeria and Cross River State to be specific. Social workers specializing in disaster managements are specifically prepared to provide tailored assistance to flood disaster victims: These practitioners usually fulfill these expectations by employing targeted victims' assistance strategies before, during and after a flood disaster has occurred. Both economically and socially disadvantaged groups face high level of risk during and after a flood disaster. According to (FEMA, 2021), individuals, families and communities that are economically disadvantaged including those with low wealth, children, older adults, people with disabilities and racial and ethnic minorities, experiences a higher level of negative impact during flood disasters. Due to those pervasive, pre-existing issues, social workers must employ inventive, problem-solving strategies to effectively assist and rehabilitate flood disaster victims (Quarantelli, 2023).

Effective flood disaster management victims and recovery comprises of multiple critical components, including risk assessment, early warning systems, emergency response, victims' rehabilitation, resource mobilization and community engagement (Quarantelli, 2023). By working together and adopting comprehensive flood disaster risk reduction plans victims can better be responded to and recover from flood disaster, eventually saving lives and lowering the economic and social consequences of flood disaster (Kathleen, 2020)

## **Statement of the problem**

Flood disaster by their nature grossly affects the social functioning of individuals, families and communities globally and is therefore a concern for social work. Climate change and global warming as well as other factors have led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of flood disaster. According to the Emergency Event Database EMT-DAT (2022), there were 387 flood disasters globally in 2022 that claimed 30,704 lives and has an impact on 185 million people. The number of economic damages was about US & 223.8billion (Betebekeh, 2024).

The frequent and peculiar natural disaster in Nigeria is flood disaster, between 2010 and 2023 flood disaster accounts for a total of 1,151 deaths. The worst case of flood disaster in Nigeria is that of 2012 5<sup>th</sup> November, which killed 363 people and displaced more than 2.1 million others (National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, 2023). In 2022 according to data from the Federal government of Nigeria, the floods caused more than 1.4 million people to be displaced over 603 deaths and more than 2,400 injuries. A total of 332,327 hectares of land have also been impacted along with 82,035 homes (Oguntola, 2022).

Between 1990 and 2022, Cross River State have witnessed floods that have displace over 1,000,000 people and destroyed several farmlands etc (Oguntola, 2022). In 2021 NEMA identified 10 local government areas in Cross River State that are flood prone regions, and to LGAs as extremely flood risk regions. These LGAs include; Odukpani, Yakurr, Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo, Obubra, Bakassi, Ogoja, Biase, Etung and Ikom while the two highly probable LGAs are Calabar south and Abi. The effects of flood disaster in Cross River State include destruction of dwelling places and means of livelihood, health and education, access to electricity and portable water, accessibility to movement and general limitation to human rights (Matthew, 2023). Despite the efforts put in place to mitigate flood disaster in Nigeria as well as Cross River State in particular, flood disaster still occurs due to lack of resources, climate change, population growth and urbanization, environmental degradation, limited awareness and education and lack of governance policy implementation (Mashi, Ogenejabor, & Inkani, 2019).

Flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State is characterized response phase alone. Governments and non-governmental organizations saddled with flood disaster victims' recovery do not involve professional and certified social workers in victims' recovery process due to lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of social work services in flood disaster victims' recovery among policy makers, stakeholders, individual, families and communities. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to proffer solutions as well as policy measures to address the issue of the discourse.

## **Research questions**

Do social work services have any significant relationship with flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State?

## **Objectives of the study**

To ascertain the level of relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State.

## **Statement of hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social work service in the society**

It is clear that social work services are frequently misinterpreted or ignored. Social work services have traditionally played numerous important roles in the society by addressing the needs and wellbeing of individual, families and communities including psychological first aid, crisis management and long-term

community construction (Dominelli, 2015). He also emphasized that, despite the relative invisibility, social work services are ideally suited to interpret the flood disaster context, advocate for effective services and provisioned leadership in crucial collaboration among institutions and organizations. The primary goal of social work services is to assist individuals, families and communities in coping with various social, emotional, economical and practical challenges they may face (Bess & Collins, 2014). Social workers often work with vulnerable populations, such as children and families at risk, individuals experiencing mental health issues, older adults, people with disabilities and individuals, families and communities affected by flood disaster as well as poverty, violence or substance abuse (Cooper & Briggs, 2014). Social work services primarily intervene in two different methods; firstly, through micro-level activities that directly benefits the psycho-social health of specific victims. Secondly, they address unmet requirements including providing temporary housing and access to relief services as well as macro-level organization and governance of long-term community-based recovery programs, helping to restore affected communities to their pre-flood disaster state (Barney, 2019).

### **Social work services and flood disaster victim's recovery**

Once a flood disaster has passed, victims recovery efforts become paramount. Emergency preparedness plans encompass strategies for facilitating post-disaster recovery by addressing immediate needs and long-term reconstruction goals (Mhlanga, Muzingili & Mpambole, 2019). Immediate flood disaster victims' recovery efforts focus on providing essential services like temporary shelters, food distribution centers, medical assistance centres and mental health support for affected individuals. Additionally, these plans outline mechanisms for accurately assessing damages incurred during an emergency (Betebekeh, 2024). This information is vital in security government or international organization financial aid to support long-term reconstruction projects to rebuild infrastructure and revitalize local economies.

Victim's recovery period comes immediately after the flood disaster events. Individuals, families and communities affected by flood disaster are expected to go through certain and necessary number of activities aimed at restoring lives and infrastructure that support them (National Association of Social Workers, 2015). Victims' recovery activities continue until all systems returns to normalcy or improved situation. Victims' recovery could be both short-term and long-term and there are quite a number of social work services in the victims' recovery process (Hay & Pascoe, Henley, Knight, Stewart & Radak, 2023). Social workers support the reestablishment of livelihood that may have been disrupted by the flood disaster. This includes providing vocational training, access to credit and microfinance, job placement assistance and support for small scale business development (International Federation of Social Workers, 2020).

Social workers through their services continue to provide psychological support to flood disaster victims through the recovery process (Barney, 2019). This includes implementing support group, organizing community events and promoting activities that foster capacity building and cohesion.

Victim's advocacy is also very imperative in flood disaster victim's recovery. It is evident that, flood disaster is habitually accompanied by devastating effects on human lives such as poor access to basic services and discrimination. Flood disaster often makes disadvantaged members of the society more vulnerable and marginalized thereby worsening their situation (Machimbidza, et al 2022). Mhlanga et al (2019) noted that flood disaster impact depressingly on service provision and the consequences undermines access to basic services such as health, education, food, water and sanitation which exposes the victims to streaming human rights and social justice issues to the limits when it comes to climate change and flood disaster. Nyahunda Happy (2019), found that social work with the use of justice skills deals with several issues of injustice by stimulating equal distribution of resources and advocating for social change during and after flood disaster event.

This is a very important indicator in victims' recovery and flood disaster management phases as a whole. This is aimed at complimenting the social work services and the mitigation victim rehabilitation and response phases. In that light, it is established that monitoring and evaluating all the efforts laid in trying to curb the effects climate extremes or flood disaster are all part of social work services (Betebekeh, 2024). Social work services involve planning and educating flood disaster victims at the initial stages victims' recovery process

thereby warranting the need for social work in monitoring the effectiveness of their plans in order to ascertain if their services achieved the targeted goals (Goelitz & Stewart-Khan, 2013).

Overall, social work services during flood disaster victims' recovery; victims' rehabilitation, counseling and therapy, immediate response efforts and long-term victims' recovery support. By addressing the physical, psychological and social needs of flood disaster victims as well as promoting resilience and facilitating victims' recovery and rebuilding process.

## Theoretical framework

### Problem solving model

The problem-solving model was developed by a distinguished social work author, Christian and education Helen Harris Perlman in the 1950s. Problem solving model is generally utilized to help an individual adequately identify, generate alternatives, evaluate options then implement the most promising solution.

The problem-solving model used 6-steps like; problem definition: one must first clearly identify and comprehend the issues that is now being faced. Knowledge gathering: collecting pertinent data, facts and background knowledge about the situation. Generating alternatives: brainstorming and examining several possible answers or approaches to the problem. Assessing alternatives: examining the advantages and disadvantages of each possible resolution, taking into account aspects such as validity, expense and efficacy. Implementation: selecting and implementing the most probable solution. Monitoring and evaluation: consistently assessing the efficiency of the selected solution and making necessary modifications.

The problem-solving model can be utilized to support the recovery efforts of flood disaster victims through the following key steps:

- i. **Problem identification:** Analyzing the effects of the flood disaster on individuals, families and communities (Patron, 2023)
- ii. **Assessment and analysis:** Collecting information on the needs and challenges encountered by flood victims, including their physical, emotional and psychological requirements
- iii. **Goal setting:** Defining specific goals and objectives for recovery actions such as securing shelter, food and emotional assistance (Dominelli, 2012).
- iv. **Intervention:** Executing evidence-based strategies, like counseling, case management and community development initiatives (Rosenberg & Kim, 2015).
- v. **Evaluation:** Regularly assessing the success of recovery initiatives and making necessary adjustments (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, 2018).

The problem-solving model can assist social workers during flood disaster victims' recovery to pinpoint and address the unique needs and challenges, provide emotional support, counseling and other techniques to alleviate the psychological effect of the flood disaster and finally to collaborate with communities to create long-term recovery plans and approaches (Dominelli, 2012).

## METHODOLOGY

The explanatory sequential design was adopted for this study. The explanatory sequential design is a mix-method research approach where the quantitative data is collected and analyzed then the qualitative data is collected and used to explain the quantitative data further. The study population stood at 600 while 382 was taken to represent the study sample, the stratified and purposive sampling technique were for the study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to perform the statistical testing of the HO at 0.05 level of significance. Data for the study were obtained using questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs).

The quantitative component establishes the extent of the importance of social work services on the various aspects of flood disaster victims in Cross River State, while the qualitative component provides detailed explanation and justifications. The two components are integrated through analysis and interpretation of



research findings, leading to valid conclusions and recommendations. The population of the study of the study consist of 382 adults 18 years and above who are victims of flood disaster and have benefited from social work services through State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and other non-governmental organizations during flood disaster recovery process from two selected LGAs in Cross River State and selected staff from SEMA headquarters.

### **Sample techniques and size**

The study was made of three hundred and eighty-two (382) respondents as a representative sample for the study. A breakdown of the sample size shows that three hundred and fifty-seven (357) representing 93.47% were drawn from two (2) LGAs and twenty-five (25) respondents mirroring 6.54% were drawn from the State Emergency Management Agency. A further breakdown of the sample size indicates that one hundred and seventy-nine (179) respondents representing 46.86% were drawn from Calabar South LGA and one hundred and seventy-eight (178) respondents representing 46.60% were drawn from Abi LGA which formed the quantitative sample size. While twenty (20) respondents representing 5.24% drawn from SEMA staff for focus group discussion and five (5) respondents representing 1.30% drawn from the management staff of SEMA for the in-depth interview which formed the qualitative sample size respectively.

The study adopted the stratified random sampling technique for the quantitative data and the purposive sampling technique for the qualitative data. The purposive sampling technique was employed in choosing the LGAs that are highly prone to flood disaster in Cross River State. In selecting the wards where the copies of questionnaire were administered, the researcher employed the typical case sampling technique. There are twenty-two (22) wards in the two (2) local government areas that make up the study area. A breakdown of these numbers shows that Calabar South LGA has twelve (12) wards while Abi LGA has ten (10) wards. To select the wards for the administration of the questionnaire, the typical case sampling technique was also employed to choose two (2) wards each from the two (2) local government areas selected for the study in Cross River State. However, in choosing the respondents for the study, the stratified random sampling technique was employed. This was done through subgroups who share a similar characteristic and have the same experience and to ensure representation from all the subgroups. The questionnaire entitled: social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery questionnaire (SWSFDVRQ). It is a twenty-two (22) item questionnaire which consist of two (2) sections: A and B.

Section A: this section consists of six (6) items. This section is designed to elicit demographic information about their personal background such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, religion and occupation.

Section B: this section consists of sixteen (16) items on a four-point Likert-scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D), and strongly Disagree (SD). The items assessed the opinion of the participants as it relates to social work services and flood disaster victim recovery. Also, the FGD sessions with SEMA staff in Cross River State consist of ten (10) participants in each of the two (2) FGD sessions. One of the FGD sessions was comprising of SEMA female staff, moderated by the researcher in English language and lasted for one (1) hour twenty (20) minutes.

While the second FGD session was comprising of SEMA male staff, moderated by the researcher in English language and lasted for one (1) hour four (4) minutes. The printed guide for the focus group discussion included a structured set of open-ended questions used to elicit opinions on the research question. The guide consisted of major topical question with suggested follow up questions to address predictable response or prompt unresponsive group. The in-depth interview participants comprise of SEMA management staff in Cross River State.

The IDI was also conducted in English language by the researcher and lasted for forty (40) minutes. Audio recording and extensive notes were taken during the FGD and IDI sessions respectively. The structured interview approach was adopted with predetermined questions in order to elicit in-depth experiences concerning the social work services in the various indices of flood disaster victims' recovery. To maintain confidentiality real names were not used or recorded in the study and all the recordings were destroyed after the study.

The method of data coding involves the process of categorizing and organizing data into meaningful themes and or patterns. A descriptive data coding method was used in order to capture the content or meaning of each piece of data.

## Limitations

The limitation of the study includes but not limited to funding constraints, sample size and language barrier. Another major setback was as a result of very little existing literatures concerning social work services in flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State and Nigeria as a whole. However, the research questions and design of the study was prioritized to maximize the impact of available fun. Alternative sampling technique such as purposive or snowball to reach hard-to-access population. Finally, research experts in the field such as academics and practitioners were engaged to gain deeper insight and guide the research design.

## RESULT

### Demographic data

The demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, religion and occupation were analyzed and interpreted as shown in table 1 below.

The information presented in the table below indicate that out of the 382 respondents, 169 representing 44.2% were males, while 213 respondents representing 55.8% were females. For age demographic characteristics of respondents representing 22.8% fall in between the age of 18-25years. Those between the age brackets of 26-35years were 39 respondents representing 23.3%. The table also described that, 92 respondents representing 24.1% were between the age brackets of 36-45 years. Respondents within the age of 46-55 years were 82 characterizing 21.5%. While 32 respondents depicting 8.3% are of the age range of 56-65 years. As regards marital status of the respondents, 175 respondents representing 45.8% were single, while 141 respondents characterizing 36.9% were married. Moreso, 30 respondents mirroring 7.9% were divorced, 17 respondents depicting 4.5% were widowed, and 19 respondents representing 5.0% were widowers. Regarding the educational qualifications of 382 respondent, 44 respondents representing 11.5% were FSLC holders, 12.9 respondents representing 33.8% were SSCE holders, while 131 respondents representing 34.3% were OND/NCE holders, and 72 respondents characterizing 18.5% were HND/First degree holders. Furthermore, 6 respondents signifying 1.6 fall under the category of others.

In terms of occupation, 69 respondents representing 18.1% are civil servants, 69 respondents characterizing 18.1% are farmers, 69 respondents which pictures 18.1% are traders. Again, 68 respondents representing 17.8% are students, 67 respondents representing 17.5% were unemployed and 40 respondents representing 10.5% had community roles ranging from community chairman, traditional ruler, woman leaders, youths' leaders and clergy men. Pertaining to the religious affiliation of the 382 respondents, 324 respondents characterizing 84.2% are Christians, 6 respondents representing 1.5% were Muslims, while 52 respondents mirroring 13.61% were traditionalist.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	169	44.2
Female	213	55.8
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age		
18-25years	87	22.8
26-35years	89	23.3
36-45years	92	24.1
46-55years	82	21.5
56-65years	32	8.3
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Marital status		
Single	175	45.8
Married	141	36.9
Divorced	30	7.9
Widowed	17	4.5
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Educational qualification		
FSLC	44	11.5
SSCE	129	33.8
OND/NCE	131	34.3
HND/First Degree	72	18.8
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Occupation		
Civil servant	69	18.1
Farming	69	18.1
Trading	69	18.1
Students	68	17.8
Unemployed	67	17.5
Community role	40	10.5
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Religion affiliation		
Christianity	324	82.82
Islam	6	1.57
Traditionalist	52	13.61
Total	<b>382</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

### Test of hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis is social work services, while the dependent variable is flood disaster victims' recovery.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistical technique was employed in testing the hypothesis at  $P < .05$  level of significance with degree of freedom (380) which produced the result show in table below:

Table 3 Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State (N=382)

Source of variation	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum XY$	r	T	Sig.
Social work services	18350	827.866				
Flood disaster victims' recovery	4721	4195.487	1458.999	.783	**	.0000

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The test in table revealed that, the computed t-value of 783 indicates a strong positive relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings discussed that there is a significant relationship between social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery. This finding is unsurprising because social work services play a fundamental role in victims recovery efforts, social workers are essential victims recovery key workers.

This finding corroborates with the study of Abbas & Sulman (2016), which provides useful research evidence that most flood disaster victims who do not need clinical mental health treatment or keep frequently whose requirements are not met by overburdened health system during flood disaster, receive the majority of the psychological support provided during flood disaster victims recovery efforts from social workers. The result of Dominelli (2015), indicate that incorporating the creation and management of a reconstruction plan into the first six months after a flood disaster occurs it is a critical component of social work service in victims' recovery efforts. The goal of social work services in these activities is to guarantee an efficient coping strategy but not to prevent an initial harm on flood disaster victims. Supporting this view Hay and Pascoe (2018) asserted that social work services in flood disaster victims' recovery include accurate assessment of the victims emotional and psychological and physical needs as well as the short- and long-term recovery process.

Social work services are essential for helping flood disaster victims' recovery in addressing both their immediate and long-term needs (Takim, Akah, Eze, Adachi, Betebekeh & Akah, 2025). Social work services in immediate flood disaster victims' recovery efforts include offering of emotional and mental health support to flood disaster victims, ensuring that flood disaster victims receive vital necessities like food, shelter and medical assistance and connecting flood disaster victims with important services including emergency financial aid and temporal housing (Takim, Akah, Eze, Adachi, Betebekeh & Akah, 2025). While the long-term social work services rendered to flood disaster victims are mental health support through providing ongoing counseling and therapy to help flood disaster victims manage, trauma and stress stemming from the flood disaster. Case management which encompasses helping flood disaster victims navigate complex systems to access resources such as government assistance and insurance claims. Advocacy involves social workers supporting the rights and needs of marginalized, low income and the aged flood disaster victims (Takim, Akah, Eze, Adachi, Betebekeh & Akah, 2025). Community rebuilding through promoting the organization of flood disaster victims and support network to foster resilience and recovery (Sammonds 2018).

This finding also aligns with findings of Kathryn & Kathryn (2021), which like the study indicated that social works engage more in flood disaster victims' recovery process through psychosocial support, relocations of victims, care of service user etc. Social work services play a critical role in flood disaster victims' recovery efforts. Their impact is felt through all the aspects of victims' recovery process. In order to elicit more empirical information about social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery first an in-depth interview was conducted with SEMA management staff in Cross River State. Respondent "2" affirmed that:

*Social workers during flood disaster management have a great role to play in victims' recovery, he went further to state that in the recovery policy. SEMA staff and social workers work together that flood disaster victims are emotionally very broken mostly because they do not have anything to rely on that at this stage, they need food disaster victims are emotionally very broken mostly because they do not have anything to rely on that at this stage, they need food, shelter and other palliatives to survive before a long-term recovery process is initiated and all these are the work and functions of social workers.*

In another view and experience, respondent "3" maintained that:

*Social workers during victims' recovery usually provide some services and these services includes providing emotional support through counseling to those who have been psychologically injured helping them cope with grief and the emotional impact of the flood disaster.*

However, with regards to the utilization of social work services during need assessment respondent "2" again maintained that:

*Social work services are utilized in every aspect of needs assessment because they play a pivotal role in collecting relevant information about the flood disaster victims and communities being assessed with theoretical and practical knowledge.*

(IDI, MIX. 28/05/2025. 9.06am).



Focus group discussion was held with SEMA female staff with reference to the role of social work services in victims' recovery. Respondent "F2" opined that:

*Social workers during flood disaster victims' recovery makes public appeals to government, UN agencies, NGOs, civil societies, etc. on behalf of the flood disaster victims to help in providing houses and means of livelihood that have been destroyed with temporal shelters and means of survival, through incentives to help them recover over time.*

Furthermore, the FGD with the SEMA female staff, the respondent "F3" noted that:

*Social workers connect victims with essential resources like food, clothing, shelter and medical care. That social worker during victims' recovery ensures that, the vulnerable people such as the aged, children, women and victims with any form of disabilities are given priority service and assistance*

It was also ascertained by respondent "F7" that:

*Social work services are utilized through conducting of interviews, engage for surveys and use their communication and interpersonal skill to identify needs.*

*That social workers are usually closer to flood disaster victims and often engage them in a congenial discussion in order to ascertain their immediate challenges and the way forward through their professional skill.*

Respondent "F9" relates that:

*Social work services assist in identifying and addressing mental health needs through short term therapy, which helps in reducing the risk of long-term psychological disorder amongst flood disaster victims or their families.*

Convincingly respondents F1, F4, F5, F6, F8 and F10 supported the above respondents in their assertion (FGD, FM. 28/05/2025. 1.42pm).

In furtherance to gain more knowledge/insight about social work services and flood disaster victims' recovery in Cross River State. A focus group discussion was conducted with SEMA male staff, and respondent "M10" noted that:

*Social worker locally described as usually engage flood disaster victims in a holistic rehabilitation process by first providing them the basic needs so as to aid with their rehabilitation and recovery process.*

Respondent "M2" also opined that:

*Social workers also involve in post assessment usually to determine the level and area of intervention as well as the services flood disaster victims require. That they also establish relationships with the victims in order to gather their experiences, needs and concerns. Moreso, the presence of social workers also helps the flood disaster victims feel heard, supported and understanding the challenging time.*

Respondent "M5" further established that:

*Social workers during recovery process usually help the flood disaster victims and the communities affected to put themselves together in order to start a new phase of life. That social workers also assist the victims and families in applying for disaster relief fund and other financial assistance programs through guidance and advocacy to ensure that the cries and needs of the victims and families are being heard by the appropriate authorities or concerned individuals and organizations.*

Respondent "M1" also pointed out that:

*Social workers provide support and assistance to flood disaster victims and the communities during the recovery phase after the flood disaster occurs, that they basically help them access temporary housing, farm product for farmers, farming equipment's and financial resources to rebuild their lives.*

Respondent “M9” also opined that in a different account that:

*Social workers provide mental health assessment and counseling sessions as well as developing long term support group for those who are significantly affected by the flood disaster*

*Social work services usually engage with local communities, government agencies, non-profit organizations and other relevant at stakeholders to gather input and insights on the needs of the victims. That these consultations help identify evolving needs gaps in services and area where additional support may be required. That social workers also monitor and evaluate the needs of the victims throughout the recovery phase and to also assess the impact of flood disaster on the community.*

Respondent M3, M4, M6, M7 and M8 consistently supported the above opinions. (FGD, ML 28/05/2025. 2:27pm).

## CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study. The finding revealed that social work services have a significant relationship with flood disaster victims’ recovery which facilitate victims’ recovery. These services have positively impacted on the recovery of flood disaster victims in Cross River State. The study also revealed that immediately and long-term practical skill render their services to flood disaster victims thereby enhancing their emotional, psychological and physical capabilities to cope with the devastating effect of flood disaster.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the strength of the findings and the conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations were made put forward:

Enhancing collaboration between social workers in Cross River State with state Emergency management Agency and other non-governmental organizations saddled with flood disaster management to boost flood disaster victims recovery, increase funding for flood disaster victims support programs, providing specialized training for social workers on traumatic-informed care and implementing a coordinated referral system to ensure victims receive comprehensive support service such as mental healthcare and conducting regular evacuation to ensure the effectiveness of the services provided social workers.

## REFERENCES

1. Barney, R. (2019). How social workers can use a human rights approach to disasters: Lessons learned from the international community, *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 5-11
2. Betebekeh, K. (2024). Social work services and disaster management in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria. A Ph.D dissertation carried out in the University of Calabar, unpublished.
3. Cooper, L. & Briggs, L. (2014). Do we need specific disaster management education for social work? *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 29(4), 38-7. Available at <https://ro.vow.edu.au/sspapers/1443/>
4. Dominelli, L. (2011). Climate change: social workers’ role and contribution to policy debates and interventions. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 20(4) 430-438.
5. Dominelli, L. (2018). Green social work and the uptake by the Nepal school of social work: Building resilience in disaster stricken communities; in Bracken, L. Ruzczyk H. (eds) *evolving narratives of Hazard and risk; The Gorkha earthquake, Nepal*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
6. Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies (2018) *World Disaster Report*
7. Geolitz, A. & Stewart-Kahn, A. (2013). *From trauma to healing: a social workers guide to working with survivors*. Rutledge/Taylor & Francis Groups
8. Hay, K. Pascoe, M. Henley, L. Knight, F. Stewart, K. & Radak, G. (2023). Social work disaster practice: enhancing skills, community connections and external relationships. *Artearora new Zealand social work*, (1), 60-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anzsinj-vol35iss1lid1011>

9. International federation of social workers (IFSW, 2020). Updated information of IFSW and covid-19; Sage publications. Available at <https://www.ifsw.org/updated-information-on-if-and-the-covid-19virus/> (Accessed 24 June 2025).
10. Machimbizda, D. Nyahunda, L., & Makhubele, J. (2022). The importance of social work role in disaster risk management in Zimbabwe, *Technium Social Services Journal*.27.717-726.10.47577/tssj.v27i1.5554
11. Mashri, A. Ogebenejabor, O., Ikani, I. (2019). Disaster risk and management policies and practice in Nigeria: a critical appraisal of the national emergency management agency act. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, (33) 253-265
12. Mathbor, G. (2007). Enhancing of community preparedness for natural disaster: The role of social work in building social capital for sustainable disaster relief and management. *International social work* (3):357-369 Doi:10.1177/0020872807076049
13. Matthew, O. (2023). Over 2million Nigeria displaced by flood in 2022, says NEMA. *The guardian*.[guardian.ng/new/over2-million-displaced-by-flood-in-2022-say-nema](https://www.guardian.ng/new/over2-million-displaced-by-flood-in-2022-say-nema).
14. Mhalanga, C. Muzingili, T. & Mpambele, M. (2019). Natural disaster in Zimbabwe: The primer of social work profession in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Social Work*, (2) 30-35.
15. National Association of Social Workers (2015). Cultural and linguistic competence in the social work profession. In *social work speaks: National Association of social workers policy statement, 2015-2017* (10<sup>th</sup> ed, 62-67) Washington DC: NASW press.
16. Nyahunda, L. Happy, M. (2019). Challenges faced by rural people in mitigating the effects of climate change in the Mazungunye communal lands, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*. Vol.11,No/a596/Doi:<https://doi.org/10.4102/jamba.VIIIi1.596>
17. Oguntola, T. (2022) 2022 flood: 603 dead, 1.3m displaced across Nigeria. federal government leadership. [Leadership.ng/2022-flood-dead-1.3-displaced-across-nigeria-federal-govt](https://www.leadership.ng/2022-flood-dead-1.3-displaced-across-nigeria-federal-govt).
18. Paton, D. (2003). Disaster preparedness: A social cognitive perspective. *Disaster prevention and management. An International Journal*. 12(3): 210-216 Doi:10.1108/09653560310480686
19. Quarantelli, L. (2023). *Handbook for effective emergency and crisis management*.
20. Takim, O. Akah, P., Eze, S. Adachi, C. Betebekeh, K, & Akah, J. (2025). Enhancing social work services for aged flood victims in Cross River State. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*. XII.1138-1147.10.51244/IJRSI.2025.120500111.