

**DROUGHT AND FAMINE COPING STRATEGIES
AND THE ENVIRONMENT AMONG THE KEIYO
LIVING IN KERIO VALLEY IN KENYA**

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BY

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the drought and famine coping strategies of the Keiyo people living in Kerio valley. It looks at the impacts, frequency and the people's perception of drought and famine and examines the temporal applicability of traditional coping strategies. The methods of study employed were interviewing of key informants (128) and these were selected from different clans in the valley; and officers of Government and Non - Governmental Organizations. Observation and Library research were also used.

It was found that local droughts occurred in Kerio valley almost three times every ten years and had varied effects depending on the intensity and cause. Its occurrence was attributed to god 'Asis', who punished them for their negligence of societal rules. It was also found that the Keiyo had their own indigenous famine coping strategies by which they practised reciprocity and symbiosis with their neighbours and among themselves. They sometimes raided and were also raided by other tribes for stock as one of the coping strategies. The use of these indigenous strategies was found to have declined with time.

External interventions were found to have had some positive impacts on food security though these impacts were not pronounced. There were six Non - Governmental Organizations helping the people in the area and all established themselves in the 1980's. Their contributions were not geared directly towards food security but solving immediate problems of the people, like paying school fees. The Government's effort was mainly through the services of agricultural extension officers.

The study concludes by enumerating the main problems the Keiyo faced in their efforts towards greater food security, like shortage of water for irrigation and other uses and poor communication. The study recommends that for the enhancement of food security in the valley, the area needed not only to be developed sustainably but also the indigenous people to be encouraged to cooperate towards that cause.