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Exploratory Study to Understand the Impact of Flood on the Wellbeing of the Survivors

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Abstract

Floods are among the most frequent and destructive natural disasters, causing extensive physical, social, economic, and psychological consequences for affected communities. While considerable attention is often directed toward infrastructural damage and immediate humanitarian relief, the long-term impact of floods on survivors' mental well-being remains insufficiently explored, particularly in the Indian context. The present exploratory study aimed to understand the impact of the 2025 Punjab floods on the well-being of survivors by examining their lived experiences, psychological challenges, coping strategies, and recovery processes. A descriptive exploratory qualitative research design was adopted. Data were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with three flood survivors aged 15–60 years selected through convenience sampling. Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were maintained throughout the study. The interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis with the support of NVivo software. Five major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Sudden Onslaught and Immediate Disruption, highlighting unexpected destruction, displacement, and disruption of essential services; (2) Lingering Psychological Aftershocks, reflecting persistent fear, anxiety, traumatic memories, and emotional distress; (3) The Power of Community and Mutual Aid, emphasizing the protective role of family, neighbours, NGOs, and community support in facilitating recovery; (4) Acknowledged Government and Systemic Shortfalls, identifying both effective relief measures and infrastructural limitations that intensified the crisis; and (5) Personal Coping and Post-Traumatic Growth, illustrating survivors' resilience through adaptive coping strategies, spirituality, preparedness, and hope. The findings demonstrate that flood-related distress extends far beyond immediate material losses and significantly influences survivors' psychological well-being. At the same time, strong social cohesion and individual resilience serve as critical protective factors promoting recovery. The study underscores the importance of integrating psychosocial support, community-based interventions, and mental health services into disaster preparedness and response policies. Although limited by a small sample size, the research provides valuable insights into the psychosocial experiences of Punjab flood survivors and offers practical implications for future disaster management and mental health interventions.

Keywords: Floods, Psychological Well-being, Community Resilience, Mental Health, Punjab, Thematic Analysis, Disaster Survivors.

Introduction

Background and Context

Natural disasters represent one of the most significant challenges to human well-being and community stability worldwide. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) defines a natural hazard as "a natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage" (UNDRR, 2009, p. 20). Among various natural disasters, flooding has emerged as the most frequent and devastating type of major disaster globally, affecting millions of people annually and causing extensive socioeconomic disruption.

The psychosocial impacts of flood events extend far beyond the immediate physical destruction, creating profound and lasting effects on individuals' mental health, social relationships, and overall well-being. Flooding presents a complex web of stressors that challenge affected populations on multiple levels. While the primary stressor involves the direct experience of being flooded, the secondary stressors that emerge during recovery often prove equally devastating. These secondary impacts include economic hardship from reconstruction costs, displacement from homes and communities, loss of livelihoods, and disruption of social support networks. The cumulative effect of these primary and secondary stressors can overwhelm even the most resilient individuals, leading to significant psychological distress that may persist long after flood water recede.

The interplay between environmental factors and mental health outcomes has been well-documented in disaster literature, emphasizing the need for a multi-faceted approach to understanding the consequences of such events (García et al., 2020). Furthermore, community resilience plays a crucial role in mediating the psychological impacts of disasters, as social support networks can buffer against the adverse effects of trauma (Aldrich, 2012). Given the increasing frequency of climate-related disasters, research indicates that neglecting mental health in the aftermath of disasters can lead to long-term psychological issues, affecting not only individuals but also community cohesion and recovery (Neria et al., 2008).

Global and Regional Context

Flooding has established itself as a significant catastrophic threat across both developed and developing nations. Recent decades have witnessed devastating flood events across the United States, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa, highlighting the universal vulnerability to this natural disaster. The South Asian region, particularly the Indian subcontinent, stands as one of the most vulnerable areas for flood disasters due to its unique geographic location, monsoon-dependent climate, and dense population distribution along river systems.

The region's susceptibility to flooding stems from multiple factors including seasonal monsoon patterns, extensive river networks, and increasing urbanization in flood-prone areas. These geographical and climatic conditions, combined with socioeconomic vulnerabilities, create conditions for widespread flood impacts that affect millions of people across the subcontinent annually.

Punjab's Flood Vulnerability and the 2025 Crisis

Punjab, one of India's most agriculturally productive states and often referred to as the "Granary of India," has experienced recurring flood events that have caused substantial human, economic, and social losses. The state's vulnerability to flooding is primarily attributed to its location in the fertile plains of major river systems including the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi rivers, along with numerous seasonal rivulets. These

waterways, while crucial for the state's agricultural prosperity, become sources of devastation when monsoon rains in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir cause them to swell beyond capacity (BBC News, 2025).

The 2025 floods in Punjab represent one of the region's most devastating natural disasters in nearly four decades, causing widespread destruction across over 1,400 villages in 23 districts. Triggered by unusually heavy monsoon rainfall in upper catchment areas, the crisis was compounded by surplus water releases from major dams including Pong, Ranjit Sagar, and Bhakra. The floodwaters swelled the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej rivers to critical levels, inundating vast farmlands and settlements across the state (BBC News, 2025).

The severely affected districts included Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Pathankot, Kapurthala, and Fazilka, while other districts such as Tarn Taran, Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, Moga, Sangrur, Barnala, Patiala, and SAS Nagar (Mohali) also experienced significant impacts. The agricultural sector, which forms the backbone of Punjab's economy, suffered devastating losses with approximately 3.7 lakh acres of farmland submerged, threatening the livelihoods of millions dependent on farming (Indian Express, 2025; Vision IAS, 2025). Over 3.8 lakh residents were displaced, necessitating large-scale evacuations and relief operations with emergency shelters and food distribution centres established across affected areas. Official data recorded at least 29 fatalities, while the floods severely disrupted normal life through school closures, transportation breakdowns, and health crises linked to waterborne diseases (Wikipedia, 2025; BBC News, 2025)'

Mental Health and Psychosocial Implications

Beyond the immediate physical and economic devastation, the 2025 Punjab floods have profoundly impacted the psychological well-being of affected communities. Survivors have grappled with trauma, loss of livelihood, and uncertainty, which are compounded by the social dislocation caused by displacement. The mental health burden extends beyond individual psychological distress to encompass community-wide disruption of social support systems and traditional ways of life, highlighting the need for comprehensive understanding of how such disasters affect human well-being in the Punjab context.

Research Rationale and Study Objectives

Despite the magnitude of the 2025 Punjab floods and their evident psychological impact on affected populations, there remains a critical gap in systematic research examining the mental health consequences of this disaster. The complex interplay between environmental catastrophe, cultural disruption, and psychological trauma in the Punjab context requires focused investigation to understand how communities experience, process, and recover from such devastating events.

This study addresses this knowledge gap by exploring the lived experiences of flood survivors in Punjab, with particular attention to the psychological challenges, coping mechanisms, and cultural factors that shape mental health outcomes. The research aims to provide evidence-based insights into how flood disasters impact individual well-being and community resilience, informing future disaster preparedness, response strategies, and mental health interventions.

Objective

The following are the objective of the present study.

1. To determine the impact of the flood on lives of Punjab flood survivors.

2. To understand the experiences and wellbeing of Punjab flood survivors

Hypothesis:

H^1: To study whether a flood has significant impact on the wellbeing of Punjab flood survivors.

H^2: To study significant impact of flood experience on wellbeing aged between 15-60 years old.

Review Of literature

A study was done by Lijo Kochakadan Joy et al (2021) on "Learned Helplessness, Psychological Wellbeing, and Pro-environment Care Behaviour among Victims of Frequent Floods in Kerala."

The study was done after the aftermath of floods in 2018 and 2019 in the coastal regions in Kerala. The study examined whether continuous victimization of natural calamities like floods in Kerala leads to the development of learned helplessness and decreased psychological wellbeing among those affected. They studied 374 heads of families in Kerala, selected through Quota Sampling method. They belonged to the following They belonged to the following three groups: (1) flood-affected only once (OFA, n = 124), (2) flood-affected twice (TFA, n = 124), and (3) never flood-affected (NFA, n = 124) households. The key variables of learned helplessness, psychological wellbeing, and pro-environment care behaviour were measured using learned helplessness scale, psychological wellbeing scale, and the environmental behaviour scale, respectively (Joy et al., 2021).

The study found that learned helplessness was found to be high among the TFA group. Psychological wellbeing and pro-environment care behaviour were high among the OFA group as compared with the TFA group. The NFA group had higher learned helplessness in comparison to the OFA group, and psychological wellbeing and pro-environment care behaviour were low when compared with the TFA group (Joy et al., 2021).

The study found that learned helplessness was high among the TFA (Flood affected twice) family heads in Kerala. We found that people who survived a natural disaster once had greater psychological wellbeing, pro-environment care behaviour, and low learned helplessness as compared with the NFA (Never Flood-affected) and TFA groups. Hence, this study provides evidence that surviving a moderate amount of risk is perhaps necessary for better psychological wellbeing and that too many or too few risks in life can be detrimental to good psychological health. Immediate psychological support among victims of natural calamities and periodic examination of well-being and psychological interventions among people who are vulnerable for frequent victimization of natural calamities have to part of disaster management related to natural calamities (Joy et al., 2021).

In another study by Girimallika Borah et al. (2023) on the outcomes of wellbeing in the aftermath of a flood, as well as the interplay of social, institutional, and environmental processes that influence wellbeing.

Eight focused group discussions and 15 key informant interviews were conducted in five villages in the Bongaigaon District of Assam six months after the devastating floods occurred in August 2021. A wide range of negative psychological health outcomes is recorded among adults: sadness leading to the deterioration of health, depression, concern for children leading to hopelessness, worry and frustration, tension and powerlessness, psychotic depressed state, worthlessness, paranoia, and anxiety with substance abuse. Positive outcomes such as helplessness leading to camaraderie and resilience were reported. Although the study's participants were over the age of 18 years, parents and relatives stated that children's psychological health had suffered; negative traits such as anger, irritation, apprehension and worry were

observed among children. The study uncovered four themes: institutions and agencies, social capital, secondary stressors during recovery, and resources, as well as how these four aspects interact to impact wellbeing.

The study identifies several formal and informal networks of support that were already in place or developed during the flood. After a flood, in addition to formal disaster agencies (National Disaster Response Force, medical clinics, and relief camps), the local community and neighbourhood, as well as relatives and kin, offer coping mechanisms. However, as time goes on, the support diminishes while routine and new sources of stress (secondary stressors) continue to accumulate, leading to chronic psychological stress that has lasted longer than six months. In hindsight, flood-stricken people evaluate the authorities' inaction or delayed response at various stages, beginning with the institutional inability to support a reliable early warning system and a strong structural measure to protect them from flooding after suffering significant loss following a major flood. Thus, even if the primary trigger is a natural occurrence, mental health issues worsen because of feelings of victimhood amongst the flood-stricken residents due to inadequate assistance, not receiving any early warning, and institutional apathy towards bringing in a permanent solution to long standing recurring problems.

Diwash Gahatraj is a freelance journalist based in Siliguri, India who reported in an article, “Mental Health after India’s Glacial Floods” in Think Global Health (January 6,2025) about the small town of Singtam, nestled beside the Teesta River in Sikkim, India. Parts of his articles are shared as it is as it carries valuable information both about the Survivor’s experiences and Mental Health professionals who worked with the survivors of floods.

He shared a case about Neelam Nandi (Name Changed) who “struggles with anxiety every time she hears heavy rainfalls or warning sirens. For her, these sounds are haunting reminders of the night the banks of the Teesta River burst, submerging her home in deluge and darkness.

The Nandi family is among the few survivors of a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) that hit the Himalayan state of Sikkim when heavy rainfall caused the overflow of South Lhonak Lake in the early hours of October 4, 2023. The flood caused widespread destruction, government reports indicating that it claimed 55 lives and affected an estimated 80,000 people across 100 villages. Now, more than a year later, Sikkim's residents continue to suffer unseen damage from the disaster—its mental health impact.

"It's been over a year, and my daughter still can't attend school or lead a normal life. She's on medication and has suffered multiple panic attacks where she's lost consciousness," explains Neelam's mother, Preeti Nandi*. "My husband rescued her and two other children when water started entering our rented house," she recalls. Preeti also suffers from anxiety following the flood and now needs medication and counselling from doctors at Singtam District Hospital to cope.

"The flood not only reshaped the region's physical landscape but also left a lasting impact on the mental health of its survivors," says Dr. Seema*, a psychiatrist from Singtam District Hospital.

Both Neelam and her mother have been under Seema's care for the past year. The doctor recounted the details:

I met the Nandi family at a relief camp set up for flood victims who had lost their homes. Many of the men and women there reported experiencing fear, panic, and restlessness after the disaster. However, most of the patients from the camp did not return for follow-up care after being resettled. Neelam and Preeti, on the other hand, continue to receive counselling and medication.

According to Seema, climate disruption and resettlement has hindered the collection of definitive data on the number of flood victims who suffered from psychological issues—such as anxiety, posttraumatic stress

disorder (PTSD), or other mental health disorders—because most people never returned for follow-up visits at the district hospital.

Despite the lack of concrete data, mental health professionals indicate that the burden continues. "The number of patients seeking treatment for mental health have increased in Singtam Hospital post-pandemic, and after the GLOF it has increased too. Old patients who were stable have relapsed. Ten to 15 new patients and a few follow-up cases come every week [to] the Psychiatry Department for treatment," says Devendra Singh, a neuroscience researcher and psychotherapist who has been working in the state for close to a decade.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design is descriptive and exploratory for this study. To gain insight into the wellbeing of the flood-affected people of Punjab, interviews (KII) carried out for qualitative data collection based on one data collection tool: Key informant interviews (KII).

Participants

After having conceptual framework, reviewing the literature, framing the objectives and hypotheses the next step was to select a representative sample on which the proposed variable can be studied. The sample of the present investigation was selected using the convenience sampling of 3 respondents (Punjab Flood Survivor). The age range of the sample was from 15 to 60 years old.

Sample

The Convenience sampling would be used to collect the sample. The sample size will be N= 3, participants would be the Punjab flood survivors for interview, has been selected from the age group of 15-60 years old.

Inclusion:

- Age: 15 to 60 years old
- People residing in Punjab.
- People affected from flood

Exclusion:

- Person below 15 years and Person above 60-year-old are not included in this study.
- People not residing in Punjab.
- People who are not affected from flood.

Ethical Considerations:

- The participants were assured of confidentiality of data and the data obtained during the study will be used for the academic purpose only.
- The participants were informed about the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime they wish to.
- No participants will be harmed physically, psychologically and emotionally during the study.

Procedure:

- The study will be conducted on the sample of 3 people selected according to criteria.
- Purpose of the study will be explained to the subject and informed consent will be taken from the subject to use the data for the further research purpose.
- The key informants (KI) are selected purposively from the flood villages under study. None of them was previously known to the researcher. The inclusion/exclusion criteria used to identify the KIs were a) personal experience b) working professional and student above the age of 15 till 60 years old.

Data Analysis:

For analysing the collected data Thematic Analysis have been used to test the framed hypothesis for the Punjab flood survivors. Data was analysed using NVIVO Software.

- **Steps of Thematic Analysis**

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data: This involves reading and re-reading the data to get a deep understanding of its content and context.
2. Generating initial codes: The Researchers systematically go through the data and assign short labels or "codes" to interesting features.
3. Searching for themes: The Researchers begin to group the codes into potential themes that capture a pattern of meaning.
4. Reviewing themes: The Researchers check if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset. This is an iterative process of refining, merging, or splitting themes.
5. Defining and naming themes: The Researchers create a clear, concise definition for each theme and a descriptive name.
6. Producing the report: The Researchers write a narrative that tells the story of your data, supported by quotes and examples, to present your findings.

Themes

Theme 1: The Sudden Onslaught and Immediate Disruption

This theme captures the abrupt and destructive nature of the flood event, which caught residents off guard and caused immediate, significant physical and material losses. Aditya shared that the flood came "all of a sudden without any warning". This suddenness led to widespread damage to homes and possessions. PS described how one of her house's walls fell down. Similarly, Ranjana noted that a previous flood had damaged her "bridal lehnga", while Aditya's mattress was destroyed. Beyond personal property, the floods severely disrupted essential services, including electricity, internet, and railway services. The scarcity of basic necessities like food, water, and essential grains was a major challenge in the immediate aftermath.

Theme 2: Lingering Psychological Aftershocks

The floods inflicted a significant and lasting emotional and psychological toll on the participants. A pervasive sense of fear and anxiety was evident in all three interviews. PS stated, "fear has increased in everyone", while Aditya admitted to getting very worried whenever there is heavy rainfall, fearing another flood. The unpredictable nature of the event was particularly traumatic, with PS likening the experience to something "you see in movies". The psychological impact also extended to children, as PS noted that her school had to hire psychologists and counsellors to help students cope with their fear and anxiety. Ranjana also expressed concern that children's education suffered and that they started using mobile phones excessively.

Theme 3: The Power of Community and Mutual Aid

A central theme of the interviews was the immense strength found in community and family support. Participants repeatedly highlighted the mutual aid that helped them cope and recover. PS emphasized the "strong communal understanding" in Punjab, where people not only guide others but "will actually drop you off where you need to go". She also mentioned that people offered tea and donated essential items to those in need. Both Aditya and Ranjana received help from community members and NGOs who provided food, water, and other basic necessities. Aditya specifically mentioned receiving help from "Khalsa Head" and Punjabi singers who provided donations and medicine.

Theme 4: Acknowledged Government and Systemic Shortfalls

The participants offered a balanced view of the institutional response, acknowledging both effective measures and systemic failures. On one hand, the government was praised for its quick and helpful actions. PS reported that the government was "very responsive," coordinating with people, providing weather updates, and keeping helplines active. Aditya also noted that his family received a helpful donation from the government. However, the interviews also brought to light a significant systemic problem: the sewerage system. Ranjana pointed out that the sewerage system "hardly gets cleaned even in a year" and worsened the flood situation, urging the government to address this issue.

Theme 5: Personal Coping and Post-Traumatic Growth

Despite the challenges, the interviews revealed a strong sense of personal resilience and hope. Participants adopted various coping mechanisms to navigate the crisis and its aftermath. PS and Ranjana, both school principals, demonstrated a sense of responsibility and composure, with PS stating she tries to "live life as it comes" and relies on meditation and prayer. Aditya also displayed a forward-looking mindset by suggesting a need for designated shelter places with basic items and planning to build rooms on his terrace for future protection. Ranjana's past experience with a flood made her better prepared this time, and she displayed empathy for others who were worse off.

Findings

1. The Sudden Onslaught and Immediate Disruption

This theme highlights the unexpected and destructive nature of the floods. Participants were caught off guard, leading to significant and widespread physical damage to homes and property. The flood in Aditya's village came "all of a sudden without any warning". Aditya and his family had to rush to their terrace to escape the rising water, which reached shoulder level. PS's house also suffered a falling wall, despite its good construction. Ranjana's interview mentioned that a prior flood had damaged her "bridal 'lehnga'", while this time, she was more prepared to save her possessions.

The floods also caused a severe disruption of essential services. PS noted that railway services, internet, and electricity were all down. This disruption, combined with the closure of shops, created a scarcity of basic necessities. PS had difficulty getting grains for eating because shops were closed, and vegetables were damaged, leading to high prices.

2. Lingering Psychological Aftershocks

The interviews reveal a profound and lasting psychological impact on the participants. A pervasive sense of fear and anxiety was evident. PS described the situation as "fearful and scary", stating that "fear has increased in everyone". Aditya expressed his own anxiety, saying that "whenever rainfall is heavy at that time, he gets very worried that what if flood comes again". The experience was also traumatic, with PS likening the conditions to something "you see in movies, but it actually happened to everyone around me

and me myself faced this". The psychological impact also extended to children, as PS's school hired "psychologists and counsellors... to give them courage".

3. The Power of Community and Mutual Aid

A strong sense of community and mutual support emerged as a key theme in the interviews. Participants received crucial help from neighbours, community members, and various organizations. PS highlighted the "strong communal understanding" in Punjab, where people would offer tea and donate essential items to those in need. The Sikh tradition of giving was noted as a key driver of this communal spirit. Aditya and his family received food and water from people in the community after being stranded on the terrace for two days. He also mentioned receiving help from "Khalsa Head" and Punjabi singers who provided donations and arranged for medicines.

4. Acknowledged Government and Systemic Shortfalls

The participants offered a balanced perspective on the official response to the floods. On the one hand, they acknowledged the helpful actions of government bodies and NGOs. PS stated that the government had "helplines that were active throughout" and that doctors were available due to efforts from the government and NGOs. Aditya noted that his family also received a "donation from the government". However, the interviews also brought to light a significant systemic issue. Ranjana pointed out that the "sewerage system hardly gets cleaned even in a year", which worsened the flooding, and she believes the government should "take measures on this side".

5. Personal Coping and Post-Traumatic Growth

Despite the hardships, participants demonstrated significant personal resilience and a forward-looking perspective. PS, a school principal, relied on meditation and prayer to cope with the stress. She stated that she tries to "live life as it comes and do my best in whatever situation arises". Aditya displayed a resilient and proactive mindset, planning to "build rooms on the terrace" to prepare for future floods. Ranjana also highlighted her preparedness due to a past flood experience, which allowed her and her family to manage the situation better this time.

Discussion:

The recent floods in Punjab had a multifaceted impact on the well-being of the affected individuals, influencing their physical, psychological, and social lives in a way that is consistent with broader disaster research. The analysis of the three interviews revealed a nuanced picture of immediate disruption, emotional distress, and remarkable resilience.

Physical and Material Impairment:

The interviews highlighted the immediate and severe physical and material impairment caused by the floods, with residents being caught off guard by the suddenness of the event. Aditya's family, for instance, had no warning and had to seek refuge on their terrace as the water level rose to their shoulders. This immediate displacement and loss of a secure environment were followed by significant damage to personal property. PS's house suffered a collapsing wall, which she noted was built to be "solid". Similarly, Aditya's mattress was destroyed, forcing his family to use a plastic sheet for sleeping. The physical disruption was not limited to personal homes; it extended to the broader community, with essential services like electricity, internet, and railways being shut down. The scarcity of basic necessities was a major challenge, as PS reported difficulties in acquiring food due to closed shops and damaged vegetables, leading to high prices.

Emotional and Psychological Impact:

The floods inflicted a significant emotional and psychological toll on the participants, causing lingering distress and anxiety that are common following traumatic events. A pervasive sense of fear was evident in all interviews. PS stated that the situation was so "fearful and scary" that she felt "miserable," likening the experience to something out of a "movie". This sense of trauma manifested in ongoing anxiety for Aditya, who "gets very worried" whenever it rains heavily, fearing another flood. The psychological impact also affected children, as Ranjana expressed concern about their education being disrupted and PS's school hired psychologists to help students cope with their fear.

Personal Coping Mechanisms:

The participants also revealed a strong sense of personal resilience and the use of individual coping mechanisms. They adopted forward-looking mindsets to navigate the crisis. PS, for instance, used prayer and meditation to manage her anxiety, stating that she tries to "live life as it comes". Ranjana demonstrated resilience by being better prepared for this flood due to a past experience, and she also displayed empathy for people from other districts who were in a worse situation. Aditya also showed a proactive coping strategy by planning to "build rooms on the terrace" for future protection, suggesting a desire to regain control and security.

The thematic analysis of interviews with three flood survivors in Punjab revealed a complex interplay between immediate physical disruption, emotional trauma, and a powerful, community-based resilience. The findings are largely consistent with existing literature on the psychosocial impact of natural disasters, particularly the understanding that such events lead to significant psychological distress and a breakdown of social order before recovery begins (Norris et al., 2002).

The themes of "Physical and Material Impairment" and "Emotional and Psychological Impact" are well-supported by prior research, which documents the profound effects of natural disasters on both physical property and mental health. The experiences of Aditya, PS, and Ranjana, characterized by fear, anxiety, and a feeling of powerlessness, align with findings on post-traumatic stress and anxiety following disasters (Galea et al., 2005). The finding that children, in particular, suffered psychologically, reinforces the need for specialized mental health support for vulnerable populations.

However, the analysis also extends existing literature by highlighting the central role of "Social and Communal Resilience" as a core coping mechanism. While the government and NGOs provided crucial support, participants' narratives placed a greater emphasis on the immediate and unconditional help received from family, neighbours, and community members. This suggests that in cultures with strong communal ties, such as Punjab, community-level resilience is not merely a response but a foundational element of the recovery process. This finding has significant practical implications for disaster management, suggesting that strategies should focus on empowering and resourcing local communities to provide mutual aid.

A key limitation of this study is the small sample size of three participants, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The interviews, while rich in detail, may not fully represent the diverse experiences of all flood-affected people in Punjab. Future research should aim to include a larger and more varied sample of participants, including those from different socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical areas, to further explore the themes of resilience and government response. Further studies could also investigate the long-term psychological effects of the floods and the efficacy of community-based support networks in the years following the disaster.

Conclusion:

The thematic analysis of the interview data provides a compelling and multi-layered insight into the impact of the recent floods on the well-being of the residents of Punjab. The study confirms that natural disasters are not merely isolated physical events but complex crises that significantly disrupt the physical, emotional, and social fabric of a community. The identified themes of Immediate Physical and Infrastructural Impact and Lingering Psychological Aftershocks underscore the profound and lasting distress experienced by survivors. These findings are consistent with established literature on the short- and long-term consequences of traumatic events.

Crucially, the study's most significant finding lies in the powerful and undeniable themes of The Power of Community and Mutual Aid and Personal Coping and Post-Traumatic Growth. These themes reveal that while formal support from government and NGOs is vital, the well-being of the affected individuals was largely sustained by the robust, reciprocal support from family, neighbours, and community members. This suggests that a community's pre-existing social capital and cultural values, such as the strong communal understanding highlighted by the participants, are a foundational source of resilience.

The well-being of the Punjab residents was not simply a casualty of the flood but was actively preserved and restored through personal strength and collective action. This report underscores the need for a holistic approach to disaster management that not only focuses on providing material aid but also recognizes and empowers local communities as primary agents of recovery.

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