

Abstract

'Care' on the monsoon calendar: Understanding 'care' as 'adjustments' during annual flooding

This research aims to explore how repeated disasters, specifically monsoon flooding, shapes and reshapes the care needed and extended to members of riverine communities. Repetitive disasters are unique as they are not sudden and single events but recurring situations that expose patterns of care experienced by affected communities and the structural issues that influence the care provided both within the community and through external interventions (local governing bodies, self-help groups). This study analyses how scale of disasters intersects with factors like gender, age and class to shape both the needs of specific members of communities and the ways in which these needs are met.

Based on ethnographic research looking at repetitive annual floods, the study highlights that the various forms of care extended are shaped by interactions within and outside households. Members belonging to these riverine communities refer to experiences of care as 'adjustments' they have to make during the monsoon season. The communities' continuous response and adaptive mechanisms to the care crises during floods also allow us to rethink the binary notions of vulnerability vs resilience. Particularly noteworthy are the coping mechanisms of women from riverine communities, who consider 'adjustments' as a way to ensure care especially during menstruation, dysmenorrhea and pregnancy.