

'CARE' ON THE MONSOON CALENDAR



Repeated floods are a problem faced by riverine communities. These floods shape and reshape the care needed and expected by the communities. This study examines how the scale of disasters and the repetitive nature of monsoon flooding affect the disaster response of communities and affect the ways in which care intersects with both existing vulnerabilities and resilience.



INTRODUCTION

By exploring the lived experiences of flood affected communities through this research aims to identify how 'care' manifests among community members and affects the already existing vulnerability and resilience. Gender relations and power structures affect the distribution of the care extended to community members through both formal and informal networks which in turn affect the community's disaster response on the whole. Fatality, losses, damages and movements to relief camps shapes the care needed and extended.

METHODOLOGY

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.

WHY

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).

RESULTS

Informal and formal connections shaped the amount of care received by communities. For example, affiliations or memberships to local governing bodies or political parties resulted in better care received – in the forms of mental and physical support, care packages and shelter offered.

'Adjustments' as a form of care. Female interlocutors often used the term 'adjustments' to talk about the ways in which they modified their choices during floods. For example, older women helped younger menstruating women access toilets and skip queues in relief camps.

ANALYSIS

The ethnographic observations and conversations with interlocutors point to the importance of connections in determining the amount of care received during the annual monsoon floods. Families with one or more members participating in political activities or local governing bodies often had access to early warnings, received care packages and received assistance from volunteers in moving ailing family members to relief camps. Familial connections also have an important role in the amount of care extended during disaster response. Ailing family members and pregnant mothers often resorted to the help of close or distant relatives for shelter and comfort during floods. Those who did not have these connections were often the last to receive care. The role of connections in assisting care in turn seems to exacerbate the vulnerability and resilience of community members.



CONCLUSION

The communities' continuous response and adaptive mechanisms to the care crises during floods via adjustments and connections allow us to rethink the binary notions of vulnerability vs resilience. The community is vulnerable due to their exposure to floods but their various coping mechanisms and the ways in which they meet their needs reflects their resilience

Related literature

References can take up a lot of space, so cite only the key references used in the study.

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