

Lived Experiences of Faculty Affected During Floods

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ABSTRACT

The environment is a balance of impacts which can either be positive or negative. One of the negative impacts which can cause a marked disaster to life is flood. A qualitative study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of faculty affected during the floods at selected nursing college in Chennai. **Methods:** This study was conducted using a qualitative research design with phenomenological approach at selected nursing College in Chennai, Tamil Nadu- South India. Twelve faculty members who were severely affected during floods were selected through the purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using Open ended, probing and leading questions to explore the lived experiences of faculty through in depth personal interview that facilitated free conversation. **Results:** Data was analyzed based on the Van Kaam's methodology. From the collected data six essential themes were developed which were on the following dimensions such as physical dimensions, psychological dimensions, social dimensions, spiritual dimensions, financial dimensions and academic dimensions. The themes, which emerged reflected the need for holistic dimension of disaster care for the faculty affected during flood.

Keywords: Faculty, Lived experiences, Floods.

The southern Indian city of Chennai experienced torrential rains between November and December 2015 with unanticipated flood consequences. Notoriously known as India's water scarcity capital, instead of the proverbial poor monsoons, a series of low-pressure depressions with record-breaking rainfall submerged the city rapidly, as homes and apartments flooded, communications were cut, and transportation came to a standstill including the closure of the airport. The storm brought life to a standstill and almost everyone experienced some kind of loss. Thousands were left homeless and vulnerable, at the mercy of the weather and the charity of good Samaritans.

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The schools and colleges in Chennai faced difficulties due to floods in December 2015. Educational institutions could not conduct classes. University exams were postponed in many colleges. Faculty members found difficulty in reaching colleges due to flooded roads and restricted transportation due to fuel shortage. Students had undergone physical and psychological problems due to floods (The Hindu 2015). Many Institutions were closed for several days. In spite of heavy floods and failure of communication system many faculties were concerned about their students and took several steps to safeguard their students and protect them from physical and psychological consequences.

Despite consistent reports on flood effects qualitatively in existing literature, difficulties of faculties have not been seen extensive exploration and still there is a paucity of research on the lived experiences of faculty affected during flood. Hence, the investigators have undertaken this study to explore the lived experiences of faculty affected during flood to understand their perspectives and plan for better future preparations.

Statement of the problem

A Qualitative Study to Assess the Lived Experiences of Faculty Affected during Floods at Selected Nursing College in Chennai.

Objective

- To explore the lived experiences of faculty affected during flood.

METHODS

This study was conducted using, a qualitative research design with phenomenological approach at the selected nursing College in Chennai, Tamil Nadu- South India. Data was collected after obtaining approval from the Institutional review board. Twelve faculties who were severely affected during floods were selected through purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using funnel approach, one to one in depth interview. Interview with the faculty members were audiotaped, transcribed and analysed.

Lived experience refers to the formulated meanings of the profound experience such as feelings, sentiments, perceptions and desires of faculty working in the selected Nursing College and who were severely affected during the flood which occurred in the months of November and December 2015.

Consent was obtained from each faculty members for the study, saturation was reached with the sample size of twelve. Open ended leading questions were used to elicit perceptions related to physical, psychological, social, spiritual, financial and academic dimension of faculty who were affected during the floods of December 2015.

These experiences were audio recorded and transcribed in the form of narratives. The verbatim were transcribed and data coding was done. Analysis of the data was accomplished using Van Kaam's methodology and included 6 major operations that were the guiding principles for data analysis.

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These operations are as follows (1) eliciting descriptive expressions (2) identifying common elements (3) eliminating expressions not related to the phenomena (4) formulating a hypothetical definition of the phenomenon (5) checking the hypothetical definition with original descriptions and (6) specifying the structural definition.

Use of this methodology allowed the researchers to more fully describe and analyze the human experience. It provided the researcher an opportunity to explore, in a holistic manner, the emergence of themes and patterns of the lived experiences of the faculty affected during flood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Flood related Variables of faculty affected during flood. (N=12)

Flood related Variables	f	%
Loss occurred during flood		
Nil	-	-
Loss of job	-	-
Loss of paid leave	-	-
Loss of belongings /valuables	12	100
Loss of family members	-	-
Other loss	-	-
Whether rescue was required		
Yes	1	8
No	11	92
If yes –type of rescue used		
Boat	-	-
Using rope	1	8
Swimming	-	-
Others	-	-

Table 1 depicts all of them lost their valuables and rescue was required for one faculty and 2 of them were found to be away from their home for more than a week. One faculty was rescued from flood using rope and she expressed in her words. “Inside my house I had water till my knee level and I thought I could move fast and reach a safe place, but due to water logging outside and everywhere around my house, I was not able to move. Finally, I was rescued by using rope. I experienced fear of death, loss of my family members and I got frustrated much by seeing the water logging and tried to walk slowly and safely. I felt very tired because of this shifting, extra burdens and insecure feelings”.

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Tab 2 Examples of Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Faculty members. (N=12)

S.No	Themes	Significant statements	Formulated meanings
1	Physical dimension	Mrs.A expressed that she had common cold and cough. In her words; <i>I had fever, cough, vomiting, and was not able to get out of bed for two days and was preoccupied about our students' health.</i>	Faculty expressed that they had acute health problems such as fever, headache, common cold, vomiting, diarrhoea, fatigue and body pain.
2	Psychological dimension	Mrs.B was scared and said that she experienced fear of death. In her words; <i>" I thought I may die in water" First time in my life I experienced and worried about my survival, if not for me, at least for the sake of my children I prayed God to save my life.</i>	She was anxious, depressed, worried , felt insecure and even expressed fear of death.
3	Social dimension	Mrs.C was scared and in her words: <i>my apartment is surrounded by flood and it became like an island now. I was scared how will I go out of my house.</i>	Faculty felt they were isolated from the society
4	Spiritual dimension	Mrs.D was praying for everyone. In her words; <i>I am praying for everyone, I pray and trust in God.</i>	She had special prayers with their family.
5	Financial dimension	Mrs.E was depressed and expressed: <i>to our family, flood was very terrible; we lost old and valuable things, which belong to our family. Those things were very precious which cannot be replaced.</i>	She spent a lot of money on replacing the lost valuable items.
6	Academic dimension	Mrs.F was worried and <i>preoccupied with the thoughts that nothing should affect the academic success of our students.</i>	She was worried about the continuous leave and incomplete clinical requirements of our students.

The names of the faculty are fictitious and have been changed for the sake of confidentiality. Significant statements of the participants were arranged to ensure common statements formed the themes.

Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Venkatesan L3 on lived in experiences of nursing personnel in the hospital during floods, the themes which emerged were chaos, reality check, reorganizing, stabilizing and finally planning for the future.

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Theme 1: Physical dimensions

Faculty members had many physical complaints like fever, body pain, unable to do household and professional work, lack of strength, unable to get adequate food, lack of electricity.

1. Faculty members expressed a variety of emotions such as sadness and helplessness because some had little children and elderly persons in their home and were not able to take care of them and afford medicine for them.
2. Faculty members faced difficulty in reaching the work place due to transportation problems

Study findings were consistent with the study conducted by Mugunthan 2015. The worst rain and flooding in the century turned several parts of Chennai into a living hell. Buses and trains were severely affected by the torrential rains. Floods have blocked roads and train tracks were submerged in water, choking transportation. Some employees were not even able to work at their home. Pharmacies in flood hit area had downed their shutters.

Theme 2: Psychological well being

The Flood caused a lot of psychological impact over faculty members.

1. Many faculty members experienced many psychological disturbances such as anxiety, fear, sadness and helplessness.
2. Many faculty members were worried about the wellness of their family members and their relatives.
3. Faculty members were anxious about their future.

Ana Fernandez, et al (2009) conducted a study on flooding and mental health: A systematic mapping review, quantitative and qualitative study to assess the mental health among the urban people of UK. The main mental health disorder is the post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety. So the factors associated with mental health among those affected by flood focuses on the long term impacts of flooding on mental health. The existing guidance on the emergency planning for the impact on flooding on the psychosocial and mental health needs.

Theme 3: Spiritual beliefs

1. Faculty members had a strong belief in God and prayers.
2. Their spirituality with God helped them out of the confusion, chaos and turmoil caused by flood.

Theme 4: Social relationship

Many faculty members required a strong social support.

1. Some faculty members had shifted from their homes due to stagnation of water in and this led to separation from their neighbors and loss of familiar surroundings.
2. Faculty members were not able to communicate with their relatives and neighbors and felt for their safety.

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3. Some faculty members sought social support for all basic needs such as food, water, etc.
4. Some faculty members complained of social isolation because they were unable to go outside due to stagnation of water.

Theme 5: Financial burden

Faculty members expressed their financial burdens due to the loss of their household items

1. Some faculty members lost their furniture and had to spend lots of money for cleaning and painting their houses.
2. Faculty members reported that the entry of flood water inside the house, caused spoilage of electronic equipments used in the house and that they had to spend a lot of money for repairs.

Theme 6: Academic dimension

1. Faculty members were worried about the continuous leave and incomplete clinical requirements.
2. A majority of the faculty members had encouraged the students to continue their term exams in the hostel.

Subthemes

Positive Feelings towards Flood:

1. For few faculty, floods brought about a feeling of unity and a sense of well being which is interpreted as the positive feeling towards flood. In their words
 1. *Many people from all over the world helped us in coping with the flood.*
 2. *There were special prayers and poojas all over the nation and world for us.*

Negative feelings towards Flood:

1. The Majority of the faculty had negative feelings towards flood and they expressed it as
 1. *I had anxiety, depression and loss of hope.*
 2. *I felt insecure and worried a lot about my family members safety.*
 3. *I felt scared and could not even think about anything.*

CONCLUSION

The frequency of floods is increasing. The mortality relating to flooding is variable and depends on the enormity or otherwise of each extreme event and the capability of the rescue and recovery services. But, when compared with other types of disaster, the mortality may be interpreted as low when floods occur in well-prepared areas of the world.

However, this should not blind policymakers, service designers and practitioners to the substantial morbidity that is posed by flooding.

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Disaster Preparedness skills, psychosocial support, community based first aid drills, tabletop exercise, simulation, early warning compliance and evacuation helps to meet the holistic needs of the society during disasters including floods.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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