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Title: Resilience and Response: Understanding Community's Policy Perspectives on Flood and Erosion in Assam

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Abstract: As a chronic flood and erosion-prone region in India, Assam faces perpetual challenges in managing and mitigating the impacts of natural hazards every year. Despite participatory policy and communication approaches, communities in the region do not feel included in the planning and decision-making processes of mitigation and prevention. The study conducts a stakeholder perception analysis using a qualitative approach through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured and structured interviews with flood-prone communities of Barpeta, Dibrugarh, and Majuli districts in Assam. The thematic analysis revealed multiple gaps in the policy planning and implementation stages where the traditional knowledge of communities has been ignored, while also revealing gendered silences and communication fallouts. The increasing frequency and intensity of floods, along with untimely modern interventions, have convinced communities to combine modern mitigation strategies with their traditional mitigation strategies like stilt houses, but engineers and policymakers often bypass the traditional knowledge of communities. The study calls for a multi-faceted approach to flood and erosion management by addressing the infrastructural and socio-cultural challenges, and involving communities more actively in the planning and decision-making processes, re-emphasizing the importance of SDG 13 and SDG 17.



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