



## Epidemiology

## NEWSPAPER COVERAGE ON EFFECT OF FLOOD IN CHENNAI - A MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background :** The heaviest rainfall in more than a century has caused massive flooding across the eastern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Many people suffered in various aspects during flood in Chennai - loss of loved ones, houses, properties and valuables, lack of food and water, need for the rescue, physical and mental health suffering and so on are the various difficulties and bargaining of the sufferers. Considering all these damages and loss, the investigators chose to do newspaper coverage on how the city suffered during the period.

**Objectives :** To quantify the articles published by selected newspapers related to flood. To identify the sectors affected by flood and to discuss how the city was managed during flood.

**Materials and Methods :** Mixed method approach which included both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The study was conducted in the Library of Apollo College of Nursing where the researchers chose 200 articles published in 3 English dailies (The Hindu, Times of India and Indian Express) as samples for quantitative study and 20 articles were selected for qualitative study.

**Results :** The findings revealed that 42% of the articles were from Hindu, 28% from Times of India and 30% from Indian Express. Qualitative analysis was done considering the various aspects of disaster management cycle such as impact, response, rehabilitation, mitigation and preparedness with the help of 20 published articles from all the three English dailies.

**KEYWORDS :** Effect, Flood, Newspaper.**Introduction**

Flooding may occur as an overflow of water from water bodies, such as a river, lake, or ocean, in which the water overtops, resulting in some of that water escaping its usual boundaries. It may occur due to an accumulation of rainwater on saturated ground in an aerial flood. From October to December each year, a very large area of South India, including Tamil Nadu, the coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh and the union territory of Pondicherry, receives up to 30 percent of its annual rainfall from the northeast monsoon (or winter monsoon). Unlike during the regular monsoon, rainfall during the northeast monsoon is sporadic, but typically far exceeds the amount produced by the regular monsoon by upto 90%. This excessive rainfall can be exacerbated by an El Nino year, which 2015 saw. On November 12, 2015 Chennai saw the start of heavy rain that caused massive damage in terms of loss of men and property. There were around 357 deaths across the state, relief operations were undertaken. Thousands of people have been driven from their homes in the state capital Chennai. Four helicopters dropped food, water and medicines. 5000 soldiers were put on relief work. 5000 soldiers were involved within 24 hours for the relief work

**The quintessential role of News Media.**

The media can play a crucial role not only in presenting the issues to people, but also how these are perceived and what importance the public should attach to them by framing the issue in specific ways. It is well documented that the news media can influence which public policy issues receive attention and which are ignored. Through the process of 'agenda setting', particular news stories are prioritised over other stories. Local newspapers and magazines published evidence of the natural disaster along with their suggestions for policy and programming. The interaction between media and policy demonstrates how the quantity and quality of media coverage of a specific health problem can both influence, as well as reflect public health action directed at the situation.

**Problem Statement**

A Mixed Method Research to assess the Newspaper Coverage on Effect of Flood in Chennai 2015

**Objectives of the Study**

- To quantify the number of articles published by selected newspapers related to flood between Nov 8, 2015 to Feb 15, 2015.
- To assess which aspect is given more importance by the selected newspapers during flood.
- To identify the sectors affected by flood in the society based upon the articles published by the newspapers.

- To discuss how the city managed during flood with the guidance of the data published by the newspapers.

**Assumptions**

- Flood in 2015 caused major destruction to living and non living things in Chennai
- Transportation is affected in a worst manner across the city during flood.
- It affected the physical, mental, economical and social health of the people.
- All media focused more on this issue during the period.

**Materials and Methods**

Research design is Mixed method research, which is a combination of two methods, explained in 2 phases, Phase 1 is quantitative (non-experimental, descriptive design and Phase 2 is qualitative (based on the philosophy of phenomenology). The investigators analysed the data published by the print media to describe how the Chennai city suffered and managed during the flood. The study was conducted at the library located at Apollo College of Nursing, Chennai where from the English dailies were selected as sample.

**Data Collection Procedure**

The investigators had collected the data from the news papers available at the library of Apollo College of Nursing daily from Nov 12, 2015 to Feb 15, 2016. Formal approval was obtained from the management of Apollo College of Nursing and Librarian to collect the needed data from the Newspapers available in the library. The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Apollo college of Nursing, Chennai. The investigators read the articles on flood published in the Hindu, Indian Express, Times of India and collected data depending upon the content of the News. The hard copy of the newspaper cuttings were collected and filed according to the category of the data and then scanned for better storage.

**Results and Discussion****Frequency and percentage distribution of Newspaper coverage in the three English Dailies**

N = 200

Name of the English Dailies	The Hindu n = 84		Times of India n = 56		Indian Express n = 60	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Impact of flood on social & economic problems	41	48.8%	20	35.7%	17	28.3%

Impact of flood on health of people	8	9.5%	6	10.7%	4	6.6%
Impact of flood on transportation	13	15.4%	10	17.8%	8	13.3%
Impact on Relief and rescue work	22	26.1%	20	35.7%	31	51.6%
Total articles	84	42%	56	28%	60	30%

The Hindu daily gave most (48.8%) of the news coverage with regard to impact of flood on social and economic problems in the city, Times of India gave majority (10.7%) of news coverage with respect to impact of flood on health of people, Times of India gave majority (17.8%) of news coverage on the impact of flood on transportation and Indian Express covered most (51.6%) of the news on relief and rescue work. Overall 'The Hindu' had the highest proportion of stories.

The qualitative data were analysed based on themes in the disaster management cycle. 20 articles published under the themes by the three English dailies during flood were selected as samples using probability stratified random sampling technique. The themes are as follows: impact, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction, mitigation and preparedness.

### Conclusion

The study findings are suggestive of the imperative role of the print media in updating the status of the city in flood and it also helped by giving propositions for preparedness and readiness. The media play an important role in both providing information to policy makers as well as public deliberation on natural calamities. The authors quantified the frequency of the article under each theme whether written directly by the journalist or quoted from an interview.

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