

The 2022 floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: an assessment of the impacts on the Afghan Refugees

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Abstract:

The 2022 floods in Pakistan have been disastrous for the country, as they have impacted almost all the provinces of Pakistan. This paper investigates the impacts of the 2022 floods on the residents of Khashgi refugee village in district Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which was vulnerable and exposed to the floods. It had devastating impacts on people's lives. It was thus important to investigate its impacts on the Afghan refugees in the Khashgi refugee village. The study focused on the impacts of the infrastructure of the refugee village, economic impacts, impacts on the people's livelihood, psychological and physical impacts, impacts on the women, children, and PWDs, and environmental impacts. The paper explores the lived experiences of Afghan refugees in times of crisis and natural disasters such as floods. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with the flood-affected people of the community who have faced the 2022 flood impacts and from the staff of the humanitarian organisations that have provided support to the affected people. The findings of the study reveal that the 2022 floods impacted all aspects of the Afghan refugees' lives in the Khashgi refugee village, which brought various hurdles and challenges for the community people.

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1. Introduction

The 2022 floods were quite destructive natural calamities that witnessed in Pakistan, catastrophic destruction and displacing a huge number of people, including the Afghan refugees in who are the resident of the vulnerable areas (Rehmat et al., 2023). The study is investigating how such destructive floods affected the lives of the Afghan refugees living in the Kheshgi Refugee Village in District Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Afghan refugees in Pakistan are the vulnerable community due to their displacement problems, which have experienced more worse challenges during the natural calamities, making their lives quite difficult, which became a significant area for research and investigation. The primary objective of the study is to investigate and highlight how the 2022 floods have impacted the lives of Afghan refugees during these flash floods. The scope of the research is including the economic impacts, social impacts, environmental impacts, and psychological impacts that were experienced by the Afghan refugees during and after the floods of 2022, providing an in-depth analysis of their difficulties. The significance of the study appears from its potential to feature the particular vulnerabilities of the refugee people communities in disaster-prone areas, resulting in more informed disaster risk management and humanitarian responses and solutions.

The study uses a qualitative research approach to investigate the personal accounts and lived experiences of Afghan refugees during the floods of 2022 in Kheshgi Refugee Village. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were done with 25 households directly affected by the floods. The oral history technique was used to record comprehensive recollections of their experiences, resulting in a better understanding of the impacts. The sample consisted of 20 male and 5 female respondents selected using probability sampling procedures. However, due to cultural barriers, no interviews with female respondents were carried out. The findings of this study highlight the profound and multifaceted impact of the 2022 floods on refugees' life, including loss of livelihoods, housing damage, and increased psychological suffering. The article is structured in which the introduction and context of the study are presented first, followed by the research methodology. The data and analysis are then thoroughly analyzed with a focus on important themes that emerged from the interviews.

2. Literature review

The literature emphasizes the significant losses suffered by Nowshera's RV and its citizens as a result of the 2022 floods. It provides an outline of the history of Afghan refugees as well as the effects of natural disasters on their daily life. Since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Afghan refugees have sought asylum in Pakistan, fleeing bloodshed and insecurity. This invasion resulted in a large exodus to Pakistan. NGOs, the Pakistani government, and UNHCR worked together to assist refugees with shelter, food, and medical care (Grare & Maley, 2011; Sohail et al., 2022). The civil conflict in Afghanistan in the 1990s, combined with the rise of the Taliban, exacerbated the refugee situation, driving many to migrate to Pakistan

for protection (Schamiloglu, 2002). Another wave of Afghan refugees entered after 9/11 and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, driven by violence and instability. Continuous conflicts, terrorism, and political upheaval in Afghanistan have exacerbated the situation, with efforts to return refugees routinely delayed by insecurity and economic problems (Khan & Durrani, 2024; Madni et al., 2024). Academic publications question repatriation procedures and highlight ongoing concerns. Since the Soviet invasion in 1979, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has played a major role in hosting Afghan refugees, with Peshawar emerging as a key hub (Noor, 2006; Khan et al., 2021). The refugees made their homes throughout the province, with Peshawar becoming as a significant centre for Afghan communities (Taha & Aamir, 2012; Khan et al., 2022).

Refugee migrations into KP increased again after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Pakistan, a developing nation grappling with severe economic challenges, has faced additional burdens due to the influx of unregistered refugees, exacerbating financial, economic and environmental strains (Borthakur, 2017;). The goal of this research is to investigate the economic impact of floods on small-scale farmers in District Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study demonstrates the severe consequences of the 2010 flood on people's livelihoods and the difficulties they face. According to the cases, the majority of farmers are struggling to make ends meet. Flood destroyed the entire livelihood of farmers who were already in terrible condition, making them much more susceptible. The study shed light on gender concerns during the flood, as well as the activities of relief organisations and government departments (Zulqarnain, 2013).

In Pakistan, one instructive example is the displacement of 23,000 Afghan refugees from Azakhel, a town outside of Peshawar that was 90% destroyed by floods (Thomas & Rendón, 2010). While many of the residents had lived there for more than 30 years and considered it home, they were prevented from returning and rebuilding once the flood waters subsided, ostensibly to permit the government to conduct a safety assessment. Consequently, the UN undertook its own assessment which deemed many of the same areas safe enough for return. While it may be that the selective nature of Pakistan's zoning enforcement was unintentional, the situation nonetheless highlights the risk that without protection mechanisms and advance planning, vulnerable populations may be forcibly displaced or relocated in the aftermath of disasters (Thomas & Rendon, 2010).

There is increasing concern about the issues related to the climate change phenomenon, such as floods, snow and glacier melting, storms, earthquakes, etc. Pakistan was badly hit by the flash floods of 2010, which were a direct result of heavy rains and glacier melting and caused catastrophic devastation. The purpose of this study was to look into the social and economic vulnerabilities caused by the flood and how it affected women's lives. The research was carried out in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), district Nowshera, Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2011). According to the findings, people in both the analysed ethnic groups, Afghan and Pakhtun, were enjoying somewhat better lifestyles before the flood. However, the Afghan

group had a somewhat greater degree of livelihood satisfaction before the event than the Pakhtun group. Furthermore, both ethnic groups were equally exposed to the disaster in terms of severity, damage, and displacement. The pre-event poverty that has entrenched these communities is a major contributor to the current poor socioeconomic conditions. Due to the quick deterioration of available resources during the crisis, the level of resilience within both ethnic groups was insufficient to respond to the flood-related stressors (Khan et al., 2024). Furthermore, the flood had a detrimental impact on women in households and exacerbated marital problems due to economic stress and dissatisfaction among their spouses because of environmental change. Two years after the flood, physical and mental health difficulties linger, particularly among women and children. Most of the interviewed had dubious feelings about the future with main concern about their children's future. The participation of local, provincial and central governments, NGOs, and INGOs in re-establishing infrastructure and livelihoods for the impacted populace has been inadequate (Khan et al., 2022b; Saleem, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between multidimensional poverty and climate change vulnerability in the rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Nowshera and Charsadda districts. The study's findings revealed that half of the population in the study area lives below the multidimensional poverty line. Nowshera had more multidimensionally poor persons, and the severity of poverty was larger than in Charsadda. Nowshera was found to be more impoverished in all three dimensions of poverty, namely education, health, and standard of living. In terms of climate change vulnerability, Charsadda falls behind in the areas of livelihood strategies, social networks, socio-demographic profiles, and food. On the other hand, Nowshera was discovered to be more vulnerable in terms of natural resources, financial assets, and health. In the end, the data showed that Nowshera was more vulnerable to floods than Charsadda (Rana et al., 2023).

Pakistan contributes just one percent of the world's emissions of greenhouse gases. The country's considerable susceptibility to the consequences of climate change was emphasized by the 2022 floods. One-third of the country was underwater, affecting 33 million people and displacing 8 million. The scale of the calamity in Pakistan surpasses the harm inflicted by the 2010 floods. This study examines the impacted area's rehabilitation and recovery goals, as well as further mitigation options. This can be accomplished through resilient and long-term maintenance and upgrade of the physical infrastructure. An analysis was performed to determine how robust this target group is to disasters. The findings revealed that communities were uninformed of their risks and issues, and they were not supplied with the essential strategies and remedies. Specific tools and approaches are needed to assess the resilience of distinct communities and social activist groups (Aleha et al., 2024).

Afghan refugees residing in the camp were forced to leave due to floods, worsening their terrible living circumstances. Refugees who lived in the camp lost their homes, possessions, and access to essential services when the floods flooded the area. The camp's inadequate infrastructure, which sometimes consisted of improvised and transient buildings, was

unprepared to resist the impact of the floodwaters. The floods had significant negative effects on the ecosystem (Shad, 2024). Floods are the most hazardous and continuing catastrophe that can damage people's homes, lives, and livelihoods. They are caused by extreme weather conditions, population growth, and a lack of efficient preparedness strategies. The primary factors were unplanned urbanisation, town expansion on steep slopes, a lack of knowledge, and poverty. Floods are regarded as one of Pakistan's most damaging and frequent natural disasters. Similarly, Swat district is prone to flooding and has been heavily hit by recent storms in 2010, 2016, and 2020. The investigation found that floods occurred primarily in higher Swat during the summer months of July and August, while floods caused by rivers occurred in lower Swat. A comparison of pre- and post-flood satellite pictures demonstrates that considerable changes occurred in the post-flood scenario, most notably in the water class, and that the area under water bodies grew (Manglore et al., 2024).

The floods in Pakistan have become more common and critical as a consequence of climate change. Pakistan, in specific, has seen two of the most distressing flooding incidences in current years: the 2010 mega floods and the 2022 rainy season floods, which affected millions of people. However, no study has been identified that completely discusses the current level of knowledge, significant research areas, and themes in the context of flood studies in Pakistan. The bibliometric analysis showed an increase in flood-related publications, primarily in the fields of environmental, earth and planetary, and social sciences. The study also includes indicators and quantitative methodologies for evaluating flood risk and susceptibility. The study suggests advises that future research look at the socioeconomic and institutional obstacles connected with flood risk reduction (Waseem & Rana, 2023).

Flood risk has increased in South Asia due to its high vulnerability and exposure. The August 2022 flood that struck Pakistan exemplifies the scale of damage and destruction that can be expected to worsen with climate change. The flood disaster is ranked second in terms of human fatality, and it was the most significant event in Pakistan, for example, displacing almost 33 million people. Using measurements and climatic estimates, we investigate the causes and implications of Pakistan's 2022 flood. The fundamental cause of the August 2022 flood was multiday excessive precipitation combined with wet preceding soil moisture levels. Two atmospheric rivers that crossed across southern Pakistan generated the high precipitation in August 2022. The 2022 Pakistan floods show the adaptive issues that the South Asia faces, as well as the critical need for climate mitigation to lessen the risk of such disasters (Nanditha et al., 2023).

This paper sought to highlight Pakistan's climate security nexus. According to this investigation, environmental climate change in Pakistan is a likely cause for internal migrations, which have contributed significantly to the aggravation of existing conflicts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, and Balochistan provinces. The climate security nexus in Pakistan is constructed using a logical method that considers environmental security and political ecology. The study has a significant impact on Pakistani policy-making circles by

giving insights on climate change mitigation, conflict-sensitive adaptation, and societal resilience. The study indicates that human-generated climate change-induced internal migration is aggravating violent conflict in Pakistan's KP and Balochistan, and has the potential to create major economic losses in the future (Saad et al., 2024).

The floods of 2022 had a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods. The assessment focused on the direct impact on monetary poverty and took into account changes in household welfare as a result of flood-related damage and losses. The impact on household welfare occurred through at least three channels: loss of family revenue and employment/livelihood due to demolished crops, killed livestock, or business inactivity; loss of assets, which include useful assets and homes; and rising food prices as a result of nutrient scarcity resulting from lost food stocks and inadequate harvests. Furthermore, households are likely to lose human capital due to the considerable threat of disease outbreaks, food shortages, and protracted school closures, all of which result in learning losses. Because these are long-term consequences, the ex-ante simulation findings do not include the loss of human capital (Knippenberg et al., 2024).

3. Research methodology

The study uses a qualitative research approach to investigate the personal accounts and lived experiences of Afghan refugees during the floods of 2022 in Khashgi Refugee Village. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were done with 25 households directly affected by the floods. The oral history technique was used to record comprehensive recollections of their experiences, resulting in a better understanding of the impacts. The sample consisted of 20 male and 5 female respondents selected using probability sampling procedures. However, due to cultural differences and barriers in the refugee village, interviews with the female respondents were not conducted directly. This study highlights the profound challenges faced by refugees during and after the floods, capturing their voices and perspectives through the oral history approach.

4. Impacts of 2022 floods

This section of the paper discusses the impacts of 2022 floods on the Afghan refugees in Khashgi Refugee village. The section is primarily based on the primary data collected through in-depth interviews from the affected population and some representatives of the humanitarian organizations. It focuses the impacts on the RVs infrastructure, psychological impacts on the people, financial and economic impacts, impacts on livelihood, social impacts, Impacts on Female, PWDs and Children and obviously environmental impacts the floods had in the area. Khuram Shehzad, a representative of a humanitarian organization said that

In my area of jurisdiction, two Refugee Villages, Khazana in Peshawar and Khashgi in Nowshera, were severely affected by the 2022 floods. Khazana experienced a major flood, with water levels gradually rising. In contrast, Khashgi had a flood protection wall constructed in 2019 by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government, which collapsed

under the heavy floodwaters. This led to flash flooding in the area, reaching Kheshgi Refugee Village. The water rapidly inundated the village through Shalakhel, Abakhel, and Dagoona, as these urban areas are close to the Refugee Village. The urban houses near the flood protection wall, built with concrete, withstood the floods, unlike the mud and clay houses in Kheshgi Refugee Village, which were washed away. In spite of the heavy floods the flood affected people of the refugee village showed great courage to evacuate their houses and move to safer places within the village. In a few hours, the whole infrastructure of the village wiped out and the members of the community were compelled to move to a safe place (K. Shehzad, personal communication, May 2024).

Khurram expressed that the floods of 2022 in Nowshera presents a clear picture of the devastation and destruction caused by the natural calamities and the perseverance of both the flood affected communities and the humanitarian organizations involved in the emergency assistive efforts. It is evident that the whole infrastructure was destructed by the heavy floods in a short time and the people of the community were moved to a safer place within the refugee village in Kheshgi. Another challenge apart from others was the less attention of the humanitarian and government departments towards the refugee village because of its status of a refugee village. The status of the refugee village was revoked by the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees due to the revocation of the status the refugee village faced numerous challenges. As compared to another refugee villages, the Kheshgi refugee village was not entertained properly. Khazana refugee village status is intact, so various national and international organization provided the assistive responses during and after the floods. This nature of disparity in the emergency responses efforts accentuated the problems and difficulties faced by the residents of the refugee village and the amalgamation of natural calamities and administrative problems aggravated the vulnerabilities of the residents of the refugee village to a great degree.

4.1. Infrastructural damages

Every natural disaster had always been disastrous for the infrastructure of the area under its grip. The RV of Kheshgi was one of the most vulnerable places due to its location and lack of proper safety measures against the mighty storms of the floods. Daud Khan, a respondent at the community said that there were several infrastructural damages. The entire village turned into a mound of mud and clay because the houses were built from clay, and the entire infrastructure was demolished due to the flash floods. It looked as if someone had prepared mud piles for clay plaster. The camp is divided into two parts: one part is at a higher elevation, and the other part is at a lower elevation. The lower part was completely wiped out, while the higher part, known as Sector D, remained safe during the 2022 floods due to its elevated position. The houses damaged by the floods were not just partially affected, such as a boundary wall or a room; the entire infrastructure was washed away (D. Khan, personal communication, August 2024).

Daud's account vividly depicts the devastation caused by floods in Kheshgi Refugee Village, where the delicate mud-and-clay infrastructure was destroyed by flash flooding. The community was disproportionately damaged because to its elevation. The lower half was

completely devastated, with dwellings reduced to heaps of muck, whilst the elevated Sector D spared serious damage. Unlike earlier disasters, the floodwaters in Khashgi destroyed whole homes and infrastructure, leaving inhabitants with little evidence of their shelters. The devastation stretched beyond residences to critical services and community places, interrupting daily life and cutting off access to resources. The roads and alleys were completely wiped out, making chaos in the refugee village. Security issues were arising which further intensified the stress and depression for the residents who were already vulnerable due to the displacements and other difficulties. Houses which are made up of clay and mud are traditional materials for construction which is helpful in some areas but in the floods the infrastructure proved to be disastrous.

This highlights the perilous need for strong infrastructure principles and disaster readiness, specifically in the areas prone to everyday natural calamities. The floods presented not only Khashgi refugee village physical and structural susceptibilities, however, the combined problems that refugee villages people faced. The disaster aggravated the residents already hard living conditions and insufficient resources. The incident of the floods in Khashgi is a prominent reminder that how natural calamities intensify the hardships and sufferings of the displaced communities, compelling them to rebuild their lives from the start. The disastrous destruction to Khashgi Refugee Village streamlines the critical and perilous necessity for long term sustainable infrastructure and effective disaster risk reduction adaptation techniques and methods. The floods are a theatrical illustration of the sufferings witnessed by the marginalized groups, depicting the importance of the planning and preparation in reducing the impacts of such natural catastrophes. The sad incident highlights the refugee village residents' plight of miserable vulnerabilities and critical need for proactive and prompt measures to support their speedy recovery and protect them from the upcoming natural disasters.

4.2. Psychological impacts

Whenever an incident happens so it has its impacts on the people who are directly affected and suffered by the incidents. The floods destroyed the homes of the people in the refugee village which left many impacts on the people, psychological impacts were among the other impacts. The floods carry waves of terror and uncertainty with itself. The vulnerable communities such as Afghan refugees, always face psychological impacts due to their vulnerable position in the society and the state they are living in because there is no one who can be responsible for the plights. Abur Raziq and Javed Khan, respondents of the interview at the community stated that:

Disasters such as floods have impacts that are both physical and psychological. Health effects include diarrhoea, skin disorders, eye infections, and fevers. Loss of house and belongings causes trauma and depression, which have psychological consequences. During travels to the village to distribute food, we saw the sorrow on the residents' faces as they slept in plastic tents in hot summer circumstances. Women and children were subjected to tremendous discomfort, as cultural conventions barred women from exiting the tents. The floodwaters ruined their homes, exacerbating health problems and

psychological distress. Residents were forced to suffer unfathomable hardships while confined to tents in the blazing heat. The psychological toll was clear, as the trauma persisted even beyond the immediate calamity. Having personally witnessed the tragedy of the 2010 and 2022 floods, I empathize completely with the refugees' situation. Despite being more stable than the refugees, I was greatly affected by both floods, leaving me profoundly traumatized. This common experience helps me appreciate the terrible hardships endured by the residents of Kheshgi Refugee Village during these tragedies (A. Raziq, J. Khan, personal communication, August 2024).

The impacts of floods on people are multifaceted, encompassing both physical and psychological dimensions. Substantially, natural disasters such as floods can lead to a variety of health issues due to the unhygienic situations and the contamination of water they create. The common health issues are including the skin diseases and infections, diarrhoea, eye infections, and fever, which rises from the contact to unclean water and improper sanitation amenities. These kind of health issues and problems can become common in the consequence of the floods, aggravating the sufferings and challenges of the affected people. Addition to these physical issues, the floods also perpetrate consequential psychological damages. The losses of homes, personal assets and belongings due to the heavy floods can lead to severe and critical traumatic and depressed conditions. The emotional affection to the residences and the losing all the belongings by the heavy floods is intensified by the enduring stress of dislocation and vagueness about the future.

Javed Khan, a community representative, provided a clear depiction of the psychological and physical impacts observed by during the floods of 2022 in Kheshgi Refugee Village. He explains the anguish and distress evident on the faces of the members of the community people who lost their houses and were compelled to live in temporary tents made up of cloth. The tents were meant to serve the purpose of shelters which were not in compliance, specifically in the severe weather conditions in the month of September 2022. The people of the community, particularly children and women, were compelled by the critical weather to remain inside the tents in the scorching and roasting heat. The cultural values of Afghan refugee communities played a role in complicating the situations in the community as women were often powerless to go outside of the confined tents, binding to the rigid cultural norms and values that imposed limitations on the mobility. The hard and harsh living conditions and circumstances in these temporary shelters, tied with the psychological suffering and ordeal of displacement, shaped a challenging and complicated environment for the refugees in the area. The scorching and roasting heat and inadequate shelter were aggravated by the emotional strain of losing their houses. The combination of physical distress and psychological stress streamlines the critical and severe impacts of the floods on physical health and mental welfare.

Raziq and Javed's experiences with the 2010 and 2022 floods further depicts the far-reaching impacts such calamities can have. Despite being in a comparatively steady situation related to the Afghan refugees, Raziq recalls experiencing substantial trauma from the floods of 2022 that badly affected his own house. The suffering gives him a profounder understanding of the

psychological distress of such calamities. The trauma he faced and experienced able him sympathize with other refugees' misery, as he has faced parallel challenges and understands the emotive and psychological anguish caused by losing belongings and witnessing critical living circumstances. Javed's own experiences underline the harshness of these bearings, describes how floods have disrupted lives and cause enduring suffering. The observations and own experiences explained the multifaceted and extensive results of such calamities, affecting both the physical and psychological health of the impacted communities.

4.3. Financial and economic impacts

Economy has always been the primary target of man-made or natural disasters because peace and stability is the basic requirement for economic activity. The RV have their own local economic and trade markets which are obviously depended on a peaceful environment and proper infrastructure. As mentioned above, the floods damaged the infrastructures and impacted people it had a considerable impact on their economy. Sher Rehmat, a respondent at the community says that:

The floods of the 2022 caused serious economic and financial challenges for the Afghan refugees of Kheshgi Refugee Village, who rely completely on daily wage labour work to provide support their families. With no savings and living hand to mouth, their income-generating activities were utterly interrupted. Residents often earned between 800 and 1000 rupees per day while working as unskilled or semi-skilled labourers in local chowks. However, when opportunities for work decreased, their children went hungry because their daily wages were the only source of money. For months following the catastrophe, the community waited for help from the government and humanitarian organisations. The damages caused to the houses of the flood affected people, lack of savings and resources, and significant losses of the income generating activities streamlines the perilous financial conditions. The floods of the 2022 in Nowshera caused an unpleasant sequence of poverty, making people unable to rebuild the devastated infrastructure and completely depending them on the support and assistance of others. The people were relying on daily labour work on nominal wages and lack of financial resources stressed the crucial need for the impactful assistance to subdue the economic and financial vulnerabilities caused by the natural calamities (S. Rehmat, personal communication, August 2024).

The heavy floods of the 2022 in Nowshera had profound economic and financial impacts of the people of the Kheshgi refugee village. The foremost result of the 2022 floods was the disturbance of the income generation activities of the residents. For quite some time following the 2022 floods, people of the community were waiting for assistance from government departments and national and international humanitarian organizations. The phase of doubt and ambiguity manifested critical economic problems for the people as floods affected the ability of earning. The people of refugee village basically rely on daily wage labour work for the livings. The people of the community did not have savings or financial resources which will help them in the hard times. They were living from hand to mouth and depending only on the daily wage labour work to provide the necessities to their families. These daily wage labourers

earned between 800 to 1000 rupees per day, a modest income that was crucial for their survival. They would typically gather in a central location, such as a chowk, hoping to secure labour opportunities. However, with the onset of floods, many of their usual work opportunities vanished. Wali Ullah, a respondent said that

The destruction caused by the floods meant that many areas were not suitable for labour, and the demand for their services diminished drastically. Most residents of Khesghi Refugee Village are either unskilled or semi-skilled, which limits their ability to find alternative sources of income. Without the opportunity for labour work, their income dried up, leading to a dire situation where basic needs, such as food for their children, could not be met (W. Ullah, personal communication, August, 2024).

Residents of the village encountered significant hardships during the floods due to a lack of money. They were living pay cheque to pay cheque, with little cash reserves to fall back on, and the devastation of their houses and livelihoods had put them in a precarious economic situation. With income sources disrupted, daily wage earners struggled to satisfy basic demands, throwing many families into long-term financial distress. The economic damage went beyond the immediate losses, hurting the community's general economic stability. Reduced purchasing power and reduced expenditure on necessities further impacted the local economy. The 2022 floods took away all the opportunities of the earning from the Afghan refugees living in Khesghi refugee village. The Afghan refugees in Khesghi entirely dependent on the daily wage labour work and secondly, they have not savings for the hard times. The refugees during and after the 2022 floods were completely dependent on the financial aid and support of national and international humanitarian organizations.

This was the reality of the 2022 floods, when survival became the one priority, overshadowing everything else. The destruction was widespread, with houses, schools, and livelihoods destroyed, leaving survivors in deep psychological pain. The floods made many people homeless and deprived them of essentials such as wood for cooking and clean water, causing anxiety and tension. Health concerns, combined with the pain of losing a home and facing uncertainty, slowed recuperation. In addition to physical destruction, the floods had a long-term impact on mental health, with survivors facing long-term psychological issues (I. Khan, personal communication, August 2024).

4.4. Impacts on livelihood

As the camp was completely under the grip of the floods, it had impacted the livelihood of the masses to a considerable level. Syed Shah, a respondent at the community opined that:

The income generation of the people of refugee village was completely dependent on daily labour, and they were also reliant on emergency responses and assistance from the government and humanitarian organizations. The people of community were already living below the poverty line and were vulnerable. I do not think that they would have any savings in banks or assets; they may not even have savings of 20,000 rupees (S. Shah, personal communication, August 2024).

The 2022 floods had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of the residents of Kheshgi Refugee Village. The community was already vulnerable, with the majority of people living below the poverty line and relying heavily on daily labour to meet their basic needs. This dependency on daily wage labour meant that any disruption in their ability to work had immediate and severe consequences on their ability to provide for their families. Prior to the 2022 floods, the refugees of the Kheshgi were already in bad conditions. The income generation was irregular and inadequate, leaving them with minimal to zero savings to shackle in times of emergencies. According to Akbar Ahmed, a community member:

It is evident that many of us (Afghan refugees) are not having adequate resources and savings, and to be realistic, many of the fellow refugees are not having even twenty thousand rupees in savings which can help in the time of such a crisis. The insufficiency of the financial resources made our people severely helpless when the 2022 floods struck, as they had no space to absorb the financial blow. The 2022 floods entirely disturbed the daily wage labour work prospects that the people depended on. Further, the floods caused many catastrophic destructions, which also took the opportunities of farming, agriculture, and construction works that were not available any longer. The initial earning sources of income generation activities vanished, and there were no means of supporting themselves and the households. The village is secluded from the nearby markets and areas where the mobility access is limited. The employment opportunities were also decreased due to the fact of being isolated from the markets. The issue was present before the floods of 2022 (A. Ahmed, personal communication, August 2024).

In the aftershock of the floods, the residents of the Kheshgi Refugee Village became entirely dependent on the humanitarian response of the national and international organization and government departments. Ijaz Ali, a respondent argued that:

The support from the national and international humanitarian organizations provided a sigh of relief, however, that were not the proper solutions to the enduring economic problems witnessed by the refugee community. The rely on the financial aid of the others illustrated the profound weakness and vulnerabilities of the people in the refugee village, where there are no stable sources of income left for people to recover from the hardships of the situation and rebuilding their livings (I. Ali, personal communication, August, 2024).

Zareen Khan, a respondent at the refugee village says that:

As compared to other refugee villages, the people of the Kheshgi Refugee Village are below the poverty line because they do not have savings and other resources to live an extravagant life. The people of this refugee village are totally dependent on the daily work. Whatever is earned by them, they finish it on that day, and nothing is left for tomorrow. Where there are such precarious conditions and then the flood struck the village, I do not think they could survive. All the refugee villages were completely dependent on the humanitarian assistive responses of the organizations (Z. Khan, personal communication, 2024).

The income generation activities of the residents of the refugee village were totally reliant on the daily wage labour work and the financial aids and assistance of the government departments and humanitarian organizations. The people living in the community, financial status is not up to the mark, as there are daily wage workers, which also contributed to their vulnerabilities. The refugees in Kheshgi do not have any savings and assets in their banks, and they even may not have fifteen to twenty thousand rupees (Z. Khan, personal communication, August 2024).

The floods of 2022 in Nowshera had a negative impact on the livelihood of the residents of Kheshgi Refugee Village, as narrated by Zareen. Most of the refugee village people were solely dependent on daily wage labour, which was the main source of their income, which was already an insignificant source of income generation. Even before the 2022 floods, the situation of the refugee village people was not considerable when it comes to income generation; however, the floods deteriorated their plight even more miserably by cutting off the fundamental sources of income. Daily labour has always remained a main source of income generation for many underprivileged communities and so for the Afghan refugees in Kheshgi, Nowshera. The daily labour chances are often changeable, and it also relies greatly on local market demands and economic activities. The devastation caused by the 2022 floods meant that many of the regular labour opportunities were no longer available for these people. Consequently, the previously insecure income sources were totally stopped, leaving families without the means to support themselves in the crisis.

The dependence of the refugee community on the assistive responses of the government department and humanitarian organization highlights the instability of the livelihoods of the people. Najeeb Ullah, a representative of a humanitarian organization, said that

Before the floods of 2022 in Kheshgi Refugee Village, the residents of the village were economically broken and were totally relying on the aid of the organizations to survive. The support and assistance provided by the organizations were not fulfilling their necessities, and many of their needs remained unmet. This circumstance showed their livelihoods' lack of resilience and the critical need for long-term remedies. Residents had no financial buffer to restore their life since they lacked considerable savings—many only had 20,000 rupees. The disaster destroyed what little they had, exacerbating hardship and delaying recovery. The lack of savings increased their dependency on help, emphasizing the fragility of an already precarious population (N. Ullah, personal communication, August 2024).

The impact of the floods on their livelihoods extended beyond just the immediate loss of income. The devastation of house and belongings, combined with the loss of daily labour work opportunities, contributed to the cycle of destitution that was hard to overcome. With no resources, the residents could not be able to repair their damage houses or do the replacements of the lost possessions, which in turn disturbed their ability to return to daily labour work or find new opportunities. The destruction of their income sources and the resulting poverty created a cycle of dependency and vulnerability that is difficult to escape. The floods not only

destroyed their physical possessions but also shattered their economic stability, leaving them in a state of extreme hardship and uncertainty.

4.5. Social impacts

To examine the other side of the story, we focused exploring the social impacts of the floods. The chaos it creates in the village had significant social impacts on the society. Bahadur Khan, an elder respondent at the refugee village responds that:

Normally, Afghan people live very peacefully and care for their neighbours in the community. However, when their children are starving, the concept of ethics and morality seems to disappear because everyone wants to secure bread or receive assistance to provide food for their children. When organizations came to provide assistance, they did not bother about taking care of their neighbours or adhering to ethical standards; instead, they were solely focused on competing for the assistance. Poverty is very bad thing. We faced the issues where our neighbours and friend were saying that you have received much assistance, and we have received less assistance. In such disaster everyone wants that he or she get more for their family. The main social issues which we have observed was the competition over assistance among our brethren and this was the one of the causes of the flood. Before the flood, everybody was living peacefully, and they used to share their pieces of bread among the neighbours and friends (B. Khan, personal communication, August 2024).

The 2022 floods had profound social impacts on the Afghan community, as recounted by Bahadur Khan. Traditionally, Afghan people are known for living peacefully and maintaining strong communal bonds, often caring deeply for their neighbours. This sense of community and mutual support is a fundamental part of their social fabric. However, the floods brought about drastic changes, challenging these long-held values and disrupting the harmony that once existed among them. Nazeer Gul, a resident of the village, said that:

One of the most significant social impacts observed during the floods was the erosion of ethical and moral standards within the community. When people's basic needs, especially food for their children, became scarce, the desperation to secure resources overshadowed their usual concern for others. This shift in behaviour was particularly evident when humanitarian organizations arrived to provide assistance. Instead of the community coming together to ensure that everyone received help, people became focused on competing for the available resources. The sense of unity and cooperation that once defined their interactions was replaced by a survival instinct, where securing bread or assistance for one's own family took precedence over the well-being of neighbours (N. Gul, personal communication, August, 2024).

Poverty played a crucial role in this change. The community's existing economic hardships were exacerbated by the floods, intensifying the competition for aid. Bahadur Khan highlights how the desperation for resources led to tension among neighbours and friends. In times of disaster, the struggle to secure more assistance for one's family became a source of conflict.

Accusations of unequal distribution of aid fuelled resentment, with some individuals feeling that others had received more help than they had. The observation of injustice weekend the hope and harmony among the community people, which had formerly been considered by joint care and collective difficulties. Nawaz Khan, a representative of a humanitarian organization, said that:

The 2022 floods discovered the delicateness of social cohesions in the forms of adversities. Prior to the 2022 floods, the people of the refugee village were obvious for the gestures of generosity, where the community shared what minimum they had with the other fellow community members. The practices of taking care were the most important characteristic of the residents of the refugee village before the floods which was bringing unity and integrity among the community. However, the 2022 floods disturbed the equilibrium, revealing the how rapidly social cohesion and unity could disentangle when the fundamental necessities were endangered. The struggle for assistance formed separations that did not present before, streamlining the impact of outside compressions on the societal relations (N. Khan, personal communication, August, 2024).

The stated observations highlight how the 2022 floods not just triggered physical devastation, however, led to a collapse in social values and cultural norms. The catastrophe carried out the nastiest in some, as the determination to protect resources for one's own self and family superseded the social ethos that had long been an essential characteristic of Afghan people. The social problems that arose during the 2022 floods, such as race over the assistance and the ensuing rigidities, were a blunt disparity to the harmonious and supportive way of life that had formerly prevailed. The floods of 2022 had profound and long-lasting social impacts on the Afghan people. The calamity interrupted the sturdy social ties that had conventionally detained the community combined, leading to race, struggle, and fading of social bonds. The move from shared assistance and support to personal endurance reproduced the severe realities of destitution and lack, highlighting the susceptibilities of social unity in form of severe difficulties. The 2022 floods not only challenge the physical structure of the people but also experienced the suppleness of its social attire, leaving a long-term watermark on the way community people cooperated and interrelated to one another.

4.6. Impacts on Female, PWDs and Children

Women, children and persons with disabilities are always well-thought-out to be utterly susceptible among the existing vulnerable groups. They were among the lowest layer of vulnerability. It was important to explore the impacts of the floods on their lives. Haji Gul, a respondent of the interview at the Kheshgi refugee village says that:

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at Kheshgi Refugee Village were among those most exposed to the 2022 floods. PWDs, who were already struggling with mobility on badly maintained streets, became completely dependent on family members as a result of the flooding. Pregnant women and breastfeeding moms also suffered great problems, which

were exacerbated by a lack of close medical facilities. The nearest Rural Health Centre (RHC), which was 10-12 Kilometres distant, was inaccessible owing to flooded roads, depriving inhabitants of critical medical attention. Lactating mothers struggled to provide for their infants since poverty prevented them from purchasing formula milk and inadequate nutrition reduced their capacity to feed. The floods also affected education, as the nearby school, PSC-102, was severely damaged and required nearly a month of reconstruction. The disaster highlighted and aggravated the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities, women, and children, emphasizing the vital need for accessible infrastructure and support during emergencies (H. Gul, personal communication, August, 2024).

The floods of 2022 in Khashgi Refugee Village carried enormous hurdles, mainly for susceptible groups like women, children, persons with disabilities. These vulnerable groups, previously fronting hurdles in regular circumstances, were additionally deprived by calamity, striving with hurdles that were aggravated by the flood. It was streamlined the critical impact on differently able persons, who are amongst the utmost susceptible and vulnerable people of the society. Khalil Jan was of the view that

PWDs in Khashgi Refugee Village experienced enormous obstacles during the 2022 floods, as their already limited infrastructure forced them to rely on family for mobility and basic needs. Submerged streets made them more vulnerable, separating them from aid and safe shelter. Women, especially pregnant and breastfeeding moms, suffered immensely. They were trapped in tents with no access to neighbouring medical services, posing major health hazards. The village's flooded flatlands cut off all connections to the outside world, prohibiting access to medical treatment and crucial materials, risking lives in an already terrible situation (K. Jan, personal communication, August, 2024).

Lactating mothers in Khashgi Refugee Village suffered greatly during the floods. Many people were unable to afford milk for their newborns due to economic constraints, as prices ranged between 1500 and 2000 rupees each box. Malnourished moms struggled to produce enough milk, putting their infants' health at danger. This crisis emphasized the underlying concerns of poverty and food insecurity, which were worsened by the disaster. Children's schooling was also significantly affected. The local school, PSC-102, was severely damaged and required more than a month to clean and reconstruct. This disruption hampered not only the children's academic achievement, but also their sense of security and normalcy. The floods exacerbated the challenges for all vulnerable groups, particularly due to a lack of barrier-free access. Pregnant women, lactating moms, and children endured life-changing impacts, with disruptions to health, education, and key supplies increasing the community's struggle to recover in the face of great adversity. Saleem Khan, a community member said that

The inability to reach hospitals, markets, or other essential services left PWDs, women, and children isolated and without the necessary support. The physical barriers created by the floodwaters, combined with the pre-existing lack of infrastructure to support these groups, resulted in a situation where their needs were largely unmet. This isolation and lack of access to essential services underscored the broader social and structural

inequalities that exist within the refugee village, which were only brought to the forefront by the disaster (S. Khan, personal communication, August, 2024).

The 2022 floods in Khashgi Refugee Village had devastating impacts on the most vulnerable members of the community, particularly PWDs, women, and children. Akhter Jamal, a PWD himself, said that:

PWDs faced increased isolation and dependency, women were trapped without access to medical care and nutrition, and children's education was severely disrupted. The floods not only exacerbated the existing challenges faced by these groups but also highlighted the structural inequalities that leave them vulnerable in times of crisis. The disaster served as a stark reminder of the need for more inclusive and resilient infrastructure that can support all members of society, particularly in the face of natural disasters (A. Jamal. personal communication, August, 2024).

4.7. Environmental impacts

Natural disasters driven by environmental issues have had disastrous consequences for Khashgi Refugee Village and Nowshera. Bahadur Khan, a flood victim, recalls how the 2010 and 2022 floods devastated deep woods used for grazing and rendered once-fertile regions barren. Cultivated grounds were frequently damaged, making them unsuitable for agriculture. The waterway nearby Shalakhel and Dagoona, which factually maintained the inherent plants and fascinated migrating birds, has witnessed considerable harm, subsequent in a decrease in the numbers of birds. These ecological transformations validate the long-lasting impact of the 2022 floods on the area's ecology and the livings. The 2022 floods had a significant effect on the local environment and nature (B. Khan, personal communication, July, 2024).

The floods, alongside with that in the year 2010, had a destructive ecological impact on the refugee village in Khashgi specifically and the wider district Nowshera. The flourishing atmosphere of this area, considered by the impenetrable forestry and lush farming lands, has been greatly transformed, leading to a cascade of environmental results. Prior to the floods, the areas around refugee village Khashgi was a habitat to extreme forestry where animals grazed, and the local ecology thrived. The forestry was a significant resource for the residents of the refugee village, providing that not just grazing green area for livestock, however, contributive to the total ecological strength of the region. The inundation of floodwater also transformed the local streams ecology, specifically near Shalakhel and Dagoona areas near the Khashgi refugee village. Prior to the floods, these regions were recognized for their natural grounds, where trees and plants raised lavishly through the summer as the tributary water retreated. These fields were crucial habitats for local wildlife and served as important stopover points for migratory birds, including ducks, which would visit the area annually. However, the floods have transformed this once vibrant landscape. Amjad was of the view that

The 2010 flood uprooted many trees, leaving the area barren. In the years following that disaster, the land was slowly cultivated for farming again, bringing some semblance of recovery. Yet, the 2022 flood struck again with such force that it once more rendered

the land barren, undoing years of rehabilitation efforts. The repeated devastation has left the land infertile and unsuitable for both agriculture and forestry, a harsh reminder of the vulnerability of the local environment to such extreme weather events (Amjad, personal communication, August, 2024).

The environmental impact of the floods extended beyond the forested areas. The flat lands surrounding Kheshgi Refugee Village, which were primarily used for farming, have also been rendered unsuitable for agriculture due to the severe flooding. These lands, which once supported the livelihoods of many local farmers, are now barren. The inundation of flood water dumped sludge, wreckages, and other contaminants crossways the grounds, which not just devastated current harvests, however, tarnished the mud quality, making it hard for the future farming. The harm of the cultivable land has had a straight effect on the resident's nutrition safety and financial firmness, deepening the hurdles already confronted by the refugees. The 2022 floods caused great mutilation to these cultivable lands, destructing the plants and disrupting the subtle sense of balance of the ecology. Consequently, there has been a considerable decay in migratory bird numbers in the region, indicating a significant environmental devastation. The demolition of these environmental possessions not just impacting the nature, however, also the resident of the area dependent on the natural resources for numerous necessities. The deterioration in wildlife, especially bird species that were once mutual in the region, highlights the long-lasting results of the ecological decay resulted by consecutive floods. The ecological impacts of 2022 floods on refugee village Kheshgi and the neighbouring localities have been deep and extensive. The devastation of the forestry, losses of cultivable farming lands, and the disturbance of the local ecology have all directly contributed to massive decay in the ecological health of the area.

5. Conclusion

The floods of 2022 had a significant impact on the lives of the Afghan refugees residing in Kheshgi Refugee Village, Nowshera. The floods have affected almost every aspect of their lives and made them utterly vulnerable. The catastrophic calamity caused physical and psychological issues, devastation to the infrastructure of the village, disrupting social cohesion, natural and ecological problems, and economic and financial instability, along with problems and hurdles for the already vulnerable groups such as differently abled persons, women, and children. Waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, skin infections, and respiratory problems made many people sick. The lack of clean water and limited medical facilities exacerbated the situation. Physical injuries were also common, and the overburdened health system struggled to keep up with the increasing demand. Psychologically, the floods traumatised migrants, causing widespread anxiety and depression, particularly among those already affected by the conflict.

Infrastructure was severely damaged, with homes, roads and public facilities destroyed. Limited village services were disrupted, isolating residents and hampering reconstruction efforts. The competition for scarce resources further intensified the strains, substituting

cohesion with conflict. The differences extended as women and persons with disabilities strived hard to access assistance and restructure their miserable lives. The ecological resultants add deterioration of farming land, earth erosion, loss of plants, making the region dilapidated and damaging the agricultural and pastoral societies. This environmental degradation has had major economic consequences. Financially, the floods have devastated the neighbourhood, eliminated limited sources of income and increased dependence on external aid. Poverty and food insecurity have increased as residents have lost their main source of income. Vulnerable communities have faced unique obstacles. People with disabilities have had limited mobility and access to essential services, while women have faced increased health risks due to lack of medical care. Schools have been destroyed, significantly affecting children's education. The 2022 floods have had a long-term impact on the population of the Kheshgi Refugee Village, affecting everything from health and infrastructure to social and economic stability. The recovery process remains a serious challenge, requiring continued efforts by the government and humanitarian organizations to address the long-term needs of the vulnerable community.

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