

## Abstract

Flooding and poverty are the two social problems that have coexisted within the rural communities of Tsholotsho district. As a result, both problems have negatively affected and disrupted the everyday lives of people living in the district. This study highlights how the two problems combine to impact human societies.

The article seeks to establish the impact of flooding on the development of rural communities, to analyse how poverty manifests itself in rural communities, to analyse the relationship that exists between flooding and poverty and to suggest ways of dealing with the two problems. A qualitative research approach, based on interviews and observations, is used to gather data from the research participants.

The study finds that flooding impeded development through the shifting of human populations, destruction of crops, shelter and livestock. Floods also affected human capital through causing injuries to members of the community. Poverty manifested itself in three ways – as a development barrier, a vulnerability amplifier and a non-discriminatory agent. The study further finds that a strong relationship exists between flooding and poverty because of the fact that flooding causes or worsens poverty, whereas poverty increases vulnerability. The authors conclude that the poor need government assistance to reconstruct shelter destroyed by floods. Furthermore, programs aimed at improving livelihoods of the poor are an indispensable imperative.