Social Psychology of Disaster Survivors: Case Study of Pekalongan, Indonesia Flood-Affected Residents

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ABSTRACT: Tidal flooding has become a chronic environmental problem in Simonet Hamlet, Pekalongan, Indonesia causing daily inundation of up to one meter and accelerating coastal erosion. This study aims to analyze the forms of suffering experienced by affected residents, identify the social-psychological trauma caused by prolonged tidal flooding, and describe the coping strategies used by the community. This research employs a qualitative method using interviews, observations, and documentation, while data were analyzed with an interactive model. The results show that residents experience multidimensional losses, including the destruction of houses and land, restricted mobility due to isolation, declining health conditions, loss of stable employment, and increased socio-economic burdens. The social-psychological impacts include recurring trauma during flood events, stress related to submerged homes and unstable livelihoods, forced job diversification, and the loss of long-term aspirations. To cope with these conditions, residents adopt physiological and psychological adaptation strategies and periodically evacuate to higher ground. The findings underscore the need for integrated disaster-management policies and psychosocial support to strengthen community resilience in chronically flooded coastal areas.

INTRODUCTION

Social psychology explains how extreme environmental changes can disrupt collective behavior, emotional stability, and community resilience. In disaster-prone regions, prolonged exposure to hazards often creates shared trauma, uncertainty, and shifts in social functioning phenomena that shape how individuals perceive threats and cope with continuous stress. This perspective is particularly relevant in coastal communities facing chronic tidal flooding.

Pekalongan, Indonesia, is one of the coastal regions along the North Coast (Pantura) of Java that has experienced such persistent environmental and psychosocial pressure. Tidal flooding (rob) has occurred since the early 2000s, when rising seawater began inundating settlements, ponds, and access roads. Rob is defined as the inundation of low-elevation coastal areas by brackish or seawater during high tides (Novita et al., 2021), with seawater intrusion occurring through rivers, drainage channels, and underground flows (Rosada et al., 2022). Over time, this phenomenon has expanded inland, increasing residents' exposure to prolonged uncertainty and repeated losses.

Government mitigation efforts include constructing coastal embankments from the Sengkareng River to the Meduri River, completed in 2020. Although initially effective in reducing

surface inundation, the embankments failed during the heavy rains of May–June 2020 and again in June 2022. Hydrologist Pramono Hadi from UGM attributes these failures to inadequate planning, poorly standardized construction, and the absence of detailed risk mapping (Dzulfaroh, 2022). In addition, land subsidence and rising sea levels continue to dominate the causes of tidal flooding in coastal areas (Syafitri & Rochani, 2022).

One of the most severely affected areas is Simonet Hamlet, which has nearly disappeared from the map due to coastal erosion and daily inundation of up to one meter. The hamlet, originally 21 hectares, has been reduced to about 30% of its size. The population declined from 70 families in 2005 to only 28 families in 2021 (AP, 2021). Many residents have abandoned their homes, while those who remain face isolation, repeated displacement, and daily exposure to threatening environmental conditions factors that intensify collective stress and psychological vulnerability.

Prior research on tidal flooding in Pekalongan predominantly focuses on physical, environmental, and infrastructural aspects. However, the long-term psychosocial impacts fear, chronic anxiety, stress, loss of social identity, and the collapse of future aspirations are rarely explored. This forms a clear research gap, as chronic disasters reshape not only the physical environment but also the psychological well-being and social dynamics of affected communities.

Therefore, this study is urgently needed to (1) analyze the forms of suffering experienced by residents of Simonet Hamlet, (2) identify the social-psychological trauma caused by prolonged tidal flooding, and (3) explore community-based coping strategies to address such trauma.

Rationale of the Study

Given that tidal flooding in Pekalongan has evolved from an environmental hazard into a prolonged collective trauma that transforms residents' emotional stability, livelihood patterns, and social identity. A psychosocial perspective is essential to understand the deeper consequences experienced by communities such as Simonet Hamlet. Existing studies have primarily addressed the physical and infrastructural dimensions of tidal flooding such as land subsidence, embankment failure, and coastal erosion while the psychological and social suffering of residents remains underexplored. Without understanding how individuals interpret their losses, adapt to chronic uncertainty, and construct coping mechanisms within disrupted social environments, disaster management efforts risk remaining incomplete and insensitive to human needs. Therefore, this study is grounded in the urgency to highlight the psychosocial impacts of recurrent tidal flooding and to generate evidence-based insights that can inform more holistic, community-oriented, and psychologically responsive disaster mitigation policies.

Research Aim

This study aims to comprehensively examine the psychosocial dimensions of tidal flooding experienced by residents of Simonet Hamlet in Pekalongan. Specifically, the research seeks to analyze the forms of suffering that emerge from prolonged exposure to daily inundation, to identify the social-psychological trauma resulting from chronic environmental disruption, and to explore the adaptive strategies employed by the community in responding to this ongoing disaster. By focusing on these interconnected aspects, the study intends to generate an in-depth understanding of how tidal flooding shapes emotional wellbeing, social functioning, and resilience among affected residents, thereby contributing to more holistic and human-centered approaches in coastal disaster management.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is used to investigate natural conditions and understand phenomena holistically within their real-life context (Sugiyono, 2008).

Based on its purpose, this research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at systematically, factually, and comprehensively describing the psychological realities and experiences of disaster survivors in Simonet Hamlet, Semut Village, Wonokerto District, Pekalongan, Indonesia (Sanjaya, 2014).

Research Procedures

The research procedures consisted of three main stages aligned with the study's objectives. First, the researchers explored the dynamics of suffering experienced by residents affected by tidal flooding in Simonet Hamlet. Second, the study examined the forms of social-psychological trauma arising from prolonged exposure to tidal floods. Third, the researchers formulated community strategies used to cope with and overcome this psychological trauma, interpreted through relevant theoretical frameworks.

Data Collection

To obtain comprehensive and integrated data, this study employed three data collection techniques, namely interviews to capture the personal experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses of residents affected by tidal flooding; observations to document the physical conditions of the environment and the residents' daily adaptive behaviors; and documentation involving the collection of written records, photographs, and supporting materials related to the tidal flood disaster (Bogdan, 1998). The selection of Simonet Hamlet as the research site was based on its status as the most severely affected coastal settlement in Pekalongan Regency and Pekalongan City, making it a uniquely critical setting for examining the long-term psychosocial impacts of tidal flooding.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three continuous stages, beginning with data reduction that involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data into meaningful categories, followed by data display where information is presented in narrative and thematic forms to support interpretation, and concluding with conclusion drawing and verification conducted through iterative analysis and cross-checking to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and validity of the findings (Sugiyono, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Portrait of Simonet Hamlet affected by Tidal Flooding

The hamlet of Simonet is now completely isolated from the mainland, and access to the area can only be reached by boat. Based on interviews with Slamet, one of the residents affected by the tidal flood, several families remain in the hamlet, including the Kasjoyo, Karim, Carwan, Da'i, and Partinah families, although they are rarely at home. The only family that consistently resides in the hamlet is Darminingsih's family, as her husband has been unable to work following a medical operation. They currently live together with their children and grandchildren.

From observations in the field, the researcher documented that the entire hamlet has turned into a lake-like area surrounded by tidal water. The journey from the Sengkareng River embankment to Simonet by boat took approximately 45 minutes, following the Dawuhan River whose original boundaries were no longer visible due to continuous inundation. Tidal flooding has not only submerged residential areas but has also devastated the socio-economic foundations of coastal residents whose livelihoods depend on aquaculture. Along the route to Simonet, numerous milkfish and vaname shrimp ponds, extending over hundreds of hectares, were found to be abandoned and poorly maintained. According to Slamet, the construction of the embankment, although effective in

reducing tidal flooding in settlements south of it, has caused the northern area, including residents' ponds, to be permanently submerged.

After a long journey along the river, the research team reached the vicinity of RT 14, the part of Simonet directly facing the Java Sea. All houses in this area had been abandoned, leaving behind empty structures as a testament to prolonged inundation. Since no residents remained, the boat continued toward Route 15, which required an additional 30-minute trip. Upon arrival, the team was able to meet Darminingsih and conduct an interview aboard the boat in front of her home. Additional interviews were conducted with several Simonet residents now living temporarily on the mainland of Semut Village some renting houses and others occupying emergency shelters built on provincial bengkok land.

Field observations reveal that abandoned houses in both RT 14 and RT 15 stand as silent witnesses to the long-standing tidal flood disaster that gradually submerged the entire hamlet. According to Slamet, tidal flooding had been a recurring phenomenon since 2012, typically lasting only a day before receding. However, since the construction of the tidal embankment in 2020, located south of Simonet, the hamlet has been permanently inundated while areas behind the embankment such as Dusun Lampis are now protected from tidal flooding. Despite this, Slamet expressed acceptance, stating that,

> "…every development has consequences, and the consequence of building the embankment is the sinking of Simonet…" (Slamet, 2023).

The Suffering of Simonet Hamlet Residents Affected by Rob Floods

On the coast of Pekalongan, land subsidence is no longer a secret, but a real occurrence. Many experts and researchers have studied land subsidence in the coastal areas of Pekalongan Regency. According to El-Fath et al., (2022), land subsidence on the coast of Pekalongan is 25.13 to 40.49 cm/year. The area of tidal flood inundation in 2020 was 1081.93 hectares and is predicted to expand to 7389.47 hectares in 2030 and the embankment is predicted to be completely submerged. This land subsidence is said to be the cause of tidal flooding along the coast of Pekalongan Regency.

The impact of tidal flooding in Simonet Hamlet has caused losses for the community there. Simonet, which used to be connected to the mainland, is now submerged. Darminingsih feels cut off from access to the outside world. She feels trapped. Her mobility is limited, for example, to take her child to school at SMPN 2 Siwalan, which is only about 3 km away, it takes an hour, because her child must take a boat first and then ride a motorbike. That is if the road she takes is not flooded by tidal water. In terms of health, Darminingsih and her family admit that they often have itching and colds. Cooking activities are done on the table (perched).

When asked about her family's suffering in staying in the Simonet Hamlet, she said,

> "…What else can we do... this is our only asset. It's better to stay here without paying. We've also rented on the mainland but couldn't afford the rent..."

Darminingsih is a tough woman who is the backbone of her family. Her husband, who was sick and had just had surgery, seemed to add to her burden of suffering. Every day, Darminingsih sets fishing nets to catch crabs and shrimp (Darminingsih, 2023).

Previously, Darminingsih, like other mothers in Simonet Hamlet, worked as a jasmine flower picker, which is indeed a favorite plant of coastal residents.

> "…The residents here are mostly farmers and jasmine flower pickers, besides, of course, working as fishermen…".

Now there are no more jasmine plants and flowers. There were also no pickers who chose to evacuate to the mainland of Lampis, Semut, Tratebang hamlets, and other villages.

Rosada et al., (2022) stated that losses due to flooding are generally relative and difficult to identify clearly, consisting of flood losses due to direct and indirect flooding. Direct flood losses refer to physical damage or losses to infrastructure caused by flooding. Examples of direct losses include loss of life or injury, loss of property, damage to settlements, damage to clean water systems, and crop failure, among others. Meanwhile, indirect losses due to flooding refer to the difficulties and losses that arise indirectly from flooding, such as the loss of communication, disruption to education, health, and business activities, as well as psychological trauma caused by flooding.

The impact of tidal flooding Sakuntaladewi & Sylviani, (2014) can be classified into two aspects: the danger of flooding and the damage caused. The danger of flooding is more emphasized in terms of its non-physical aspects, such as loss of life, environmental contamination that endangers health, beauty, comfort, and disruption of socio-economic activities. while losses are divided into direct, indirect, and difficult-to-estimate losses.

Direct losses are in the form of monetary or financial losses compared to the original financial condition if the flood had not occurred, such as losses to rice fields, fishponds, house repairs, public buildings, and so on. Indirect losses include evacuation costs, relocation expenses, loss of salary or wages, production downtime, and lost sales. These losses are identified in losses that kill business turnover, such as the inability to utilize pond land anymore, changes in livelihoods, and so on.

Losses due to tidal floods that are difficult to estimate are defined as flood losses that cannot be measured in financial terms. Many experts and researchers have studied the impact of tidal flood disasters. This is because the impact of tidal flood disasters cannot be generalized; however, a general line can be drawn, namely, between direct and indirect impacts. Different studies will produce different conclusions.

Social Psychological Impact on Simonet Hamlet Residents

The social psychological impact caused by tidal flooding is stress due to thoughts of tidal flooding which greatly disturbs the residents of Simonet Hamlet. The tidal flooding that has been going on for a long time and its quite severe impacts have hit the Wonokerto District area, causing some residents to choose to move to other areas that are not affected by tidal flooding. Residents who did not move argued that their current residence is their own hometown so they are reluctant to leave it. This was done by Darminingsih and her family. According to her,

> "…Well, what else can we do? This is the only place we live. If we rent, we have to pay. So even though we have rented, it doesn't feel comfortable. Not to mention that every year the rent bill worth 3 million always comes to him..." (Darminingsih, 2023). It seems that he justified it because of work factors and economic problems.

According to residents of Simonet Hamlet, Wonokerto District, tidal flooding began to occur around 2012, since then flooding has occurred frequently and has gotten bigger every year. Initially, the tidal flood was only seen pooling in the gutters and overflowing onto the roads, but over time the tidal flood grew bigger and began to submerge residents' houses. It peaked in 2020, when the new tidal flood control embankment was operational and was unable to withstand the heavy rainwater discharge (Slamet, 2023).

Residents also said that in renovating their houses, they did not receive any assistance from the government. So they use their personal money in home renovation. This can be seen from the house built by Slamet's parents and several of his neighbors who built temporary houses at their own expense on the province's bengkok land located in Semut Village, Kec. Wonokerto. Government assistance in the form of road repairs, originating from village funds.

Currently, the provincial government is relocating the residents of Simonet Hamlet so that they can live properly both physiologically and psychologically. According to Sugiono, Head of Semut Village,

> "…(assistance) from the government is available and provided. But there are some residents who do not want to move or have their houses relocated because they are comfortable in their own homes, but the government still makes them afraid that later if they really don't want to and the government doesn't make them, they are afraid that if something big happens again and they don't have a place to live, then they will protest so the government will still decide to make the relocation…" (Sugiyono, 2023).

According to Choirul et al., (2019) social psychology, there is a feeling of loss of control over one's life and the uncertainty that follows a disaster. Tiefenbacher (2012) also explains that the psychological impact of disasters is that individuals try to protect their resources, such as property, social roles, energy, and personal characteristics (self-confidence). Loss or threat to these resources can cause emotional stress. Common symptoms found in disaster victims are fatigue, confusion, impaired concentration, attention deficit disorder, anxiety, depression, grief, sleep disturbance, changes in eating patterns, substance abuse, and so on, so that these effects can vary in mild levels or progress to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The social psychological burden is felt more heavily by women than men. This can be caused by the increasing social burden (for example, having to help earn a living) that women must bear, as well as environmental conditions that prevent women from leaving flood-prone areas. Given the higher psychological vulnerability of female flood victims and flood victims who do not have romantic partners, it is important to accommodate both factors in assessing the psychological well-being of flood victims. Darminingsih, for example, is now the breadwinner of her family because her husband is ill, while her son-in-law is often busy gambling - instead of contributing to his family's economic well-being (Darminingsih, 2023).

Several residents interviewed felt traumatized. Winarni, for example, a mother of several teenagers who fled to Lampis Hamlet, said that she and her family felt traumatized every time a tidal flood came. Her school-age child was eventually transferred to a school on the plains, rather than spending time every day dropping her child off because the road access was cut off (Winarni, 2023).

Stress is also related to their health. Itching, heat, fever, and chills (colds) are physical and psychological dilemmas for residents affected by the tidal flood. Winarni, Darminingsih, Slamet, and other residents. In the midst of psychological problems due to the impact of the tidal flood, Winarni's husband, a fisherman (Goto), disappeared and drowned at sea while fishing with his boat. Until this research was conducted, the bodies of her husband and his boat were not found.

The tidal flood that has submerged the Simonet Hamlet has buried their dreams and future. Some residents of the Simonet Hamlet, including those who are still living there and those who have relocated to mainland hamlets and are now residing in refugee camps funded personally, are experiencing uncertainty in the form of doubts about recovering from the tidal disaster that struck their hamlet. Almost all informants stated that recovering the Simonet Hamlet is difficult (or impossible). Darminingsih and 7 other families remain living in Simonet Hamlet in very limited conditions. Winarni, Syakir, and several other residents who rent are unsure about returning their land and belongings to Simonet. Selamet and several families who built shelters in the refugee camp resigned themselves to leaving their homes. They found it hard to move on with all their memories at Simonet.

Strategy to Overcome Social Psychological Trauma Due to the Rob Flood Disaster

First: Physiological and social Adaptation of Simonet Hamlet Residents Affected by Tidal Floods. The occurrence of tidal floods has a major impact on the lives of the community and their environment (Utami et al., 2021). The tidal floods that occur annually have numerous impacts on the community. Not only do they experience property losses, but they also hinder school activities, work, and other social activities. The community is required to continue carrying out activities, especially working in the midst of tidal floods, so that daily needs can be met.

Adaptation as a response that has been carried out by the community in dealing with tidal floods tends to be the same in each flood class area, but adaptation is more visible in high-class flood areas located in areas that are close to the coast. Communities affected by tidal floods with high inundation tend to have high adaptation capabilities compared to those affected by moderate or even low tidal floods (Utami et al., 2021).

The results of a study conducted by Utami et al., (2021) showed that home and infrastructure repairs were mostly carried out in communities living in tidal floods of 30 cm and above compared to those with floods <30 cm. Communities living and directly bordering the coast are considered to have a high awareness of coastal erosion, which can cause tidal flooding, because they are directly affected when it occurs (Choirunnisa & Giyarsih, 2018).

Communities living directly adjacent to the coast will have higher knowledge about the changes that occur and how to deal with and overcome them. Communities that live directly adjacent to the coast or in coastal areas are highly vulnerable, as there is no seawater barrier to protect settlements (Firdaus et al., 2022). Communities with these regional conditions are required to further hone their abilities to adapt.

According to Yuliati (2011), adaptation consists of two parts, namely 1) physical adaptation, which is genetic adaptation that includes phenotypic and genotypic adaptation. Phenotypic adaptation is a morphological adaptation that occurs only individually, while genotypic adaptation is an evolution that is a symptom of adaptation, 2) socio-cultural adaptation, namely the physical evolution of humans through socio-cultural factors. Meanwhile, Rosada et al., (2022) had a different view in understanding adaptation, he said that adaptation includes: a) Communal adaptation, the process of adjusting to the environment that occurs as an indirect result of population organization, b) External adaptation, the process of adjusting the social structure to the social environment, c) Genetic adaptation, individual adjustment to the environment, d) Individual adaptation, individual adjustment to the environment as a direct result of individual efforts that are indirectly the result of organized population activities. From this explanation, the adaptation process is selective and has a great capacity to overcome problems independently. Still in Yuliati, Bennet in 1976 stated that adaptation is a process in which organisms or groups of organisms face changes that are responsive to elements, structures, and compositions that regulate homeostasis, both short-term and long-term environmental changes where they are located.

In general, tidal floods in Pekalongan Regency have caused a lot of damage to houses, road infrastructure, public facilities such as schools and health services, sanitation, yard land, dry fields, rice fields, and ponds. The community's adaptation patterns to tidal flood disasters include raising the front of the house, making terraced houses, migrating, raising roads, making ditch embankments, making sanitation above the river, raising pond beds, raising pond boundaries with nets, and choosing rice plant seeds that are resistant to high salinity.

The community in Wonokerto District, Pekalongan Regency, which is located on the coast and affected by the tidal flood disaster, has also adapted to the tidal flood disaster that continues to occur in their environment. The adaptation strategy carried out by the Wonokerto community, in general, in physical efforts, is by filling and raising the foundation of the house so that when the sea rises, tidal water does not enter the house and flood the room inside the house. Operating a water suction machine to move puddles of water that are difficult to recede. Raise village roads and repair

main roads. The costs for disposal come from the government and from community self-help. Planting mangrove plants to reduce abrasion and prevent more water from entering the land. However, physical adaptation as above is difficult to do by the residents of Simonet Hamlet, whose land, soil, roads, and houses are all submerged. So, the way to do physical adaptation is to evacuate to land either by renting, making a shack in a temporary shelter or even waiting for the relocation of the residents of Simonet Hamlet carried out by the government.

Adaptation strategies involving non-physical efforts are implemented by the community through job diversification. For the Wonokerto community, when they cannot leave the house to do activities outside the home, they choose to do activities inside the house, such as batik and trading. Adaptation strategies in order to utilize land submerged in tidal floods are carried out by converting land affected by tidal floods into ponds so that they can still generate income. In the Simonet Hamlet community, who work as jasmine flower farmers, jasmine flower pickers, and pond farmers, they convert to become traveling megono rice sellers, sewing workers, batik workers, and others. Meanwhile, those who previously worked as fishermen have not changed. This was conveyed by the Head of Semut Village,

"…Jasmine flower farmers, pond farmers, and fishermen. Now, there are those who have changed professions, such as garment factories, laborers, tailors, and fishermen…" (Sugiyono, 2023).

Second: Psychological and social Adaptation of Simonet Hamlet Residents Affected by Rob Floods. For people who are accustomed to and struggle with natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, landslides, flash floods, rob floods, and others every day, they are more prepared to face disasters when they come to them. For example, people at the foot of Mount Labu Kerinci, West Sumatera, know how to deal with the arrival of hot clouds, dust and cold flood lava. Their adaptation is carried out by preparing: 1) Building strong foundations, walls and roofs of houses so that they do not collapse easily if a disaster occurs. 2) Wearing thicker clothes and masks in the morning and evening because the area is cold and to protect themselves from volcanic ash. 3) People collect food and drinks that are easy to cook and can be found around them. 4) In plantation crops, people adapt agricultural crops by planting plantation crops that have a quick harvest period and looking at the weather situation (Asrofi et al., 2017).

Residents of Selopuro Village, Nganjuk Regency whose land was hit by landslides due to heavy rains adapted by carrying out *coping behavior* to adapt to the new environment. Residents were able to carry out their activities as usual, although until now they are still taking refuge in the homes of neighbors or relatives because residents have to wait for the results of the relocation from the local government, build fences on the cliff cracks, and stop activities in areas prone to landslides when it rains. Residents who experience psychological trauma reflect *a coping strategy,* namely *Planful Problem Solving* in *Problem Focused Coping,* this is done by residents by praying or chatting with neighbors to divert feelings of anxiety and worry when it rains (Zainuddin & Sulastri, 2021).

The adaptation of the Simonet Hamlet residents to the tidal flood is not only limited to physiological adaptation by building infrastructure and facilities in their new place (refugee camp), but also psychological adaptation, namely efforts made by residents to compromise with a condition or situation, so as not to get caught up in trauma and depression. Coastal communities that are always or even every day wallowing in tidal floods, such as the Simonet Hamlet community, prepare themselves psychologically with an attitude of being humble, open-minded, calm, resigned, and drawing closer to God. All residents interviewed indicated that they were resigned, accepting God's destiny that came to them.

"…What else can we do?.." was the response of Slamet and Darminingsih. We as humans just go through it. Even Winarni, whose husband was lost, swallowed by the waves while fishing on the coast of the Java Sea, as a survivor of the tidal disaster, let go of her husband's departure forever,

whose body has never been found. This happened at a time when the burden of renting her house in Semut village increased due to her house in Simonet Hamlet sinking (Winarni, 2023).

Simonet residents adapt to survive, including looking ahead. They diversify their jobs. Darminingsih, who usually works as a jasmine flower picker, now fishes for shrimp and crabs around her house, which is surrounded by water. Slamet, who usually goes to the middle of the sea to fish, now serves as a guide for mainlanders who will fish around Simonet. Along the downstream of the Sipait River, decks are provided as fishing spots. Winarni and most of the res idents of Simonet who have fled to the mainland, such as Lampis, Tratebang, Semut, and others, most of them work as batik colet workers.

Psychological and social adaptation has an impact on people's acceptance of this disaster, that it is all God's will, and humans must be willing to live with it. Children who previously had easy access to schools because of the availability of roads and transportation are now willing to follow the rhythm of nature. Most of them moved schools on the mainland following their parents, who fled, although there were several children from families who remained in Simonet by continuing to attend school on the mainland with the risk of very limited access.

Efforts to Overcome Rob Flooding in Simonet Hamlet, *First:* Building a Giant Embankment. In 2017, the Pekalongan Regency government announced plans to build a giant embankment that stretches along the coastal area of Pekalongan Regency. Quoted from republika.co.id (2018), the construction of a giant embankment along the coast of Pekalongan Regency began in late January 2018. The cost of building the embankment came from the central government budget managed by the Pemali Juwono River Basin Center (BBWS), in synergy with the Central Java provincial government, the Pekalongan Regency and City Governments, with a total budget of Rp. 517 billion. With a total budget of that amount, the work package includes river normalization, long storage and embankments, parapets, pump procurement, and collector drains.

Second: Resident Relocation. Another project originating from the Pekalongan Regency government is to conduct a relocation of residents with a village bedol system for residents affected by the tidal flood. Before the idea of a giant embankment emerged, the Pekalongan Regency government had previously discussed a plan to relocate residents affected by the 2010 tidal flood.

The tidal flood in Simonet is different from the tidal flood in other villages in the Wonokerto District. If in other villages the tidal flood only submerges the streets and terraces of houses, occasionally entering the houses and receding in a few hours or days, then the tidal flood in Simonet Hamlet seems to be permanent, not wanting to move and recede, so that Simonet becomes an island. Likewise, the water level ranges from 70 cm to 1 meter, making the houses in the hamlet uninhabitable, which ultimately prompts most of its residents to evacuate to neighboring villages on the mainland.

Of course, the problem of overcoming tidal flooding is not solely the responsibility of the community; the government is also responsible for ensuring the safety of its citizens. Most Simonet residents are resigned to the condition of their submerged hamlet. In such conditions, they hope for a helping hand from other residents, especially the Pekalongan Regency Government. Since the major tidal flood in 2020, they have been unable to participate in activities in their hamlet. Most of the refugees rent houses for their residences at quite expensive rates. Some others built sheds on the province's land in Semut village. Simonet residents really hope for help and a helping hand. The dream of having a decent place to live (a house) continues to be their hope.

In 2020, the Pekalongan Regency Government again offered relocation to residents in Simonet Hamlet, Semut Village, Wonokerto District, Pekalongan Regency, as their homes had been submerged in tidal floods for about a month in June 2020. Tidal floods in Simonet Hamlet occur every month. This increasingly severe flooding is also caused by the impact of the giant embankment, because Simonet Hamlet is located north of the embankment, which further exacerbates the high-water levels.

In 2023, the Pekalongan Regency Government prepared approximately 1 hectare of land in Tratebang village for the relocation of 96 families from Simonet Hamlet, who are still constrained by the acquisition of land owned by residents that will be used as an access road to the location.

Implication

The findings from Simonet Hamlet highlight that coastal disaster management cannot rely solely on physical interventions such as embankments or relocation programs. A more holistic approach is required, one that integrates structural mitigation with community-based strategies, including psychosocial support, livelihood recovery, and strengthened social protection for vulnerable families. The case of Simonet shows that poorly planned infrastructure can unintentionally worsen conditions for certain communities. Therefore, this study underscores the need for equitable, participatory, and community-centered coastal adaptation policies to ensure that affected residents can recover and rebuild their lives sustainably.

Limitation

This study was conducted within a single Simonet Hamlet which limits the generalizability of its findings to other coastal communities with different social, cultural, or environmental conditions. The research also relied heavily on qualitative data obtained through interviews and observations, which may be influenced by participants' emotional states and recall accuracy. In addition, fieldwork was carried out during an ongoing disaster situation, restricting the researchers' ability to observe longer-term psychological changes. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable in-depth insights into the lived experiences and psychosocial dynamics of residents affected by tidal flooding.

CONCLUSION

Residents of Simonet Hamlet affected by tidal flooding experience severe losses, including the destruction of homes and land, restricted mobility, recurring health problems, loss of livelihoods, and increased financial burdens without government support. Psychologically, they suffer from trauma whenever floods occur, ongoing stress due to submerged homes and unstable employment, vulnerability among women who become primary earners, and a sense of lost dreams caused by prolonged uncertainty. To cope, residents employ both physical and psychological adaptation strategies, such as shifting to new types of work, maintaining children's schooling despite access barriers, engaging in social activities to ease trauma, and accepting their situation spiritually. Many also evacuate to nearby inland villages by renting houses or building temporary shelters on designated relocation sites.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

M. Yasin Abidin: Original draft writing, data analysis, and methodology; Rofiqotul Aini: Manuscript writing and editing; Ahmad Ta'rifin: Instrument validation, proofreading; Siska Rachmawati: Data analysis.

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