TALES FROM THE RIVER'S EDGE: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO ECED FACILITATORS' EXPERIENCES OF FLOOD-DISRUPTED EARLY LEARNING, COPING AND RESILIENCE

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Mamita Tamang* for the *Degree of Master of Philosophy in Early Childhood Development*, presented on *29 September 2026*, entitled *Tales from the River's Edge: A Narrative Inquiry into ECED Facilitators' Experiences of Flood-Disrupted Early Learning, Coping and Resilience.*

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Dissertation Supervisor	Dissertation Supervisor

There has been an increasing threat posed by floods on the educational experiences of children in resource-limited communities, where schools play significant roles in teaching, learning, care, and protection. Despite earlier studies having mostly addressed issues related to the restoration of infrastructure and educational access following disasters, there has been little emphasis on early childhood learning experiences and on the adaptation practices of both educators and children to disruptions in their learning environments. Thus, this study examined how floods had affected early childhood learning through narratives of educators working in flood-affected community schools in Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur.

I applied interpretivist framework in my study and generated the information through narrative inquiry. I selected six participants through purposive sampling, including head teachers and ECED facilitators from flood-affected community schools. I did thematic narrative analysis to analyze the generated information from the participants. The findings were substantiated by using Michael Ungar's socio ecological resilience theory which viewed resilience as a dynamic process of positive adaptation amidst challenging environments, recognizing socio-ecological relationships among them.

The study showed that the effects of floods extended beyond disrupting learning by interrupting formal classes. Classrooms and learning materials were

destroyed by the flooding, disrupting children's learning spaces, routine and playtime. The results show that developing resilience in schools is a team process. The flooding has made it harder for the kids to learn, follow rules, play and feel safe. In response to this challenge the teachers were there to protect the kids, help them make friends and help them grow. They contributed to making the setting safe by adapting their teaching, seeking help from family and neighbors and using what was available.

The study concluded that the problems with learning after the floods were influenced by a number of factors, including academic, emotional, social and environmental.The study further showed that resilience was not simply an individual feature but was supported by relationships and pedagogies. This study contributed to the existing body of literature on disaster and early childhood education by redefining educational recovery as a multifaceted process rather than a purely physical one. The study suggests that resilience building, disaster preparedness, and psychosocial support need to be integrated within early childhood education policy and practice to increase learning quality in the disaster situation.

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शोध सार

प्रारिम्भक बालविकासमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर उपाधिका लागि ममिता तामाङको शोधप्रबन्धको शीर्षक "नदी किनारका कथाहरू: बाढीबाट प्रभावित प्रारम्भिक सिकाइ, सामना गर्ने प्रक्रिया तथा उत्थानशीलता सम्बन्धी प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्था शिक्षा तथा विकास (ECED) सहजकर्ताहरूका अनुभवहरूको कथात्मक संकथन " १३ असोज २०८३ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो।

.....	.....
मिनाक्षी दाहाल, पिएचडी	उप. प्रा. पार्वती ढुंगाना, पिएचडी
शोध निर्देशक	शोध निर्देशक

बाढीले सीमित स्रोतसाधन भएका समुदायहरूमा बालबालिकाको शैक्षिक अनुभवमा बढ्दो खतरा उत्पन्न गरिरहेको छ, जहाँ विद्यालयहरूले शिक्षण, सिकाइ, हेरचाह तथा संरक्षणमा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्छन्। विपद्पछिको भौतिक पूर्वाधारको पुनर्स्थापना र शैक्षिक पहुँचसम्बन्धी विषयहरूमा विगतका अध्ययनहरूले मुख्यतः ध्यान केन्द्रित गरे तापनि प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्थाको सिकाइ अनुभव तथा सिकाइ वातावरणमा आएको अवरोधसँग जुध्न शिक्षक र बालबालिकाले अपनाउने अनुकूलनका अभ्यासहरूमा निकै कम ध्यान दिइएको छ । त्यसैले, यस अध्ययनले ललितपुर जिल्लाको गोदावरी नगरपालिकाका बाढी प्रभावित सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा कार्यरत सहजकर्ताहरूका कथामार्फत बाढीले प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्थाको सिकाइमा पारेको प्रभावको अध्ययन गरेको छ।

यस अध्ययनमा व्याख्यावादी (Interpretivist) दृष्टिकोण अपनाइएको थियो र कथात्मक संकथन (Narrative Inquiry) मार्फत सूचना सङ्कलन गरिएको थियो। बाढी प्रभावित सामुदायिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापक तथा प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्था शिक्षा तथा विकास (ECED) सहजकर्ता सहित छ जना सहभागीलाई उद्देश्यपूर्ण नमुना छनोट विधिबाट छनोट गरिएको थियो। सहभागीहरूबाट प्राप्त सूचनाको विश्लेषण गर्न विषयगत कथात्मक विश्लेषण (Thematic Narrative Analysis) गरिएको छ । प्राप्त निष्कर्षहरूलाई माइकल उङ्गारको सामाजिक–पारिस्थितिक उत्थानशीलता सिद्धान्त (Michael Ungar's Socio-Ecological Resilience Theory) का आधारमा पुष्टि तथा व्याख्या गरिएको छ । यस सिद्धान्तले चुनौतीपूर्ण वातावरणमा सकारात्मक अनुकूलनलाई गतिशील प्रक्रियाका रूपमा हेर्दै व्यक्तिहरू र उनीहरूको सामाजिक तथा पारिस्थितिक वातावरणबीचको सम्बन्धलाई महत्त्व दिन्छ ।

अध्ययनले बाढीको प्रभाव औपचारिक कक्षा सञ्चालनमा अवरोध उत्पन्न हुनुसम्म मात्र सीमित नरहेको देखाएको छ । बाढीले कक्षाकोठा र सिकाइ सामग्रीहरू नष्ट गर्नुका साथै बालबालिकाको सिकाइ स्थल, दैनिक दिनचर्या र खेलका अनुभवहरूमा समेत अवरोध पुऱ्याएको थियो। निष्कर्षहरूले शिक्षामा

उत्थानशीलता निर्माण गर्नु सामूहिक प्रयासको विषय भएको देखाउँछन् । बाढीले बालबालिकाको सिक्ने क्षमता, नियमित दिनचर्याको पालना, खेल्ने अवसर र सुरक्षित महसुस गर्ने अवस्थालाई प्रभावित गरेको थियो । यी चुनौतीहरूको सामना गर्न शिक्षकहरूले बालबालिकाको संरक्षक, सामाजिक सहयोगका स्रोत तथा उनीहरूको विकासका सहजकर्ताका रूपमा भूमिका निर्वाह गरेका थिए । शिक्षकहरूले आफ्नो शिक्षण विधिमा अनुकूलन गर्दै, आफन्त तथा छिमेकीहरूको सहयोग जुटाउँदै र उपलब्ध स्रोतसाधनको उपयोग गर्दै बालबालिकाका लागि सुरक्षित वातावरण निर्माण गर्न सहयोग गरेका थिए ।

अध्ययनले बाढीपछि सिकाइमा आएको अवरोध शैक्षिक, भावनात्मक, सामाजिक तथा वातावरणीय पक्षहरू समेटिएको बहुआयामिक घटना भएको निष्कर्ष निकालेको छ । यस अध्ययनले उत्थानशीलता केवल व्यक्तिको व्यक्तिगत विशेषता मात्र नभई सम्बन्ध, अन्तरक्रिया र शिक्षण अभ्यासबाट समेत सुदृढ हुने प्रक्रियाका रूपमा रहेको देखाएको छ । यस अध्ययनले विपद् तथा प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्था शिक्षासम्बन्धी विद्यमान साहित्यमा योगदान पुऱ्याउँदै शैक्षिक पुनःस्थापनालाई भौतिक संरचनाको पुनर्निर्माणमा मात्र सीमित नराखी बहुआयामिक प्रक्रियाका रूपमा पुनःपरिभाषित गरेको छ । विपद्को अवस्थामा सिकाइको गुणस्तर अभिवृद्धि गर्न प्रारम्भिक बाल्यावस्था शिक्षासम्बन्धी नीति तथा अभ्यासमा उत्थानशीलता निर्माण, विपद् पूर्वतयारी र मनोसामाजिक सहयोगलाई एकीकृत गर्नुपर्ने सुझाव यस अध्ययनले दिएको छ ।

..... १३ असोज २०८३

ममिता तामाङ

उपाधि उम्मेदवार

This dissertation entitled *Tales from the River's Edge: A Narrative Inquiry into ECED Facilitators' Experiences of Flood-Disrupted Early Learning, Coping and Resilience* presented by *Mamita Tamang* on *29 September 2026*.

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of the Library of Kathmandu University. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved son, **Sarwajeet**

one who quietly endured my weary hours without a word of complaint and who never made me promise what I could not afford, and simply walked along.

In honor of all the love I have for you as a Mamma, I dedicate this work to you.

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Finally, I want to thank my family for their love, sacrifice and endless support on this journey. They have always believed in me and they've always had my back. I could not have done this without them.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction Management
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EiE	Emergency in Education
FAS	Flood Affected School
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
TLC	Temporary Learning Center
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nation Children's Fund
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Working with little children has always been a part of my job. Over time, it has only grown into a passion and commitment to supporting them, especially in times of crisis. As I live in a community along the Bagmati River, where every monsoon season brings flooding, I witness firsthand how children from nearby informal settlements are displaced. Along with this, their schooling gets disrupted, and their emotional well-being is shaken.

In this chapter, background details are provided to set the stage for the study. This is followed by an exposition of the problem statement regarding children who were unable to continue learning in their permanent classrooms due to flood damage. The objective of the study is stated, emphasizing the role of teachers in the disruptions and coping mechanisms used. The research questions are designed to guide the study, whereas the limitations define its scope and constraints. The study is significant as it provides insights into children's experiences and teachers' coping mechanisms in flood-affected regions.

The study primarily focused on early childhood education for children attending schools in Godawari, which is prone to floods. The early childhood (ages 4 to 6 years) is most vulnerable to the cognitive and affective consequences of such disasters because this stage is critical for overall development, peer relationships, and self-identity. To gain in-depth knowledge of these effects, the study focuses on three public schools purposively selected for the extent of flood damage they suffered. This facilitates descriptive analysis of the dimensions of flood exposure and examines the dynamics within children's recovery and coping processes in response to such frequent disruptions. The study aims to understand children's experiences through their teachers, who are obliged to cope with learning disruptions amid environmental unpredictability.

Resilience Theory in this study offers a lens through which the phenomenon of resilience in Early Childhood Development (ECD) is not limited to an individual trait but rather a continuous process involving supportive relationships and adaptive pedagogical approaches in the face of adversity (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2011). Focusing on the experiences of teachers who play an important role in children’s

education, this study enriched knowledge of how early learning can be maintained under difficult circumstances and helps formulate and implement policies to address ECD in post-disaster situations.

Note on Terminology

For the purpose of consistency and readability, the terms Early Childhood Development (ECD), Early Childhood Education (ECE), Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), preschool, preschool education, childhood education, and preschool settings are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Although these terms may have slightly different meanings in specific policy or academic contexts, they generally refer to educational provisions and learning environments for young children prior to formal primary schooling. Where a particular policy or document uses a specific term, the original terminology has been retained to preserve its intended meaning.

Contextual Realities that Lead to Inquiry

This choice of topic has been informed by my professional experience. During my field work, I visited several community schools in Kathmandu that were affected by the flood. The experience left an impression on me. There was visible damage in the classrooms: walls were damp, the learning environment was foul-smelling, and learning materials were either in disarray or simply absent. Moreover, in some of the schools, there was no furniture or teaching materials available even after a significant period had passed since the flood

But what struck me the most were the conditions of the children and the teachers. Some of the children looked sick, tired, and disengaged from learning. The teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with having to teach despite scarce resources and a lack of support. Damage to property by flooding is usually the main concern, while the effect of flooding on children's learning and the problems faced by teachers are rarely discussed. I started to wonder about a number of things.

The geography of Nepal also makes it difficult to get to school, with earthquakes, floods and landslides. More than 2,000 schools were destroyed or damaged in April 2015's Gorkha earthquake. Another 5,000 schools were affected (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, n.d.) This resulted in more than 2 million children being out of school (United States Agency for International Development, 2018). Every year the monsoon floods exacerbate these disasters.

The Jajarkot earthquake in November 2023 destroyed 898 schools, leaving more than 134,000 school-aged children in need of help with their schoolwork. The longer girls are out of school, the greater the risk that they will drop out and marry early and the less likely they will be to return to class (UNICEF, 2023). Nepal has, however, embraced resilience by integrating school disaster risk management into the education planning process.

In that light, this study emerged out of a personal experience coupled with an academic pursuit. It aims at showing children's stories through the eyes of teachers and guides who live and work near the river and have to deal with flooding all the time. Through this study, I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of learning disruptions in early childhood and to inform more responsive educational practices in disaster-prone schools.

Problem Statement

Urban schools situated on riverbanks or prone to disasters experience recurring annual hindrances, including temporary displacement and shortages of teaching materials (Save the Children [SC], 2015). The closure of schools to avoid flooding is among the impediments mentioned above. Unlike purely natural phenomena, I, as someone who lives in a flood-prone community, regard these floods as persistent obstacles that impede a child's learning and development.

According to Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), the preschool years are crucial for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, as they are the period when children have many educational experiences and relationships. Nevertheless, there is insufficient information on the frequency of disasters and their effects on the educational experience of preschool children (Tanner et al., 2015). Parents, teachers and students are often left out of the conversation about research and policy. These people are directly affected by the problem and can give important background information (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2015).

The current response is largely in terms of material losses or aid from above, and overlooks the emotional and developmental problems that children face (Subedi, 2017). If this problem is not fixed, I fear that many more kids will continue to have problems in school and in their growth. For the moment, the most reasonable, humane and meaningful responses may be those of caring authorities, policy makers and practitioners listening to the lived experiences of these children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ungar, 2011).

The September 2024 floods killed 21 people and damaged 269 schools. 52,839 students were affected by the storm. Of the schools, eleven hundred and twelve were from Bagmati province. The Nepal Education Cluster (NEC) 2024 informed that the flood had severely impacted 13 schools in Godavari Municipality in Lalitpur district.Nepal has done a lot of study on disasters and education but most of the studies have examined the impact of disasters on the school building, damage, preparedness, decreasing the risk of disasters and reconstruction after a disaster (ADB, 2022; UNICEF, 2023). Recent reports have highlighted that flooding has led to school closures, damage to classrooms and school supplies, family displacement, and barriers to students' participation in educational activities (United Nations Nepal, 2024). From this information, one can conclude that floods can seriously affect access to and the continuity of education. However, there is still little information about teachers' experiences, particularly in early childhood education, and their pedagogical responses to this situation. The contemporary education in emergencies framework (Nepal Education Cluster, 2024) has focused on continuity of learning, psychosocial support, teacher capacity building, and a safe learning environment. But there's not a lot of real-world evidence about how teachers use these ideas in floods." There has also not been enough study of how teachers change routines, learning activities, play, learning environments and emotional support for young children. In this study I want to get a better sense of how frequent flooding affects learning in young children.

Additionally, I sought to explore how ECD facilitators' approaches help children manage, recover from, and sustain their learning following floods (Center for Education & Human Resource Development [CEHRD], 2020). The current research, therefore, aims to fill the above gap by studying teachers' experiences at flood-affected schools in Godawari Municipality of Lalitpur district.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how annual floods affect children's early learning, and the coping strategies they develop to address these impacts in the community schools of Lalitpur.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers in flood-affected community schools of Lalitpur perceive the impact of recurring floods on early childhood learning?
2. How do teachers in flood-affected early childhood classrooms construct coping strategies to support children's learning after flooding events?

3. In what ways do teachers' narratives reveal their resilience in re-establishing early learning processes in post-flood contexts?

Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on three community schools in the Godawari municipality of the Lalitpur district that are subject to recurring monsoon floods, with attention to children aged 4-6 years. These schools were purposely selected based on the severity of flood damage in recent years. The research considers early learning experiences in relation to children's dislocation/displacement, disruption of routines, and environmental unpredictability. I have delimited my study to exploring only the perspective of ECED facilitators regarding children's learning disruptions caused by the flood and the coping strategies they construct in the post-flood period. The focus remains solely on explaining how teachers perceive and respond to classroom challenges.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it showed how early learning can be disrupted for children in Lalitpur schools that are prone to flooding, where the risk of flooding increases every year. This study has helped me understand how environmental problems such as flooding impact education. It also discussed the many ways floods affect children's learning and how teachers work hard to bring their classrooms back to normal after floods.

From an academic point of view, this study adds to the limited research on teachers' perspectives and how they manage problems such as floods so they can continue teaching their students. The stories and perspectives have helped teachers, school leaders and policy makers think about how to make schools more welcoming and disaster prepared. This research could be a starting point for researchers who want to understand the impact of repeated natural disasters such as storms on early learning in children. The study results can be used to develop disaster-preparation plans taking into account ECD.

The results help the ECED facilitators enhancing their pedagogy, classroom management, routine restoration, and psychological support in the event of floods. To help children adapt and continue learning, the study's results may highlight the importance of the teacher-parent relationship and of counseling among families. The results will help develop disaster-resilient ECED practices and policy, psychosocial support, and teacher education policy. Finally, the study gives guidelines for future

research on ECD, teachers' preparedness, school safety, family-school collaboration, and recurring natural disasters.

Structure of the Dissertation

This study is organized into eight chapters. In the first chapter, I have discussed the contextual realities of disaster along with conceptualizing the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study.

In chapter two, I reviewed the available literatures related to ECED, flood and resiliency. I have also discussed the existing issues, policies, and practices, explored the gaps and noted conclusions for each sub-section.

In chapter three, I discussed the research paradigm, philosophical assumptions, and research methods of the study. I spelled out the narrative inquiry adopted in this study. I detailed the study process, techniques and tools, ethical considerations, quality standards, data processing, and information analysis.

In chapter four, I discussed the storied perceptions of teachers' understanding of flood impact on early learning I categorized the information into different sub-sections such as disrupted grounds of learning, when learning lost its continuity, psychological landscapes of childhood learning and restricted horizons of playful learning.

In chapter five, I described "holding the classroom together of ECED facilitator's coping in the post flood realities," where I have categorized the information on redrawing the learning space, guiding children through emotional waves, ecologies of collective care and collaboration and holding it together by teachers' emotional coping journeys.

In chapter six, I discussed "the emergence of teachers' resilience: a reflexive narrative". I have discussed adaptive resilience mechanism in post-flood recovery contexts, resilience as place embedded profession identity, emotional containment as an expression of relational care

In chapter seven, I discussed the study findings by substantiating them with different theories and literature in this research report and summarizing the study. I have outlined the findings in three sub-sections according to the research questions. The result substantiates relevant theories. So, the discussion is made based on the information from chapters four, five, and six.

Chapter eight concludes with a summary, conclusion, and implications according to the findings and discussion in chapter seven. The implication section is divided into three sub-sections: i) unfolding research withing, ii) ruptured pedagogy: reflections on conclusion for flood, care and resilience, and iii) implications.

Chapter Essence

The first chapter serves as the foundation of this study, introducing the research problem and situating it against the backdrop of current urban flooding and its impact on early childhood education in Nepal. As it is derived from the researcher's practical experience, this chapter provides the context of the inquiry by linking it to the situation of floods in the flood-prone areas of Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur, where annual monsoon floods and off-season cloudbursts have a devastating effect on children's early learning.

This chapter identifies a gap in the disaster and education literature by showing that most previous research has focused on physical damage, infrastructure, and disaster management rather than on teachers' experiences in maintaining early learning amid floods. Further, it outlines the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the study's delimitation, and its significance. With the guidance of Resilience Theory, this study views resilience as a dynamic process of adaptation and reconstruction of the learning environment in the wake of disasters by the teachers and children.

CHAPTER II
SITUATING THE STUDY WITHIN EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

This literature review examines existing literature on disasters and early childhood education. This provides the framework for situating the current study and for adding to the discussion by highlighting teachers' narratives about how they perceive the effects of floods on young children's early learning journey in public schools. I categorized the literature review into thematic, empirical, and policy reviews.

Thematic Review

The thematic review examines key concepts and themes related to disasters, flooding, early childhood education, learning disruptions, resilience, and educational recovery. It provides us with general knowledge of how the interrelated topics have been treated in prior research and is an integral part of the broader academic discussion.

Flooding and Learning Difficulties

Regular flooding makes it extremely difficult for the schools to function. When school facilities like classrooms and learning materials are damaged, schools often need to be closed for long periods of time (Uprety, 2012). These types of breaks that happen early in school tend to be during a very important time for cognitive and social-emotional growth. In my experience of the floods in Lalitpur during September 2024, schools were shut down, and students did not attend for weeks, which also affected their learning. In the absence of systematic support for (re) engagement or plans for continuity of learning, such frequent disruptions only worsen the educational gaps that disinterest children and prevent them from focusing in class (SC, 2015; UNESCO, 2020).

The cycle of flooding, school closure, and inability to engage with established pedagogy directly shapes the focus of the children's study (Plan International, 2016; Tanner et al., 2015). Children's learning is always affected by natural disasters, pandemics, and conflict. The global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the schooling of over 1.6 billion students across the world and was thus the most disruptive event ever in human history. The term "learning disruption" has been proposed by Harmey and Moss (2021) as a replacement for "learning loss." The statement "Grades of the

students get worse everyplace" underscores the fact that young children who do not know the basics are at risk of developing long-term developmental disorders (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021; Uğraş et al., 2023).

Schools and colleges in economically disadvantaged nations have been greatly impacted by natural disasters such as pandemics, floods and earthquakes. In 2023, Karki (2024) and Pant and Acharya (2023) examined how students and teachers in Nepal prepare for natural disasters.. These scholars pointed out that the phone-based teaching and outdoor classes were not always available to them nor did the government assist them enough. During the 2024 floods in Rajapur Municipality, Karki found that many poor students left educational institutions or began repeating their courses. Moreover, a 2024 storm in Nepal prevented over 10,000 children from attending classes and exposed them to danger.

In this study, learning disruption is defined as the disruption of the learning processes of a child caused by floods. These disruptions include disruptions to classroom learning, disruptions to learning through play and outdoor learning, disruptions to learning environments, disruptions to social life, and disruptions to psychosocial life. In emergencies, simply closing schools or losing learning time is insufficient; displacement, disruptions to the learning environment, to routines, and psychosocial issues may also negatively affect children's engagement in learning (INEE, 2023; UNICEF Nepal, 2025).

In particular, in emergencies young children need opportunities for play, social contact, and developmentally appropriate learning (INEE, 2023 especially). Studies have also highlighted the significance of sufficient learning environments, family engagement, psychosocial support, and the competence of ECED facilitators in post-disaster contexts that followed the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

Psychosocial Effects on Students

Masten and Narayan (2012) indicated that flooding can cause chaos and stress which can profoundly impact the mental and emotional health of children. But kids may be more scared and worried when the flooding is happening because their normal routines and sense of security are being disrupted. Children's mental health is greatly affected when exposed to floods. Being scared, confused, and insecure is quite common for them, since school closures, home damage, and family relocations occur in such situations. According to Plan International (2016), it becomes difficult for them to concentrate and to enjoy typical children's activities. In dangerous conditions

without a fixed schedule, you can feel unsafe all the time. These early events might have little impact but long-lasting effects on their academic, social and confidence levels if they do not receive enough mental support (SC, 2024. Children feel recognized, heard, and supported during challenging moments; parents, teachers, and community members must play a vital role.

Damages of Learning Places and Resources

The loss of these essential resources hinders children's capacity to participate, investigate, and feel safe within their educational setting. For children, whose growth significantly depends on sensory experiences and play-based learning, a lack of safe, engaging environments and resources can greatly impede their development (SC, 2015). Particularly in the early childhood settings where a secure and engaging atmosphere is crucial, such loss poses serious obstacles to the teaching-learning process. There is always a need to improve such facilities, making it difficult for both teachers and learners to adapt to poorly constructed, makeshift classrooms. According to teachers working in schools affected by floods, children cannot play or engage in their usual classroom activities because the schools are not conducive to learning due to a lack of necessary materials (INEE, 2023).

Teacher and School Challenges

Teachers in flood-affected schools face major challenges that impede their ability to continue the learning process. Teachers themselves are displaced or have their houses destroyed, resulting in a lack of consistent teaching (Subedi, 2017). The other teachers attempt to cope with the students' academic delays and emotional problems, but the extra work they have to do is unbearable. Educational organizations lack the tools they need to cope well with floods, such as the right supplies for teaching and safe buildings. Inadequate disaster preparedness training for teachers and the absence of support systems complicate recovery. All of these prevent schools from maintaining continuity of education and from providing the necessary care to students before, during, and after flood incidents, thereby exposing both learners and teachers to prolonged disruption.

Infrastructure Challenges

Almost all schools lack fundamental flood-protection measures and sufficient infrastructure, such as proper sanitation facilities, thereby jeopardizing the health and safety of children during and after floods (Uprety, 2012). In addition, disaster preparedness in early childhood learning environments is typically poor, or there is no

mechanism as such to meet the specific needs of young learners. Well-built infrastructure and institutions would have to be built to ensure that early childhood education is continuously resilient in flood prone cities (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2015). Studies indicate that many schools in Nepal are not prepared for floods, especially regarding child-specific preparedness, safe infrastructure, and sanitation (Uprety, 2012; Sharma & Bhattarai, 2015). This is important to my study because not only will it put the kids in danger but it will also make it harder for them to learn. When considering early childhood, school safety needs to be considered in terms of both the structure itself and the continuity of the children's learning and well-being. This view makes me think about how ECED facilitators support student learning when the usual classroom setting collapses and what kinds of preparation might help them do their jobs better. So, we know that we need to make effective plans to reduce the risk of disasters that keep child safety in mind when planning for emergencies.

Education in Emergencies (EIE) in Flood Contexts

Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (EIE) issue has gained more attention in recent years as it ensures the continuity of education during natural disasters, wars and other crises. InEE (2023) defines EIE as offering safe and quality learning opportunities to children, safeguarding their right to education and enhancing their mental and physical health. So education is more than simply learning, it's about helping kids be strong and stable and healed. The development and well-being of children are adversely affected by school absenteeism during crisis periods. This statement applies particularly to young children who require a stable environment for growth (Sinclair, 2002).

Based on the findings from early childhood education during emergencies, children are affected differently by disasters than are older children. One reason is that this is a period when young children are growing rapidly. Research indicates that delays as a consequence of disasters can affect children's mental health, behavior, attention span and motivation to learn (Masten & Narayan, 2012). It is difficult for children to re-adjust to learning in school environments after relocation or when they are not used to their new environment.

In Nepal, where seasonal flooding remains an ongoing problem for both communities and educational institutions, studies on disruptions in early childhood learning remain scarce. While there has been research on the impact of disaster-related events on the educational system, there is still little information about how

preschoolers experience learning disruption, navigate the learning environment, and relate to their learning experiences. Therefore, a focus on narratives is essential for a better understanding of the process in question. Through studying teachers' narratives about preschoolers affected by flooding, the current research will contribute to the EIE body of knowledge by gaining further insights into learning disruptions from the perspective of early childhood learners.

Empirical Review

Flooding remains one of the most prevalent and destructive natural hazards worldwide, and there is a growing body of literature documenting its impact on early childhood education (ECE). Floods greatly affect children's learning, which means institutions are not fully prepared. Schools in Lalitpur are vulnerable to floods.

More than 60% of preschools in flood hit areas of Bangladesh had to close for extended periods of time. This resulted in many children losing their early reading and maths skills (Ahmed et al., 2019). UNICEF research (2020) also found that the rains brought by Typhoon Vamco made children in the Philippines who attended pre-school act out and learn more slowly than they used to.. This is a result of the floods in the Philippines. Murray and Ebi (2012) further add that infrastructural weakness not only disrupts learning for children but also threatens school exclusion for historically marginalized children.

Lalitpur is experiencing more frequent floods during the monsoon season due to unchecked urban growth and poor drainage (Uprety, 2012). Climate change adds to that amount of rainfall. Most of the community schools do not have disaster recovery and planning (DRP) plans, which poses challenges during disasters (Gautam et al. 2020). A key part of disaster recovery often comes from community-level coping methods, such as collective narratives and stories that are passed down through generations (Nguyen et al., 2020). But in the aftermath of disasters, it's becoming harder for Nepal to provide safe and welcoming learning environments as its institutions don't have the right policies and tools. According to both Sharma and Bhattarai (2015) and Uprety (2012), the key aspect of disaster risk reduction planning involves early childhood development (ECD). The key aspects involved here include the development of adequate infrastructure, the training of educators, and the preparation for emergencies that take into account the needs of primary-level children.

In countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, and Kenya, the study shows that flood-induced school disruptions are compounded by factors such as poverty, gender norms, and a lack of safe infrastructure (Plan International, 2016). These factors reduce children's ability to resume their schooling after such emergencies. At the same time, teachers who play an important role in recovery often face their own challenges. Studies from the Philippines and Sri Lanka show that teachers are obliged to manage classrooms with limited resources, the emotional needs of children, and a lack of training in trauma-informed teaching (SC, 2024). Most teachers, despite the challenges that they encounter, make use of their own imaginative and unstructured methods, such as storytelling, play, and flexible schedules, in order to help their pupils regain a sense of normalcy within the classroom environment

In crisis situations, the ECD centers may remain undermanned yet accessible to the public. Several temporary learning centers, mobile schools, and ECD programs at the community level have been established worldwide to assist children experiencing difficulties learning due to natural disasters such as floods. For instance, child-friendly spaces and ECD centers helped children continue their learning and receive support after disasters in Haiti and Pakistan (INEE, 2020). But research shows national policies to reduce the risks of disasters and get children ready for school do not take into account the importance of early childhood education.

In real life, floods have been shown to make it harder to learn in many ways, especially when people are young. Some of these problems include dropping out of school, emotional problems, damage to infrastructure and the lack of ECD in all levels of disaster plans. People who have been interacting with children in their lives are often excluded from research, making teachers crucial narrators of challenges and solutions. Their narrations and experiences are critical in making early childhood education inclusive and robust.

Review of the Policies

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), as noted by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), emphasizes the safety of critical infrastructure, including schools, in high-risk areas.

In particular, SDGs 4.2 aims to ensure that all individuals receive high-quality early childhood development and care, as well as pre-primary education by the year 2030 (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2016).

This goal is part of the larger need to keep early learning going during disasters. The CEHRD has been increasingly aware of learning loss as a major problem caused by some emergencies that disturb schooling. CEHRD has issued guidelines to avoid learning loss and to continue operation of schools during and after the COVID-19 outbreak. CEHRD was aware that problems in the early years can affect a child's mental, social and academic growth for a long time, although most of the measures were targeted at primary and intermediate levels. However, national frameworks for measuring and addressing learning loss in early childhood education are still lacking, especially in disaster-prone areas like urban areas that flood.

There is still little training for early childhood educators in disaster pedagogy and psychosocial support. Policymakers and recovery planners rarely think about what children actually go through in disasters. The implementation deficiencies remain to be highlighted by development agencies such as UNICEF Nepal and Plan International, both working to enhance children's welfare. This holds even more weight in the vulnerable areas, which happen to be the areas where children are usually neglected. Even as people become more aware of the risks posed by natural disasters and the needs of children, there is thus a big gap in the effectiveness of Nepal’s educational policies. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the experiences and survival strategies of teachers who work with young children in areas prone to flooding.

Critical Enquiry of Education in Emergencies

Meanwhile, storms are one of the biggest problems climate changes is creating for schools’ systems around the world. We can figure out how much damage floods do on a world scale. UNICEF carried out the world’s first-ever study on the effect of climate change on schooling. In 2024, storms, floods and droughts forced at least 242 million students in 85 countries or territories to miss school. UNICEF (2025) stated that the majority of these children (74%) were living in low- and lower-middle-income countries. But effects are very different from country to country.

128 million students in South Asia were unable to attend classes due to climate change, whereas in East Asia and the Pacific, only 50 million students missed classes in 2024. As a result of floods, Italy closed its schools for more than 900,000 students in September 2024. Likewise, floods impacted about 13,000 children in Spain in October 2024 (UNICEF, 2025).

Further research on EiE (Sinclair, 2002; Kagawa, 2005) shows education is one of the four pillars of humanitarian aid, together with food, water, shelter and health care. Education is a life-saving, situation-normalizing, and psychosocial protection activity that in emergencies prevents children from becoming victims of trafficking, forced marriage, and forced labor (dominant perspective, Winthrop & Mendenhall, 2006). This perception underpins the INEE Minimum Standards and the triple goal of protection, continuity, and rebuilding of most interventions (INEE, 2023).

However, the effectiveness of this approach is called into question. A more critical perspective posits that the humanitarian justification for education interventions is such that it ignores the very political issue of the question: whose education and to what end is being provided, as illustrated through research on the Rohingya refugees, where curriculum exclusion and statelessness illustrate that access does not necessarily mean appropriate or just delivery of educational services.

The dominant language of "resilience," which has moved from disaster risk reduction to EiE policymaking, emphasizes the ability to support systems and communities in "bouncing back." The critique and decolonial approach suggest that "resilience" thinking is grounded in a Eurocentric epistemology that treats "vulnerable" communities as shock absorbers without addressing the underlying structural and political causes of the crisis (Amo-Agyemang, 2021; Chandler, 2024). The top-down approach to the implementation of resilience programs leads to a reproduction of "coloniality of power" by neglecting the role of indigenous and local knowledge, leading to a project failure and resistance because those who experience the negative effects of policies are not considered in governance discourse (Amponsah, 2024; Scott-Smith, 2018).

However, the most horrible disaster in the past few years is the flood in Pakistan in 2022, which ruined or caused damage to 30,000 schools, making children out of school (UNICEF USA, 2025). Save the Children reported that 945 schools were damaged in Thailand and Vietnam by floods following Typhoon Yagi in 2024 (SC, 2024).

The case of Nepal provides a valuable testing ground for validating and complicating the notion of global debates. In terms of the region itself, South Asian scholarship identifies Nepal as part of a zone of climate-augmented threat where the logic of humanitarianism and development intersect (Shrestha, 2019).

The casualties were about 250 persons, and 10,000 homes, 62 health facilities, and 240 schools were damaged or ruined in Nepal. According to UNICEF reports, in 2024, 190 schools were damaged, leaving almost 23,000 boys and girls out of school. Moreover, the government suspended schooling and other educational activities at all educational institutions in affected areas and canceled all exams nationwide (World Vision International [WVI], 2024). The rains destroy school buildings and make it difficult to get to them. Families whose homes were flooded are now living in classrooms. Children, particularly girls, are less likely to go back to dangerous places as they are more likely to get married, become slaves or get abused as kids (UNICEF, 2025).

Gorkha earthquake in 2015 destroyed about 8,000 schools and kept more than two million children out of school (USAID, 2018). The Jajarkot earthquake 2023 destroyed 898 schools and affected 134,000 students (UNICEF, 2023). The fact that Nepal has included school disaster risk management in national planning (Prevention Web, 2019) might indicate the strength of the country. The Nepalese example, however, shows that this idea has some problems. Reconstructions are always delayed; the country depends on donor money and there are still temporary schools' years after the disaster. These issues reflect how resilience can mask an underfunded government and create a sense of community responsibility, consistent with the decolonial critique. The problem at hand is not solved or resolved in the scholarly literature, but it does reveal the tension: the humane approach to the problem emphasizes the importance of EiE, while the critical and decolonial approaches lead us to question how it should be done.

Theoretical Perspectives

The study looked at how children learnt about the social and natural issues of climate change effects and annual flooding. Michael Ungar's socioecological resilience theory can be used for the theory applied in this study to explain the impact of floods on early childhood education. It is especially important to consider this in the case of regular floods in Lalitpur. Whenever there are floods, these events disrupt the microsystem environment for children by destroying their homes and schools, thereby affecting their activities and limiting their educational opportunities.

Resilience Theory

The social-ecological resilience framework proposed by Michael Ungar is an excellent approach that enables examination of how teachers and young children in

flooded schools cope with adverse conditions and resume their regular activities during educational disruption. Contrary to conventional perspectives on resilience, which view it as an individual characteristic, Ungar (2011) argues that resilience is dynamic and involves individuals' skills in discovering and negotiating resources relevant to a particular cultural context. Such a conceptualization of resilience makes it possible to understand how teachers in early childhood schools that have been flooded are important participants in the process of building resilience, both for themselves and for students. In the words of Ungar (2008), a person is resilient when he/she has the mental, social, and financial resources needed to maintain well-being in the face of adversity.

Research suggests that resilient teachers are capable of managing their emotions, coping with stress, and maintaining dedication to their work (Gu & Day, 2007; Masten, 2001). Their positive outlook and self-assurance in their ability to succeed significantly help create a safe and nurturing environment for children, which is important for building resilience in young students as well. Internal coping strategies thus help teachers to preserve continuity in the classroom while also providing a foundation for encouraging children's adaptability and recovery in the wake of disruption, according to Wang et al. (1994).

The Resilience Theory is applicable to this study when considering how ECED facilitators in flooded schools in Lalitpur cope with recurring disasters. It considers how ECED facilitators select to put aside such experiences and develop an enabling environment that encourages learning. This encompasses their internal resources, such as hope and flexibility, which are essential for fostering a learning mentality, as well as their external environment, which is aided by management and community (Masten & Obradović, 2006). The theory lays the ground for the study in this case, by demonstrating how the ECED facilitators create a learning space for the children to learn how to deal with the emotional effects and learning breaks caused by flooding.

The theory also helped me with data collection by focusing my attention on how facilitators dealt with and learned from floods, and their experiences of support, coping and teaching during the disaster. Open interviews and informal interactions were conducted to understand how the ECED facilitators responded to learning disruptions, which sources they used, how they adapted, and how they supported children's emotional well-being. The theory facilitated the interpretation of the

narratives by offering a sensitizing framework for understanding such responses in terms of adaptation and resilience, rather than just individual coping. Meaning-making was also aided by the theory, which revealed the relational and contextual nature of resilience, shaped by interactions among facilitators, children, schools, teachers, families, the community, and the learning environment.

Socio-cultural Perspective

Vygotsky's sociocultural view of children suggests that children's learning and thinking are constructed in their environment and by their language and cultural practices. According to Vygotsky (1978), children have a better understanding of new things and concepts when in contact with their parents, teachers, peers and other members of the community (p. 10). Language is important here too, allowing children to talk to each other, to share their experiences and to develop their critical thinking skills. This theory is based on the central idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The difference between what a child can do by himself and what he can do with help. Learning is personal as well as social and cultural. For this reason, Vygotsky (1978) argues that it is important for educators and other adults who work with children to create safe and supportive learning environments that recognize the individual needs, social circumstances and cultural backgrounds of each child.

Theory of Attachment

Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory emphasizes the significance of emotional bonds between infants and their caregivers in early life for emotional stability, social development and overall well-being of children. Bowlby believes that children have an innate tendency to seek out familiar caregivers, especially when they are frightened, stressed or vulnerable. Where care-givers provide continual love, protection and care that is sensitive to children's needs children are more likely to develop a sense of security that is conducive to exploration, learning and interaction with other people. Disturbed or insecure attachment bonds however can be one of the factors that lead to emotional and social interaction problems. From an educational perspective the concept emphasizes the importance of positive relationships between children and their parents and teachers. Teachers' ability to provide emotional support, stability and a safe learning environment to children may contribute to children feeling secure and participating more confidently in learning activities (Bowlby, 1969).

Perspective on Trauma

The perspective on trauma shows that how traumatic experiences affect the brain, body, emotions, memory and behavior is given by Van der Kolk (2014). Trauma is not just a painful memory of things that happened in the past, he writes in his book, "The Body Keeps the Score." It can affect how people feel safe, how they regulate their emotions, how they form relationships and how they respond to stress. Fear, anxiety, attention difficulties, emotional distress and behavioral changes can be experienced by children who witness or experience traumatic events such as floods, violence, neglect or the loss of loved ones. Also, their behavior might change in these children. These consequences can affect the learning and social interactions and the overall development of these individuals. Van der Kolk also lists supportive relationships, safe places and appropriate therapeutic procedures as a high priority in the healing process. In this view, educators and caregivers need to recognize children's emotional needs and provide them with care, stability and understanding to enable them to recover and become resilient (van der Kolk, 2014).

Ethics of Care

Noddings (1984) suggested the ethics of care which emphasizes the importance of respectful relationships, empathy, responsiveness and mutual understanding within the framework of education. Noddings believes that teachers need to develop meaningful relationships with their students by listening to the needs of the students, understanding the experiences of the students, and responding with care. Effective teaching is not merely about transmitting information to students. She emphasizes, particularly, the relationship that exists between the one-caring (the person giving care) and the cared-for (the person receiving care) and asserts that authentic care needs to be alerted to and respond to the other person. This view in early childhood education indicates that teachers should create a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment. The environments should emphasize that children feel valued, respected and emotionally safe. Teachers can foster children's well-being, participation and learning through identifying individual needs and providing ongoing emotional support and encouragement (Noddings 1984).

Buddhist Perspectives

Eastern faith, especially Buddhist thought, can help you make moral and practical decisions with the ideas of Anicca (impermanence), Karuṇā (kindness) and Upāya (skilful means). Anicca means that all things that are conditioned, such as

human experiences, feelings, relationships and social situations are impermanent and forever changing. The understanding that things change over time helps people to accept that suffering is a normal part of life and increases their acceptance, resilience and willingness to accept change (Amoli, 2006; Sangiacomo, 2021). To further this understanding, karuna means caring about other people's pain and wanting to alleviate it through kindness, sensitivity and not hurting others. Compassion is a key moral feature in Buddhist philosophy that connects the knowledge of right and wrong with the concern for others (Tyler, 2013).

Similarly, Upāya, often translated as "skillful means," means adapting one's teaching, talking and helping in accordance with the situations, capacities and needs of the people. This principle is very important in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and states that compassionate action should not be rigidly applied, but should be based on the situation (Williams, 2009). All three of these ideas work together to give us a complete picture of how we should understand and deal with human suffering. Anicca helps people to see that things can change; Karuna helps people to be sensitive to suffering and Upāya helps people to come up with interventions that are appropriate and fit their culture." These ideas can help build caring relationships, flexible ways of doing things and places where vulnerable people are treated with respect and given the tools they need to get through hard times in education, caregiving and community development.

Panchabhuta and the 5Cs

A philosophical idea with roots in South Asian traditions, Panchabhuta uses five elements—Prithvi (earth), Jal (water), Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Akasha (space)—to describe how life and the natural world are interconnected. In this study, Panchabhuta offers an interpretative lens with a cultural foundation for comprehending resilience in early childhood education after a disaster. Additionally, the social-ecological perspective of Ungar (2011) and Masten (2014), which views resilience as a dynamic process that is influenced by interactions between persons, relationships, resources, and environments, is reinforced by its focus on interconnectedness.

An interpretative lens of Panchabhuta and the five Cs—Coping, Caring, Connecting, Collaborating, and Comeback—was used in order to get an understanding of the experiences and reactions of the ECED facilitators. The five Cs show how facilitators handled uncertainty, nurtured children's mental health,

sustained relationships, marshaled collective support, and salvaged learning opportunities through creativity and persistence. There's no fixed or straightforward connection between the five elements and the five Cs, but their interpretive relationship suggests that resilience is relational, contextual and ongoing. This perspective acknowledges that maintaining early learning following a disaster entails more than just reconstructing physical spaces; it also calls for compassion, teamwork, contextual awareness, and the ability to create meaningful learning opportunities in the face of adversity.

Research Gap

As I reviewed the existing literature, I found that few studies focus on the learning disruption of ECD students caused by floods and on strategies to address such disasters. The Nepal government has developed disaster preparedness strategies and an action plan, but they are not being channeled from the federal to the local level. Each school also develops a School Improvement Plan with a separate section of disaster preparedness; however, it is not clearly articulated or elaborated within the plan. While the effects of natural disasters on education have been increasingly recognized around the world, most of the research has been conducted on elementary and middle school children with little attention to early childhood education (ECE). Research in countries like Nigeria, Bangladesh and Pakistan has revealed that floods cause damage to infrastructure, but do not necessarily take into account the vulnerability of young students. Qualitative narrative researches focusing on the voices of ECD teachers who directly face and deal with learning disruptions and emotional problems during disasters are not many. Additionally, resilience frameworks are seldom applied to understand young children’s learning recovery from the teachers’ perspective.

In Nepal, floods frequently affect the riverbank and low-income urban communities. Although national policies recognize disaster risk reduction in education, empirical research on flood impacts in ECD remains limited. I see that the studies about disasters only consider how to make sure schools and buildings are in good condition. They don't look at the impact of changes to early learning on kids. Or the challenges faced by ECED tutors who have to be carers and teachers during emergencies. This study fills those gaps through the use of story inquiry to explore how teachers of young children in flood-prone urban areas respond and cope with changes in young children’s learning. Resilience theory shows how to deal with

problems and identifies problems. It contributes valuable knowledge to the global and local dialogue on how to teach in emergencies, especially in the ECD sector, which has not been widely researched."

Chapter Essence

This chapter introduced the study within the context of the extant literature on flooding, early childhood education, learning disruptions, resilience, and education during emergencies, through a thematic review of the conceptual, empirical, and policy literature. Through a thematic review, this chapter has developed a conceptual understanding of the impact of repeated floods on children's learning. Through an empirical review, the chapter summarizes national and international literature indicating that there has been substantial work on disasters and education, but very little research on early childhood education and teachers' experiences maintaining learning in the face of floods. In terms of the policy review, the chapter explores international and national policies that emphasize disaster risk reduction, continuity of education, and children's right to education, but also identifies major gaps in the adoption of disaster-responsive practices within Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs in Nepal.

The theory utilized in this section is Social-Ecological Resilience Theory developed by Michael Ungar (2011). The idea is that resilience is a social and dynamic process that depends on the person's skills, the relationships that support them and their environment. The theoretical framework serves as the lens through which one can understand how teachers deal with recurrent disruption caused by flooding, as well as their ability to restructure the learning environment for young children. Lastly, the chapter will discuss the research gap, as evidenced by the limited number of qualitative and narrative studies on early learning disruptions and adaptive teaching in flood-prone urban areas of Nepal from the perspective of teachers.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a philosophical consideration and discussion of the research paradigm, research design, and the justification for choosing it. The research site and participants for this study are also described, followed by the data collection technique, tools, and procedure. Moreover, this chapter discusses how data is analyzed and interpreted to obtain the findings.

Research Paradigm

Creswell (2014) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that reality is constructed by individuals based on their experiences. This philosophy lies at the basis of my research. This line of thinking is in line with the study's main argument since it studies the problems faced by children studying in the Lalitpur schools which were destroyed by storms in terms of their learning. Many personal experiences and social, cultural and environmental factors resulting from a lot of moving around, not finishing school and not knowing what the future holds affect children's learning. This study used a narrative inquiry interpretive approach to explore the teachers' experiences and perspectives to determine how the flood impacted the schools' ability to teach.

Interpretivism says that people view and understand social reality in different ways, so that there are various points of view on the same event. This paradigm considers these different points of view as useful to understand complex issues (Pham, 2018). I chose the Interpretive model because it allows me to successfully describe their feelings in context.

Interpretive study without statistics focuses on how people understand things, how meaning is mediated, how things are defined in different situations, and how people perceive things (Putnam & Banghart, 2017). In long interviews, I asked my participants to tell me what effect the annual flooding had on their children's ability to learn, and how they felt about it. In this way, the interpretive paradigm helps me find deep qualitative insights that help me fully explore the research topic.

Philosophical Assumptions

Choosing an appropriate research philosophy is one of the most important elements of research methodology because it determines the philosophical basis on

which the research is carried out. The main dimensions of research philosophy, such as ontology, epistemology, and axiology, determine how researchers perceive reality, knowledge, and the role of values in research. They helped me make sound judgments regarding the research philosophy that I chose for this research in relation to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ontological Assumptions

The nature of reality/the ontological stance of this study is a relativist one, which assumes that realities are constructed through human experiences and interactions. In my study, the effect of floods on children's learning cannot be defined by a single truth. Rather, I believe that it is shaped by multiple, context-specific realities and individual experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ECED facilitator's understanding of the effects of floods on children's learning is one of the various realities. Therefore, exploring the facilitator's perspective in depth is crucial for me, as it offers an important way to understand how floods affect children's learning.

Epistemology

Epistemology delves into how we acquire knowledge and make sense of realities. It investigates the process of understanding "how do we know and what we know?" shaped by multiple influences, including insights (Riessman, 2008). In accordance with its ontological position, my study adopts a subjectivist epistemology; knowledge, in this instance, is co-constructed through dialogue, storytelling, and relational engagement between me, as the researcher, and my research participants.

As an interpretive researcher, one of my main goals is to make sense of the natural, social and cultural complexities of this large body of knowledge. "I know their human situation. It's more than just giving them information." Their stories are a powerful learning tool because they illustrate how the interactions of different people have shaped their life experiences and perspectives. Through this process, I have constructed a subjective knowledge base grounded in ECED facilitators' experiences of challenges and their coping with them in the wake of floods. This way of thinking about how to look at knowledge and how making sense is done gets to the core of the different levels of understanding and making sense. It shows how ECED trainers see the impact of the floods on early childhood education, managing stress and being resilient in a world that has changed since then.

Axiology

My research is based on axiology, which is a set of values. This is because it holds that people think, analyse and see things differently, shaped by their own experiences and beliefs and in turn, affect their perspectives (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). People see things from their own ideas and ideals, and thus their views are biased. During the study, it is important to note that participants' perspectives are highly valued for their influence on the research process.

Additionally, axiology in study also involves the researcher's own values and viewpoints, which can influence how knowledge is generated (Creswell, 2014). In the modern world, where there are many perspectives, I appreciate and accept the different perspectives that arise from research. A great number of aspects valued by both me as a researcher and the participants are their perspectives. They are regarded as the source of knowledge of the highest importance. They are treated with great respect, which reflects my desire to recognize and value the uniqueness of their perspectives.

Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method

My study applied narrative inquiry as a research technique, which entailed interactive storytelling and restoration throughout the investigation (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). This approach is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm and enables rich explorations of facilitators' perspectives, allowing their voices to be heard authentically. Narrative inquiry is chosen because I am interested in understanding the complex, emotional, and often invisible effects of environmental and situational upheaval on children's early educational journey.

Narrative inquiry, as developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), defines it as a method that prioritizes stories as both a method of inquiry and a phenomenon of study. In my study, narrative inquiry provided a way for participants to make and engage with the meanings they have given to learning as interrupted, displaced, coping, and returning to classrooms.

Selection of Research Sites

Initially, Kathmandu District was identified as the study area because the research aimed to explore the experiences of children and teachers affected by flooding. However, a review of flash-flood impact reports from all three districts of the Kathmandu Valley revealed varying levels of impact. Compared to Lalitpur and Bhaktapur, Kathmandu district experienced relatively less damage. It was reported that flood damage was the most extensive in Lalitpur among all places that

experienced flooding. Information from the local government level indicated that Godawari Municipality was the most affected area in the district of Lalitpur. In Godawari Municipality, there are 37 schools that operate classes from ECD to grade 12. According to the Nepal Education Cluster report, 11 community schools were affected by the flood, disrupting educational activities.

According to the Nepal Education Cluster report, 11 community schools in Godawari Municipality were severely damaged, making it difficult to run them. In connection with such findings, it became necessary to reassess the study site to ensure that it is located in an area affected by a natural disaster. As a result, the study site was selected: Godawari Municipality, since the flood had severely affected educational institutions hence disrupting education.

I visited Godawari Municipality and, based on conversation with the Education Officer, identified the most suitable locations for conducting my research. The Education Officer provided me with a list of all the public schools in Godawari and highlighted three that were significantly damaged by floods and landslides. To ease access to schools, the official recommendation letter was provided. Later, I visited the selected schools and discussed the aim of the study with their headteachers and ECED trainers. I got their permission and support, I went to the schools, got to know the participants and started the research.

I explored the three most flood affected schools in coordination with the education department of Godawari Municipality. I kept the school names as Flood Affected School (FAS) 1, Flood Affected School (FAS) 2, and Flood Affected School (FAS) 3 to maintain confidentiality, and the schools' details are as follows:

Flood Affected School 1

A community school offering ECD to Grade 5. Situated amidst sloping green hills, dense vegetation, and a moist landscape. The setting is calm and scenic, resembling a "flower placed in a vase." One concrete building of the school was completely destroyed by the mudslide, and the other building was seriously damaged. 53 students (31 girls & 22 boys) were affected by the flood and were unable to continue their education as scheduled (Nepal Education Cluster, 2024).

Flood Affected School 2

Located close to a river, making it geographically vulnerable, a landslide occurred at the school's main building. 114 students (69 girls & 45 boys) were

affected by the flood and were unable to continue their education as scheduled (Nepal Education Cluster, 2024).

Flood Affected School 3

Situated on elevated land directly above a river with scenic surroundings but high flood risk, and with a Classroom Damaged by a landslide, 686 students (328 girls & 358 boys) were affected by the flood and were unable to continue their education as scheduled because of the disaster (Nepal Education Cluster, 2024).

Participants Selection

Considering the goal of a narrative inquiry, which is to provide detailed descriptions of phenomena in a particular context (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). (Chae, 2008), I adopted a purposive approach when selecting participants. This ensured that participants could reflect on a spectrum of challenges that the children faced and the coping strategies they constructed in an under-resourced context. I purposely chose three public schools in Lalitpur's Godawari Municipality, based on the Nepal Education Cluster's disaster report of 2081. Qualitative research is about looking into things in great detail, especially at the level of the individual. I started by asking each participant to tell me a personal story.

Following Creswell's (2014) view that a smaller group aids effective information analysis, I selected six participants for my study.

Purposive sampling helped recruit participants who possess insider knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation, potentially leading to more valuable contributions to the study (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Polit & Tatano-Beck, 2017). The participants were carefully selected to ensure that their characteristics reflected those of the participants being studied. For qualitative research, the quality of the information gathered, including the experience, events, and settings, is the main concern rather than sample size. Six participants were selected from the respective schools for the in-depth interviews. The research participants were ECED facilitators and head teachers, who addressed the study's purpose and questions. Of the total participants, 4 were female, and 2 were male. All ECED facilitators were female. One head teacher was female, and 2 head teachers were male. All research participants were resident of Godawari Municipality.

Participants Profile

School	Male	Female	Total
Flood Affected School 1	1	1	2
Flood Affected School 2		2	2
Flood Affected School 3	1	1	2

In this case, the study involved six people: three head teachers and three ECED facilitators. Each of the ECED facilitators had undergone yearly ECED professional training conducted by Godawari Municipality. The headteacher had more than 10 years of experience in teaching and leading a school, while the ECED facilitators had more than 6 years of experience in early childhood education and development. All ECED facilitators had completed bachelor degree. Likewise, one head teacher had completed master degree and two headteachers had completed bachelor degree. The ECED facilitators had also participated in several trainings related to ECD which was organized annually by the municipality. Their wealth of professional experience and involvement in the educational reconstruction after the floods has yielded valuable insights into the problems faced and how they were addressed.

The study included both male and female participants, and their gender was not treated merely as a demographic characteristic but as part of the social and professional context in which their experiences were situated. In the context of early childhood education, caregiving and classroom-based work with young children are often feminized, with women constituting a large proportion of the ECD workforce. The gendered orientation is important in this case since the routine activities of caring for young children and addressing their emotional needs, as well as sustaining classroom relationships, were described in the terms of the experience of female ECD facilitators.

Simultaneously, the male head teachers' stories provided an additional viewpoint concerning the management aspects of educational continuity after the flood. These stories focused on tasks such as organizing school-level responses, mobilizing existing resources, communicating with parents and the community, organizing space, and ensuring ongoing school activities despite disruptions. Thus,

the distinction between the narratives of female ECED facilitators and male head teachers was not used to construct a simple binary between women as caregivers and men as managers. Instead, it helped shed light on how gendered professional roles and duties were intertwined with the realities of education after the flood.

Information Collection and Generation Approach

The data were collected using in-depth interview guidelines with open-ended questions aligned with the objective of my study. Both in-person and telephone interviews were conducted separately with all the participants as needed. The ECED facilitators were participants involved in ECED programs who had experienced disruptions and school closures due to floods. The interview explored the experiences and perceptions of ECED facilitators involved in schools affected by annual floods. Participants were able to share their experiences freely through open-ended questions, which did not limit the impact of the researcher's beliefs and prior findings (Creswell, 2014). Thus, I conducted in-depth interviews with participants to collect their narratives, stories, reflections, and personal experiences.

Further, with participants' consent, I audio-recorded all interviews to accurately capture their experiences, emotions, and personal narratives. Field notes and research logs were written after each interview to capture the setting, participants' body language, new ideas and the researcher's thoughts.

The research note helped me to reflect on the way I worked as a researcher as I was able to write down my methods, my personal thoughts and my changes in the way I understood the research process. The combination of audio recordings, field notes, and diary entries was helpful for researchers in describing the lives of the participants in the study and in forming narratives during the analysis stage. Six participants were selected for my research because Creswell (2014) notes that a small number of participants facilitates analysis.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth narrative interviews served as the primary method of data generation in this narrative inquiry. Six participants were interviewed to explore their lived experiences of supporting young children's learning in the aftermath of flooding. Unlike conventional qualitative interviews that primarily elicit participants' views, perceptions, or experiences in response to predetermined questions, the narrative interviews in this study created space for participants to narrate their experiences as stories. Participants were encouraged to share what happened to them, what they

experienced during and after the flood, who was involved, how their experiences unfolded over time, and how they made sense of the changes they encountered in their work with young children.

The interviews, therefore, unfolded as conversations through which participants moved between events, places, people, emotions, challenges, responses, and reflections. Rather than following a fixed sequence of questions, I allowed participants' narratives to develop in their own ways, while using gentle prompts and follow-up questions to invite them to elaborate on significant experiences, turning points, relationships, and meanings within their stories. In this process, participants did not simply provide answers to questions about the effects of flooding; they narrated how their experiences developed from the initial disruption of their learning spaces and routines to their efforts to support children, adapt their practices, and continue learning in changing circumstances.

Storytelling thus became the form through which the participants articulated and constructed meaning around their experiences. I attended not only to what participants said, but also how their stories unfolded across time and place, which events they considered significant, how they positioned themselves within those events, and how their relationships with children, colleagues, families, school leaders, and communities shaped their experiences. This approach was consistent with narrative inquiry, in which experience is understood as storied, temporal, social, and situated (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The interviews consequently generated narrative accounts rather than isolated responses, providing the basis for subsequent narrative reconstruction and re-storying of participants' experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Observation

Apart from conducting story interviews, I also conducted informal classroom and school observations to gain insights into the educational context within which the subjects' experiences had occurred. In light of what I was told by ECED facilitators about the effects of flooding on children's lives, learning contexts, and school activities, I visited the classrooms and observed the physical environment, learning materials and classroom settings in the ECD context. Such findings allowed me to contextualize the participants' stories and have a deeper understanding of the experiences of the children and teachers in schools following the flooding. Observation was an additional means of data collection, providing me with a better

understanding of the participants' natural context and lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Reflexive and Field Notes

As I collected data, I recorded my thoughts and observations in field notes and reflective memos (Saldaña, 2015). Field notes are a great way to gather background information for narrative inquiry because they capture not only what people say, but also their body language, tone of voice, gestures and the larger context in which people tell their stories. As I interviewed people and arranged the recordings, I knew that all of those things mattered a great deal to me, because I knew they would help me to understand the people I was speaking to.

Writing down what I saw in the field allowed me to learn things about the environment that I couldn't learn by just recording sounds. The field notes provided insight into the context from which the participants' stories emerged and provided us with further information about how the floods and school disruptions were talked about and understood. Throughout the research process, I maintained reflexive memos and field notes to aid me in critically reflecting on my own feelings, interpretations, positions, and biases. With these notes I could keep reflecting on myself and how my past, my experiences and my relationships with other people might have contributed to the way we co-created the story.

Information is socially constructed when the researcher and the subject speak to one another in the course of story research. Thus, reflexive memos were very important in enhancing openness, credibility, and morality, as they clarified ethical decisions made during data collection and analysis.

Interpretation and Meaning-Making Process

Qualitative information analysis means making sense of what people who took part in a study thought and felt about events and also about trends, themes, categories and common characteristics. Creswell (2014) says that the process of analysing data can be divided into five main steps. These steps include getting the information ready and organised, getting a general idea of what it all means, coding/categorizing/theming the data, and figuring out what it all means. First, the qualitative data from this narrative inquiry was typed word-for-word to ensure accuracy and protect the participants' voices. Then, the transcripts were coded systematically, with initial codes identified to capture critical phrases, feelings, and narratives. Codes are quite simply, "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a

summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2015, p. 4).

Thematic interpretation reflected notions or reminders about the social context of storytelling and how participants constructed meaning from their educational experiences during disaster events (Riessman, 2008). Researchers write reflective notes and memos to record new ideas and changing views. The first step in the analysis of data was the writing up of the field notes and audio-files. I listened to the tape more than once, to make sure I didn't miss anything, and the summaries were very correct.

Information for this study was collected using storytelling. Participants were invited to share memories, experiences, feelings and thoughts about teaching and learning after the floods. Rather than responding to a predetermined set of questions, participants narrated their experiences in their own ways, allowing their stories to unfold through particular events, places, relationships, challenges, and turning points. These stories provided the field texts through which I came to understand how ECED facilitators made sense of disrupted learning and their efforts to sustain learning in changing circumstances.

As the participants' stories unfolded, I attended not only to what was said, but also to how experiences were connected across time, place, relationships, and meanings. The process began with transcription of the recorded conversations and careful engagement with the Nepali-language narratives. I translated the Nepali texts into English to support close reading and interpretation. During translation, I noted emerging ideas, significant expressions, events, emotions, relationships, and recurring meanings, which later informed the coding process. These initial notes were not treated as detached categories but as ways to stay close to the participants' stories and to identify significant moments in their experiences.

Following Riessman's (2008) approach to thematic narrative analysis and Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) understanding of experience as storied, temporal, social, and situated, I moved between the participants' individual accounts and the broader narratives that emerged from them. I first engaged with each participant's account as a whole before identifying significant narrative segments. These segments were then brought together according to their connection with particular events, experiences, relationships, and meanings. Rather than fragmenting the accounts into decontextualized themes, I re-storied each participant's experience, retaining the

sequence and context in which significant experiences unfolded. In this process, coded excerpts served as a basis for narrative reconstruction, while attention was paid to preserving the participant's voice, the temporal flow of events, and the relationships among experiences.

The analytical process was also not a straightforward thematic analysis in which participants' accounts were reduced to isolated codes and categories. Rather, storytelling was the foundation of data generation, and re-storying was central to interpretation and representation. The narratives were understood as situated accounts through which participants constructed meanings around disruption, coping, care, adaptation, and resilience.

In this sense, analysis involved listening for how experiences unfolded, what events became significant, how participants positioned themselves within those experiences, and how meanings were shaped through relationships with children, colleagues, families, schools, communities, and places. The final narratives, therefore, sought to provide a coherent, contextualized, and authentic representation of participants' experiences while maintaining the storied nature of the data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008).

Quality Standards

My research maintained the trustworthiness of the results by upholding multiple quality criteria in line with qualitative research guidelines: Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, and Transferability. Credibility in qualitative research refers to the confidence in the truth of the data and the interpretation of participants' experiences. It is established when the research findings accurately reflect the meanings shared by participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my study, Credibility was enhanced by spending significant time with the participants to build trust and gather detailed descriptions. Reflective journals and papers that record analytical processes produce an audit trail of ideas and considerations that make things more reliable.

According to Sandelowski (1986), dependability refers to the uniformity and reliability of this study, as well as the extent to which relevant studies are recorded. It enabled someone from another research to implement, review, and criticize the methodological approach.

In addition, I implemented a code-recode approach to ensure consistency in data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have stated that Confirmability is the extent to

which the research study's findings are confirmed by other researchers. In my study, confirmability was enhanced through reflexivity, including identifying personal biases that might influence the analysis and peer debriefing with academic colleagues who asked questions and challenged the results. Lastly, transferability is a form of generalizability, related to how well findings from one research study seem relevant or useful to theorists, practitioners, and future studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability in my study was enhanced through rich descriptions of the participants, their environments, and the socio-cultural contexts of the urban schools affected by flooding.

To ensure the quality of my research remains intact, I have upheld ethical standards, methodological integrity, and theoretical rigor. As for narrative inquiry, the following narrative quality standards which are as follows:

Temporality

The very first thing I did was build relationships with the participants to obtain genuine data for my qualitative research. My findings were further validated when I developed relationships with early childhood development facilitators and head teachers, who shared fascinating stories with me. Temporality involves how people perceive and experience time. Considering this timescale helped me explore participants' experiences across past, present, and future contexts (O'Connor et al., 2023).

So I could see the events in the right order and understand how they build on each other. I wanted to see what the early childhood development trainers and head teachers really said by looking at how things unfolded over time.

Sociality

When people go through hard times, they don't work them out by themselves. They work them out in conversations, in relationships, in the social groups that they are part of. Then, qualitative research is based on social processes to collect authentic information. For us to understand sociality, we need to consider the relationship between social value and sociality and how these concepts shape each other (Sillander, 2021).

By fostering a positive, open atmosphere, I facilitated analysis of the emotional and ethical aspects of the issue. My connection with my participants played a very important role in this process. Such a positive atmosphere was created by the

mutual understanding mentioned, which enabled us to gather authentic information and analyze it effectively.

Place

According to De Medeiros and Etter-Lewis (2020), place can mean many things – physical spots, emotional ties, relationships, and even abstract positions. In this research, the concept of place is defined as the early childhood learning environments in schools in communities affected by floods in Godawari Municipality. Places include classrooms, playgrounds, school premises, and other areas surrounding these schools where children learn and interact. This approach to examining the concept of place will enable this research to investigate how flooding changed children's learning environments from teachers' perspectives.I examined the experiences of ECED facilitators and head teachers at community schools in Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur District. I interviewed them under natural conditions and was thus able to get an idea of what their experience was like. To understand their statements in the right context, I valued their ideas and beliefs.

Praxis

Praxis is the application of knowledge through practice, thought and experience (Freire, 1970). For the purposes of this study the experiences of ECD guides during floods were used as examples. The facilitators had to be flexible in their teaching approach to overcome the challenges of broken classroom infrastructure, poor student attendance, lack of teaching resources and the social and emotional needs of the students. The narratives provided by the facilitators depicted the impact that their previous experience had on their instructional approach in response to the floods. They were more cautious about protecting classroom teaching materials by placing books, toys, charts, and chairs, among others, in high, safe places in case of heavy rainfall, since they had previously lost learning materials due to floods.

Moreover, they learned how to shift activities using objects available in their area, such as gundri for sitting and stones, leaves, wooden sticks, mud, maize, and wheat for counting when they cannot use regular objects for counting. In addition, they placed a very high priority on preparing children mentally for the rainy season and on ensuring that learning continued despite the delay. The above fact indicates that past disasters influenced their response to the current situation, as they took measures based on their experiences. The above actions demonstrate that they have used their professional skills to adapt their teaching methods, support students,

collaborate with communities, and create additional learning opportunities. It means that they have used their professional skills in practice. These actions demonstrate not only the practical application of teaching skills but also critical thinking and problem-solving processes.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity was employed throughout the research to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. As one of the main tools of narrative inquiry, I reflected on the effects that my professional experience, personal background, assumptions, and interactions with participants may have on the collection, interpretation, and representation of participants' stories (Berger, 2015). The reflective journal was where I recorded decisions regarding methodology, new interpretations, emotional responses, and potential biases. Additionally, discussions with my supervisors helped me reflect critically and challenge my interpretations, so that I would base my findings not on my preconceptions but on the participants' stories. Reflexive approach improved the validity and credibility of my research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Every researcher should be aware of ethical considerations while conducting any research studies. “Ethical issues may stem from the kind of problems investigated by social scientists and the method they use to obtain valid and reliable data” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 51). I developed the consent form with the technical input of my supervisor based on the Kathmandu University's ethical guideline. After getting the approval from the department, I also had the consent form signed from research participants for maintaining their confidentiality and getting approval from the research participants. I explained each of them the purpose of my study, research questions, the nature of their involvement, and the procedures to be followed during the research process to avoid any kind of ethical issues.

Participants were informed about their rights, including the right to participate voluntarily, the right to decline to answer any question, and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without negative consequences. Participants’ confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed throughout the research process by de-identifying data and securely storing any identified or sensitive information. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time, and no

consequences would befall them. These ethical safeguards are in line with established research ethics principles and protect the rights, dignity and welfare of participants.

As a researcher, I also worked on self-awareness to avoid any biases in data collection process. I was cautious not to form preconceptions and to interpret stories in ways that were unfair or unjustifiable in my own research. Above all, I conducted this study with great compassion and integrity, keeping in mind the rights, dignity, and emotional well-being of my respondents at every step of the conversation.

Positioning Myself in the Study

This study, "*Tales from the River's Edge: A Narrative Inquiry of Pre-School Learning Disruptions in Lalitpur District,*" is situated within a geographically and climatically vulnerable context characterized by seasonal and increasingly unpredictable rainfall patterns, particularly during and after the monsoon period. In the last few years, the research area has faced not only predictable monsoon flooding but also unpredictable post-monsoon rains, causing unexpected river flooding and environmental instability. This problem often leads to cessation of childhood education through difficult access, destruction, and unsafe feelings among children. I am motivated to conduct this research by my work with young children and my residence in the vicinity of flood-affected regions. The experiences mentioned above influence my interpretation of the participants' accounts. Therefore, I am well aware that I am not merely an outsider but an active participant in the knowledge-building process.

Reflecting Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), I believe that the production of knowledge is always situated within a framework of power relations. My interaction with ECED facilitators were informed by my emphasis on conversation, freedom, and anti-hierarchical and "banking" models of knowledge. As a researcher, I am still conscious about my position that might influence the way people interact with me, even unconsciously, and thus influence what will be said, emphasized, or ignored in storytelling interviews. As an individual aware of such power relations, I adopt a reflective stance towards my research and constantly question myself on how my presuppositions, personal experience, and positional power might influence my interpretations. In addition, I endeavored to develop an ethically sensitive space in which the participants' voices would not only be heard but also co-constructed into narratives. This is because critical pedagogy (as defined by Freire in 1970) entails that knowledge is generated through dialogue, respect, and

collective construction of meaning rather than being transferred. Similarly, narrative inquiry views research as a social enterprise where meanings are constructed in relation to the participants' experiences and the researcher's engagement with those experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I attempted to decrease the distance between us by building relationships with the participants that went both ways recognising their voices as important sources of information. When I had to talk about the things teachers and parents had to go through after the flood in Godavari Municipality, I had to use even more of relationship and dialogue-based approach. The narrative inquiry method (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) allowed me to conduct ethically sound and sensitive research to the participants' situations while being respectful of the participants' lived experiences.

Chapter Essence

The methodological section of this chapter laid the ground for the study with its considerations of three philosophical perspectives: an axiological perspective, a relativist perspective of reality, and a subjectivist perspective of knowledge. These views include multiple realities, the construction of knowledge and values in the research process. Based on these assumptions, the study employed an interpretive paradigm and narrative inquiry to understand how teachers maintained early childhood learning in the flooded schools.In this chapter we discussed the selection of the study site and subjects, the data collection methods used (interviews, observations, field notes and reflecting memos) and how the story data was analysed. The chapter further explained the procedures taken to enhance trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability while ensuring ethical integrity in the study.

This chapter further discusses the researcher's positionality and reflexivity as well as knowledge construction in collaboration with participants. The following chapter explores ECED facilitators' perceptions and experiences of the effects of flooding on young children's learning in flood-affected community schools of Godawari Municipality. This chapter uses stories written in response to Interview Question 1 about how flooding has affected children's learning. In this chapter I expand on how floods have changed learning, play, mental health, habits and how people interact with learning environments amongst other things.

CHAPTER IV
STORIED PERCEPTIONS: TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF FLOOD IMPACT ON EARLY LEARNING

This chapter presents the experiences of ECED facilitators, revealing their perceptions of how repeated floods have affected children's learning from an early age in three community schools in Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur District. In response to the first research question, the ECED facilitators' narratives are grouped into four sub-themes, which are indicative of their knowledge about how floods affect early childhood learning: (i) Disrupted Grounds of Learning, (ii) When Learning Lost Its Continuity (iii) Psychological Landscapes of Childhood Learning and (iv) Restricted Horizons of Playful Learning

Finding My Way: Navigating Schools on the First Day of Fieldwork

I started my fieldwork at Flood Affected School 1, situated in the Godawari Municipality, a few miles from my home area. The distance away from the hustle of the city made my ride easier. However, I found the road to school too slippery, muddy, and bumpy. I saw the school and was even more shocked to see the setting. It almost looked like a flower placed in a vase. The school was surrounded by small, sloping hills, where stone walls were built to prevent landslides from falling onto it. All around stood tall trees and dense bushes enclosing the school like a forest. The school grounds were still wet from last night's rainfall, and they were slippery too. The way to the school was partly covered with a plastic sheet to prevent soil from being washed away during rainfall.

Both the Head teacher and ECED facilitator, with whom I had talked three times on the phone earlier, were waiting at the desk right next to the door. They knew about the purpose of my visit as I had already explained to the head teacher why I was willing to visit his school and meet him. This somehow helped me build rapport smoothly and paved the way to start the conversation. Contrary to my assumption that I would complete the fieldwork in a day, I visited the school three times to gather the full information and story. Throughout the writing, I spoke with both the head teacher and the ECED facilitator by phone more than 8 times, and, to my surprise, they always responded positively and provided the information I needed.

As soon as I moved away from the hustle and bustle of the city road and into Flood Affected School 2, I began to smell the freshness in the air. The view unfolded like a movie scene, something I had only seen in postcards. The river and the suspended bridge were at the foothills, and the people were tilling the paddy fields, harvesting in groups. Their collective effort and identical clothes (gunyo choli) looked surreal. Their tiffin box was lying near the edge of the field. They were singing a song. I stood there for a while, listening to its melody. Since their language was Newari, I did not understand anything from it. Even without understanding the song, I enjoyed the tune and left happily towards the destination. The marigold flowers (sayapatri) in the barren fields reminded me of the Tihar festival, which had just ended recently. Further, during the information-gathering process, I repeatedly visited this school and had telephone conversations with the head teacher and the ECED facilitator. Each visit was a joyful and hopeful experience, enriched by the school's tranquil rural setting and its welcoming spirit.

I remember the bumpy road and how it made me uncertain of the directions. I had to stop four times to ask for directions to the school. As I struggled up the hill on my scooter, a beautiful yellow building came into view. I guessed right, that was the school. Even from a distance, I noticed some damaged infrastructure down by the river. It was a place of beauty and weakness, early in the morning on my way to school. But the peace had stories of hidden damage behind it. The concrete road would become a pathway leading down to the river. The river was once beautiful; however, within a year, it became a destructive power that knew no boundaries.

As the plans to visit Flood Affected School 3 were put into action in the early mornings, there was beauty and fragility all around me. Mists hover over the mountains, the sun rays reflecting off the rivers, and the fields extended endlessly till my vision blurred. The blacktop road ended at the entrance of a small lane leading to the river. The river had been very pretty once; however, in less than a year, it became a force of destruction that knew no bounds. It was at the cremation ground where life ended, while the ruined temples acted as a reminder of destruction and strength at the same time. As I was getting closer to the school, I asked two people for directions, and both times their hands pointed me towards the stream.

The nearer I got to the school gate, the more at peace this small complex made me feel because, despite everything being ruined, life went on. At the beginning of my walk into this new environment, I saw two men standing right past the main gate.

One was wearing a denim jacket and jeans, a very unusual kind of dressing for a teacher, in my opinion, and the other was wearing slippers. *"Study hard. Your success is our success-your parents', your teachers', your schools'."*

There was an unexpected dignity in their guidance, a quiet insistence that learning mattered despite the scars of disaster. A leather-jacketed man wearing a cap greeted me warmly; it was the Head teacher. He quickly recognized me from our previous calls and, with a kind smile, asked me to wait in his office until he finished his class.

When I think of this event, I think it is very important that my research was done prior to the interviews. Dusty roads, not knowing where to go, flood damaged land, friendly teachers and strong school communities were all part of the data collection process. To start off, they told me about the place where I would do my research. They also taught me what a researcher does in such a case.

These early contacts with the study settings not only helped me to understand their settings, but also gave me a glimpse of what it's like to be in a flooded school and see how resilient people are. While I kept visiting, interviewing, observing, and even engaging in conversations with the participants, some meaningful patterns began to reveal themselves to me. The themes, based on which interpretations of these patterns were made, are described below.

Disrupted Grounds of Learning

The flood destroyed the entire infrastructure at Flood-Affected School 1, where classrooms were submerged, learning materials were washed away, and the learning environment was drastically altered. As classes resumed after the disaster, the children had to come to learn in a new physical environment that was also psychologically different from what they were used to. It emerged from the narratives provided by the ECED facilitator that the effects of the disaster extended not only to the learning environment but also to the children's participation in classroom activities.

> *When children first came into the classroom after the mudslide, they were extremely quiet, hesitant, and seemed almost frozen. "Many of them took my hands and didn't want to go inside. They kept looking at the walls and ground as if something bad was going to happen again. Some people worried the classroom would collapse or the materials would be ruined, so they asked*

repeatedly, "Miss, yo feri bigrincha ki?" (will this break again?). Instead of being self-assured and interested they were worried and careful.

This story describes how the disaster affected the social and intellectual development of children in many ways, such as the loss of learning materials and damage to classrooms. The fear and reluctance in the children were not simply a matter of behavior, but had much to do with giving up their known environments, objects, and patterns that would allow them to discover. According to Piaget (1952), young children learn through exploration and interaction with their environment. However, Vygotsky (1978) states that social contact is essential for the development of higher brain processes.

Problem-solving, collaborative play and peer learning — believed to be important for attention, memory and creativity — were more difficult when there were no familiar objects or safe places to play. Besides the mudslide there were other things to scare the kids. They were afraid of what they did not know, afraid of losing control, afraid of their familiar surroundings changing. They kept asking over and over again "will this be damaged again?" That showed that they were emotionally not stable and the learning environment has not dealt with it yet. This fear here was not an individual emotion but a collective emotional state produced by past events, memories and the environment. I began to understand that.

From the point of view of buildings, the head teacher mentioned the damage to the environment: "*Schools and classrooms were buried under the soil. The ground was muddy, and* the *smell of wet soil hung in the air. Children kept asking, khelne thau kaha gayo? (Where has the playground gone) hit me really hard".*

These results help in grasping this issue, as it is evident that the children purposely searched for the blocks and comfortable locations, while some of them cried for the old room. These behaviors demonstrate that memory, identity, and cognition in young children can be spatial and object-oriented (Malaguzzi, 1993). The flood made it difficult for the kids to get to familiar places and things immediately. It also messed up their lives, making them anxious, shy and unable to play and learn.

Familiar objects for play can provide children with a sense of safety and security again after a crisis, according to environmental psychologists (Spencer & Blades, 2006). It helps kids control their feelings and it helps them focus. The children would not be able to solve problems, play with other children, and learn from others without familiar materials and environments. The teachers noticed that children

remained cautious even after the classroom was repaired. These observations indicate that psychological recovery is strongly connected to material recovery.

These stories indicate that recovery of early childhood education after a disaster should not only be material but also encompass the restoration of a familiar, socially supportive environment rich in play opportunities, which will help children become more secure, motivated, and engaged in learning activities.

The Headteacher shared, "*There was complete stillness and dirt at our school overnight. The swings were washed away. The open field turned into a swamp. The children had nowhere to run, no corner to feel free*." The ECED facilitator from FAS 2 then shared, *"Children repeatedly asked her, 'Ma'am, khelne thau kahaa gayo*?" (Ma'am, where did our playthings go?) Their confusion reflects a deep rupture in their sense of place. The facilitator of Early Childhood Development gave a realistic account of the emotional struggle and confusion that the children experienced after being transferred to the temporary classrooms:

> *As soon as the children arrived in the temporary classroom for the first time, they were fearful, quiet, and confused. They looked everywhere for their blocks, their books, and the locations that provided them with a sense of familiarity from days gone by. There were several who were sobbing and constantly asking where their belongings were since they were missing their previous room.. It was obvious they were scared, and they felt they didn't belong anymore.*

The story depicts how the sudden loss of the children's accustomed resources and environment impacted their mental and emotional health as the story unfolds. In 1952 Piaget wrote that some of the most important things for young children to learn are habit, touch and common places I noted that the absence of these conditions resulted in fewer opportunities for exploration, play, and interaction. Exploration, play, and interaction are crucial for the formation of memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. It was not only the psychological discomfort that was demonstrated by the children through their confusion, hesitation, and withdrawal from the classroom. It was also clear that the children were less interested and engaged in the learning process.

The head teacher confirmed the above results, and added that the kids' behavior changed because of less room to play outside,

Our school was spread over 76 ropani and there was a lot of laughter and play. Over the course of the night, things deteriorated into a mucky quiet. The swings were washed away. The open field turned into a swamp. The children had nowhere to run, no corner to feel free.

The ECED facilitator at FAS 2 added that children walked into the temporary classroom "confused and quiet, unable to locate the colorful materials that once grounded their daily routines. "They kept searching for their blocks, their picture books, some even cried for the old room. It was like their memory had no place to land. This made me critically reflect on our response as educators and institutions. While we were working to restore our usual classroom dynamic, I began wondering whether there was enough effort to help children overcome their fears. Also, I realized that while the physical renovation of the classrooms could be achieved, mental safety may not necessarily return with it, as fear can linger for quite some time even after the visible signs of disaster fade.

When it comes to early childhood education, these instances demonstrate the need of putting an emphasis not only on material recovery but also on psychological rehabilitation in the aftermath of any calamity. Reconstructing classrooms and purchasing new items should not be the only things that are done throughout the process of reconstructing the class. The kids require an environment that is safe, comfortable, and psychologically supportive for playing, interacting with other kids, and regaining self-confidence. Moreover, scientific investigations into the processes of child development during disasters indicate that any change in the environment significantly impairs both the psychological and social development of children. This statement is especially relevant for young children, who require routine and material support above all (Masten & Narayan, 2012). Only if the kids regain their drive, ability to interact socially, and capacity to engage in cognitive processes will they be able to continue their studies, which were interrupted by the flood.

This was due to floods in FAS 3 throughout the years. The floods in 2081 and the cloudbursts in 2082 greatly affected the environment. And these things then took a toll on the kids' schooling and social lives and mental health. You could tell the ECED facilitator was emotionally affected when she talked about seeing kids losing their belongings and even getting lost,

When I got to school the following day, I was staggered by what I observed. The toys were scattered amid the mud; the books were glued together by

water, while the kids' work was peeling off the wet walls. All the things which kids were accustomed to – such as chairs, toys, and school stuff – were nowhere to be found. One could notice their confusion and fear. They were lost, unsure where to start, while some kids stuck with me, not wanting to play or explore. There was chaos and silence where there had been laughter and curiosity.

These narrations resonated to the Head Teacher's comments, who, in turn, added to the sense of the scale of the loss. "*I started trembling. I almost fell on the ground. Everything we had built, our plans, our hopes, collapsed in one night. These were not just materials… they were the children's world."*

These two stories helped me reflect on my reaction to them and how silently I drew the parallels between their experience and the way the early childhood learning environment is structured, with objects, play, and routines providing children with a sense of security. It suddenly became apparent that my reaction to the story was not detached and objective but rather was colored by emotions.

This experience made me recall an incident from my childhood. When I was in the UKG, it used to rain quite heavily. Water used to come inside our classroom through the roof. It was impossible for us to study in that room. Hence, we were moved to another room under these circumstances. However, I did not feel comfortable in that room. My memories of those days include a constant struggle with myself to find out when I would be able to return to my own classroom. With everything so unfamiliar to me, it was hard to pay attention to the lesson. This made me realize that a classroom for a child is not just a physical space but much more.

The narratives and my own experience, therefore, demonstrate that post-disaster interventions need to address both material and psychosocial dimensions. According to attachment theory, children require a stable, secure base to activate their exploratory behavioral system. Such a system is responsible for the playful exploration of the surrounding environment (Cassidy et al., 2013).

Reconstructing environments that are secure, comfortable, and interesting, making learning materials easily accessible, and providing assistance to children in their mental recovery are all essential steps in restoring children's confidence, interest, and involvement in activities.

When Learning Lost Its Continuity

When I met with the ECED facilitator at FAS 1, we discussed more than the physical losses of the building. We also spoke about the child's experience itself. In discussing what happened after the flood, she explained the profound effect the change in their environment had on the child's relationship to learning. She elaborated on the profound impact of the flood on children's learning experiences,

> *When I arrived at the school the next day, the sight was heartbreaking. The ground was muddy, the smell of wet soil lingered everywhere, and the classrooms were completely unrecognizable. All that was needed for studying was lost; from books to toys, from stationery to teaching tools were no longer available. All that was at the school was gone with the floods. I could not cope with the losses, and the thought of beginning anew appeared impossible. The loss of educational means and a familiar environment only added to this list, thereby retarding children's intellectual growth.*



It is evident from the ECED facilitator's account that the loss of equipment and playthings disrupted the processes needed for the development of young learners' memory, attention, and problem-solving. According to research, natural disasters not only cause physical damage to infrastructure and structures but also disrupt school processes and other critical learning functions, including concentration and memory (Nguyen, & Pham, 2018; Gibbs et al., 2019). As a result, children perform poorly in reading and mathematics over time. The children had difficulty participating in class activities without the right tools and a safe place to learn. This was making the kids fall back in math and reading.

During the school visit I also spoke with the head teacher who told me about the damage to the environment from a structural point of view. Schools and classrooms were buried under the ground. The ground was muddy, and the smell of wet soil hung in the air. Children kept asking, "Khelne thau kaha gayo? " *(Where has the playground/play station gone?) hit me really hard.* During the interaction with the Head teacher, he recalled the situation in this way,

> *When I saw the school after the flood, I couldn't believe my eyes. The classrooms were completely destroyed, all the books, toys, and teaching materials were gone, and the children had nothing familiar around them. When we shifted them to the Temporary Learning Center (TLC), they seemed confused; it was unfamiliar to them. The students who had once felt self-confident and enthusiastic about learning also found themselves confused and disoriented. Apart from denying them the opportunity to attend school, the water appeared to make it hard for them to learn.*

The statement above makes clear how environmental disruptions, such as floods, may affect learning. Such disruptions include both physical and psychological effects on learning. The learning process of the youngsters has been disrupted since there has been no learning environment. This is important for early learners in the aspects of memory, attention, and problem-solving (Brown et al., 2021; Smith & Jones, 2020). Shifting children to a Temporary Learning Center (TLC) introduced additional challenges for them. The new place made them more confused and anxious and it was more difficult for them to return to learning activities. Research-backed observations of ECED facilitators and head teachers suggest that natural disasters do not only destroy buildings, but they also affect kids' mental growth, academic progress and sense of safety in school.

As the ECED facilitator narrated that the child "forgot letters, numbers, and songs" and became "quiet and withdrawn," it becomes evident that the floods destabilized the very ecological resources, safe classrooms, predictable routines, and emotional support that normally scaffold learning. Later, reflecting back on her accounts, I began questioning what it means when she says children "lost their ability to learn"- is she describing an actual loss of capacity, or the breakdown of the environments that usually support learning? It also suggests that what appears to be children "forgetting" or "becoming withdrawn" may not simply be a cognitive regression but a response to the loss of familiar structures that once made learning possible.

Ungar (2011) argues that when these external systems collapse, children's capacity to recover cognitively and emotionally diminishes unless adults actively recreate stability and connection. In the stories shared by the ECED teachers, this recreation of stability appears in their intentional emotional presence, "I had to bring

hope first into my own heart," which mirrors Ungar's emphasis on supportive relationships as core resilience-building pathways.

As scheduled, a meeting between the head teacher, ECED facilitator, and myself, I reached the office of FAS 3, and even before I started the recording, the ECED facilitator, taking a slurp of soup (lunch break), started sharing informally how natural disasters like floods and landslides had impacted their school for many years. She shared,

> *The history of flooding and landslides at our school dates back to 2076. That year changed everything for us. Though we are not situated near a river, water broke from underground and flooded this place. It was unexpected, and it came with such force that we could do nothing. Twelve households were swept away that night, and so was our school. I still remember standing helplessly watching as everything we had built over the years disappeared beneath the muddy water.*
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> *She also shared,*
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> *In 2081, it was hard for us. There were heavy rains out of nowhere and we were still trying to get better. The hardest thing I've gone through is seeing how that situation has affected my kids. They got scared, worried and isolated from each other. They were afraid of the rain and wanted to get out of school as fast as they could. They had difficulty paying attention in class, remembering what they had been taught, and participating in activities in the classroom. The kids learned a lot from their past activities and it was evident that they moved around a lot and had a hard time settling down.*

The discussions raised concerns about the impact of floods on children's education and brain development. There were interruptions to the education and learning process due to disruptions to the places, resources, and skills for children's learning. This hindered their concentration, memorization, and conceptualization of issues, which are critical aspects of children's education, as seen in studies on disasters (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Unlike the other studies, which address ways children can recover from disasters, the experiences discussed highlighted the negative impact of frequent and unpredictable disasters.

The head teacher further added how spatial constraints and displacement affected learning. He shared*, "We had to shift to a small rented house with only six*

rooms. Children who were once free to explore and learn through play now had to sit quietly in tight rooms. Their attention drifted, and they seemed restless and distracted.

In FAS 2, the headteacher pointed out that, due to a lack of space, children have to sit rather than play, thus demonstrating that environmental constraints may affect opportunities for development. According to the socio-ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979, cognitive retreat is not merely a psychological reaction but a natural outcome of disturbed systems. As schools were destroyed, families were displaced, and daily routines were disrupted, children were suddenly deprived of the environmental support that helped them develop and learn.

As explained by the head teacher, constantly moving from place to place significantly contributed to the children's inability to concentrate and prepare for school. In 1964, Piaget wrote that the rapid transition from large playrooms to rented space diminished chances for exploratory learning, which is crucial at the early stages of cognitive development.

The children were unable to move, play, or interact with each other due to a lack of space. This reduced concentration and irritability among children is associated with learning motivation and academic engagement in preschools (UNICEF, 2025; Vygotsky, 1978). These interruptions proved that the children's inability to concentrate, process information, and engage in classroom learning was influenced by the change in learning environment.

During the meeting at FAS 3, the issue at stake was the flood's effect on the teaching and learning process. The ECED facilitator often paused before giving answers, articulating her emotional baggage and reflection,

The materials that we used to educate the children were not only destroyed by water and mud; almost everything that we had for them was taken away. The educational materials left on the floor were all broken, so nothing remained there. The toys, educational aids, books, homework, and all other school supplies were wet and destroyed. Only the charts hanging on the walls remained, as they were at



> *higher levels. After the water receded, I entered the classroom and found that nothing was left. The whole place was covered in mud, and many things became useless.*

This example demonstrates that the difficulties associated with the academic process were not only due to the absence of schooling but also to the breakdown of the physical and educational foundations that facilitate learning. As explained by the teacher, educational resources, school equipment, and technology serve as the mediatory objects that help children learn. From the point of view of the sociocultural theory, people learn through interaction with people, objects, and cultural artifacts around them (Vygotsky, 1978). It should be emphasized how the teacher referred to the "empty" classroom.

The classroom is not just an environment but a learning ecosystem where activities, routines, interactions, and materials combine to support learning and development. Alterations in a child's immediate environment affect learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this case, the flood altered the classroom microsystem, reducing the availability of resources that normally scaffold children's learning and engagement. Further, she shared,

> *The children were also affected. Many came to school after their homes were flooded. Some had lost their books and school bags, while others seemed distracted and worried. Back in school, the electricity was also gone. There was no television, no multimedia resources, and no way to use the digital materials that we sometimes relied upon. The TV would have made teaching much easier because the children enjoyed learning through visual activities and educational videos. After the flood, we had to return to teaching with whatever little remained. Even when everyone sat in the classroom, their attention was not the same as before.*

From a developmental perspective, early learning is highly dependent on habit and routine, and prolonged disruptions can make it difficult for people to memorize information (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Thus, the notion that learning has come to a halt is evidence that disruption in education is not only structural but is also present in the classroom environment and affects its functioning, teacher motivation, and interest in learning among students simultaneously.

A number of studies in the field of disaster education cite such examples and highlight that, apart from making it impossible to attend educational facilities, crises

disrupt the quality and processes of learning (Masten, 2014). In addition, findings on post-disaster education reveal that learning does not resume immediately. For learning to resume, certain psychological and social shifts should occur, and students need to reconstruct classrooms first (Masten, 2014).

As I was reading and reflecting on it, I became aware of the teacher's use of emotional language such as "heartbreaking," "devastated," and "wondering how I would conduct the day's lesson." From these emotions, one could tell that this disruption affected not only the educational tools but also her confidence and ability to deliver lessons. This self-reflection made me understand that disruption in education does not simply stop learning activities. It is much more complicated, involving resource loss, changes in the learning environment, emotional turmoil, and efforts to provide children with new educational opportunities.

Psychological Landscapes of Childhood Learning

The ringing of the bell signaled lunch break, and the noise in the class slowly died down. A warm serving of porridge and milk tea was laid out before us, and we sat there to have the meal together. Each bite and sip took us into a discussion of the flood, the children, life after the flood, and the challenges of being a teacher. Our conversation gradually moved beyond the visible damage caused by the flood to its less visible emotional consequences for young children. Reflecting on these experiences, the ECED facilitator at FAS 1 remarked,

> *After the flood of 2082 (just before the Dashain vacation started), the school remained closed for students until Tihar. However, the teachers had to work together to restore the classrooms. When children came to school, they were shocked to see their classrooms had changed from "wow" to "nothing". Some of them expressed that they had to undergo similar loss at their homes. Their hens, which they kept for the Dashain feast, were swept away by the flood. They really had a difficult time during the festival. The basic worksheet she gave the children as vacation work came in empty.*
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> *Some of the children's parents were busy collecting the utensils and shielding the blanket from getting wet. They didn't care much about their kid's books and notes, which made the children emotionally drained. The condition of the classroom further deepened their sadness; they looked very unhappy when they arrived at school.*

This reflection highlights how challenging it was for facilitators to help the children feel calm in such a context. The destruction of classrooms and learning materials created both logistical and pedagogical difficulties, as well as psychological effects on the children. The disruption not only affected the physical environment but also had implications for children's engagement and for their psychological presence in the classroom, hindering their ability to focus and participate effectively.

The following observation was noted by the facilitator as she continued to contemplate the post-recovery stage; the psychological difficulties faced by the children were ongoing, a situation made worse by the fears of the parents. As she unfolded,

> *Even though the flood took place a long time ago, parents would still run around trying to get their children when it rained. It was an awful experience, due to the fear one could see in their eyes, the kids holding on to them, their fear of not being able to make it across the nearby river, and the chaos.*

The narrative serves as a real-life illustration of how the emotional and social well-being of children and their parents may be negatively impacted by an event of this kind over the course of prolonged time. Despite the fact that the school facility may have been cleaned up, it was obvious that the students had difficulties forming relationships with one another and shown symptoms of worry. Their parents' anxiety was a factor in the frequency with which they went and the degree to which they participated. In the context of early childhood education disaster recovery, these results highlight the need of paying attention to the mental health needs of children and their parents, in addition to the restoration of infrastructure and the supply of school supplies for children (Masten & Narayan, 2012; Reifel & Brown, 2015). Teachers played a vital role in dealing with the aftermath of such events by providing stability and comfort to the children.

Similar to this is van der Kolk's (2014) presentation of children exposed to environmental trauma who become increasingly vulnerable to hypervigilance, fearfulness, and emotional numbing as part of survival. Such states have precedence over higher-order cognitive processes. This theoretical framework fits very well with the observations of teachers: children who "cried all day," or clung to them, or were "restless and unable to sit still." This is not a demonstration of a lack of discipline or attention; rather, it is a neurodevelopmental stress response caused by post-flood trauma (Perry, 2006; van der Kolk, 2014).

Under the above circumstances, the attempt to establish regularity, predictability, and warmth in relationships was also transformed into an academic intervention rather than merely a psychological one. Emotional safety –an important element of readiness to learn – is achieved through regular routines and responsive relationships. The Temporary Learning Center they built was small, congested, and far from the space that they had before. The children could hardly move freely, and running or playing as they used to was impossible. It was a completely new space for children, which made them feel strange and uncomfortable, unlike in their classroom, as reported by the ECED facilitator.

Among the various stories the ECED facilitator shared about FAS 2, one in particular stuck in my mind even after I left. The story of Star is one such story that made me ponder the emotional impact of floods on the lives of little children.



A young girl who had once been lively, curious, and actively engaged in classroom activities. In the aftermath of the flood, she showed distinct signs of change in both her behavior and her ways of learning. She had become shy and timid, avoided making eye contact, and found it very difficult to concentrate in class, as she would gaze out the window for a considerable amount of time in total silence. Star was visibly afraid and worried about the rain, especially when there was thunder. This made it harder for her to focus on what was supposed to be done for learning. Another thing that caught the teacher's attention was that she was taking an unusually long time to get home from school.

It is evident from the story of the facilitator that students faced a lot of challenges in their endeavor to overcome the emotional and psychological trauma caused by the flooding. In view of this challenge, the students were unable to concentrate on their studies in the early days of the new academic year. This further posed challenges for the teachers, who had to put in extra effort to capture students' attention in class.

In the same way, the Head Teacher of FAS 2 shared her experiences regarding students' emotional and psychological states throughout their studies.:

> *It became a great concern for me how the kids' restlessness increased because they were moved around and kept in small, makeshift classes. I remembered the instances where the toddlers used to gaze out of the small window, as if searching for their play area. It was an obvious sign that they required a stable environment. Their normal cheerful mood had been replaced by fear.*

The story presented through the Head Teacher clearly shows how a lack of familiarity with certain places, such as the area where they used to play and mingle with their friends at school, greatly affected their emotional state and their interest in studying and playing other games. The Head Teacher highlighted a strong relationship between psychosocial well-being and children's learning. Cognitive engagement depends first on feeling safe, supported, and emotionally regulated. Teachers, therefore, had to not only manage children's distress but also navigate their own emotional responses while fostering a supportive environment that could promote children's recovery and re-engagement in learning activities (Masten & Narayan, 2012; Reifel & Brown, 2015). These narratives highlight a core insight: children's emotional and psychosocial well-being is inseparable from their learning. At the same time, I became aware of the emotional labor teachers undertake in such contexts. I could imagine how difficult it must have been for them to support children's distress while also managing their own emotional responses to the disaster.

The morning air was cold as I walked toward the ECED classroom of FAS 3. Even months after the flood, the river seemed calm, but everyone remembered the day it had turned violent. The ECED facilitator greeted me with a quiet smile, but I could see the weight of last year still in her eyes. There was emotional and psychological stress on the students because of the flood, which teachers believed was necessary to break the learning process.

The ECED facilitator reflected on memories of the flood and discussed how the experience would have a lasting effect on the children. She recounted,

> *At first, the children were quiet and scared. Some hid in corners. I realized that if I was afraid, the children would be afraid too. I had to be strong; therefore, I tried to show bravery in front of the children, even though I had my own share of fear. This action helped reduce the children's fear and allowed us to begin creating a safe and supportive learning environment.*

This narrative demonstrates how crucial it is for teachers to provide psychological support during the process of educating children, particularly after a

disaster. There is evidence that exposure to the traumatic event is likely to result in the reflection of adult feelings in children. The ability of adults to manage their feelings and encourage children will directly influence the level of security and willingness to study of the latter (Masten & Narayan, 2012; Reifel & Brown, 2015). Not only did the teacher relieve anxiety, but also facilitated the return to regular routines and the learning process among students.

She further shared the ongoing anxiety children experienced even after the full resumption of school operations. She explained,

> *Even now, heavy rain makes children anxious, and some run away and try to hide themselves. I have to keep calm so they can feel safe. Even now, heavy rain makes me nervous. Parents keep calling whenever it starts pouring. They come to pick up their children early, or don't send them if it's raining.*

The experiences described by this facilitator demonstrate the flood's influence on children's mental and social development. First of all, it proves that natural disasters may be the reason for persistent anxiety, which interferes with studying and learning processes (Masten & Narayan, 2012; Norris et al., 2002). The heightened fear response in children during rainfalls proves that trauma may lead to lower security and decreased involvement of children in the learning process under the impact of environmental factors. Also, increased stress among teachers and overprotective behavior among parents may prevent kids from regulating their emotions and attending classes, which may have an indirect negative impact on their cognitive development (Reifel & Brown, 2015). Thus, these findings prove the importance of providing psychological support to children who have experienced the disaster to recover their confidence, resilience, and motivation to study.

I also consulted with the Head Teacher, who considered the behavior of parents who continued to neglect their children's education even after schools reopened to normalcy. He remarked:

> *ECD received little attention before the disaster because most parents had already moved away and were too concerned with surviving each day to think about anything else. They perceived ECD as nothing more than a way to keep their children occupied while they worked. Playtime, meals, and naps were the only aspects of ECD they understood. In the post-flood situation, they didn't even care to send their children to school, which has affected their foundational years and may have long-term effects on learning.*

These thoughts emphasize the value of parent's involvement in their children's early education, especially after a disaster. Studies by Fantuzzo et al (2004) and Melhuish et al (2008) suggest that the extent to which parents are involved in children's lives has an effect on their academic, intellectual and social development. When parents are busy trying to stay alive and aren't around because they have to move, kids can fall behind in their learning and not be ready for school. Troublesome things, such as floods, could make this worse. The results of the Head Teacher are that people are getting better but that more has to be done than just school systems and teaching materials. Parents need to be involved and aware of what is going on too. The reason is that failing to consider these factors would lead to severe consequences in the future.

Restricted Horizons of Playful Learning

As we walked through the school premises, the ECED facilitator indicated the play areas, which were once lively but have now been altered by the flood. Areas where the children used to play and learn together were no longer recognizable. As we began our discussion, she reflected upon the changes and their consequences on the children's play and learning activities.

> *The playground and classroom were very lively even before the flood and mudslide. The children used to play in the playground and later gather in groups to sing action songs, role-play, and do construction work. They talked about their work, settled their differences and backed each other's views. But the playground was a mess after the mudslide and there were no free spaces. Inside the classroom, too, the spaces were too small to move around or do group activities.*

The Head Teacher further added, *"They held onto my shirt. Their eyes were on the hill, not on each other. The spontaneous energy and interaction we used to see in the playground were gone".*

Through the stories shared by the facilitators, it is clear that the flood has had a significant negative impact on learning for young children. The physical environment plays a huge role in the development of young children. In his 1978 article, Vygotsky emphasized that the most effective means of learning is through interactions and activities conducted in a social context. When kids do not have places to play and interact with each other, they lose opportunities for collaborative knowledge building.

The teacher's observation that the kids were withdrawn, less talkative, and had less interaction with each other supports the view that the kids' physical environment impacts their verbal communication and peer interactions (Gibson, 1979; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). Facilitators describe situations where kids sit quietly, cling to adults or avoid the outdoors as similar to what happens when normal opportunities for play are taken away from children.

The facilitators' stories also relate to instances that have occurred in my own community. During every monsoon, a school in my neighborhood floods, forcing it to close for several weeks at a stretch. I was reminded of a 'Bahini' who visits our house to help me with household chores. During one of these interactions, she mentioned her little girl, who attends the same school. She had said that "all the playthings were submerged and there was no place left where the children could play around. What is my daughter going to do in those muddy classrooms and playgrounds?" These words lingered with me even after the discussion was over made me realize that floods do not only damage the school building but also stop the kids from playing, exploring and learning.

Environmental fear was also apparent, particularly among the children in this school, and this supports the idea that feeling safe is important for creative and cooperative play (Denham, 2006). Without opportunities to play, explore and interact with their peers, it really slowed down the children's cognitive, social and emotional development a lot. This made it harder for children to play with friends, do group activities and go on exploring activities that are important for early learning.

The ECED teacher in FAS 2 also mentioned that the lack of an open space and the use of temporary classrooms had been negatively affecting the behavior and learning of the children. She explained:

> *The children would often look out of the tiny window toward the road, perhaps remembering where their playground had been. Inside, they didn't play in groups like before. They sat quietly, waiting for instructions. Even their voices felt smaller. I observed how the children, who used to be so lively and full of life, got scared to move around and play with each other. They did not seem as lively and energetic as before. Their environment had obviously inhibited their liveliness and enthusiasm. Since they had no familiar places to explore, they didn't seem very interested in school activities.*

This was also the Head Teacher's view. He mentioned that the children felt as if they were being moved when the school moved into the rented building, which had small classrooms and narrow corridors. " *There was a place for our kids to play. "They played football and ran around the school. They played hide and seek."*

Room is very important for young children's growth. According to Pellegrini and Smith (1998), kids can learn and grow in a cognitive, social and physical way in large, open and familiar spaces where they can play and explore. Being shut up in a small strange space limited the freedom to play, explore and talk to other kids, which made them quiet and unsociable. The views of the ECED facilitators and Head Teacher indicate the difficulty of learning and exploration in unfamiliar settings, such as temporary classrooms. (Masten & Narayan, 2012) It is clear that the reconstruction of school premises should be carefully carried out to ensure that children are placed in familiar, interesting, and safe environments that promote their emotional, social, and intellectual development.

The head teacher at FAS 2 spoke about how the flood had destroyed the playground, which previously had been teeming with life. Before the flood, kids would gather on the playground and play, tease each other, make up games, and trace the letters of the alphabet in the sand. She remembered the flood of 2081 quite well. "All the roads were blocked by floodwaters and landslides, and classrooms were half-submerged, with the floor knee-deep in sand and rocks." The garden was filled with mud, sand and other things that were damaged in the flood.

The ECED leader shared her own experience and then turned her attention to how the kids coped with the flood.

> *Even when we cleaned it, the children didn't run out like before. They stood near the door, watching the ground as if it might change again. They appeared to feel that the flood had stripped away more than just their playground. It was regrettable that what had once been an exciting place for them to explore had nothing left and no longer felt safe and free.*

She also contemplated the manner in which this transformation had affected the school,

> *In the classroom, there was a particular kind of silence because the children had no chance of playing outdoors. Children sat closer to me, not to each other. They didn't chase their friends, call out names, or engage in games. Their usual playfulness seemed to have been washed away with the flood.* I

knew they had to feel safe and trust the world around them before they could learn the alphabet and numbers.

The examples above are indicative of how changes in a child's environment can affect their emotional, behavioral, and intellectual development. Staying in a familiar environment allowed them to play, interact and explore which are important for their memory, attention and intellectual growth (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). The ECD teacher's thoughts indicate the significance of having safe, familiar and stimulating learning environments after disasters to assist children to recover emotionally and to maintain their interest in learning. This is because children's learning is connected to their sense of safety and well-being (Masten & Narayan, 2012).

Reading these stories, I realized that the consequences of flooding go far beyond damage to buildings and cancelled classes. The meanings of the facilitators' stories and my own experience of leaving a familiar classroom when it rained made me re-think how young children learn. I realized that children don't just learn in the classroom, they also build attachments to places, routines, people and playtimes that make them feel safe and comfortable. This aligns well with the principles of Resilience Theory, which views resilience not as a characteristic but as a process facilitated by relationships and environments (Ungar, 2011; Masten, 2014). It was from the accounts given by the facilitators that I came to understand that the reconstruction of learning for children after a flood is much more than reconstructing classrooms

Chapter Essence

In summary, the narratives revealed that floods disrupt early childhood learning in multiple and interconnected ways. The flood destroyed schools, learning materials and play areas, but it also messed up kids' mental safety, habits and chances to play and connect with others in a useful way. The ECED facilitator stated that the disruption to learning was not only in the classroom, but also in the children's confidence, willingness to participate and sense of belonging. The money ran out. It took even longer to find a safe place for the kids to learn and made the healing process even harder.

I see these stories and I think of when I was a kid and had to learn in makeshift classrooms after it rained a lot. I remember the community schools around me were flooded so much too. These events made me realize that kids are subject to more than

what they are taught. They are also affected by the degree to which they are attached to particular places, people and routines. This idea is in line with the Resilience Theory (Ungar, 2011; Masten, 2014) that states that loving relationships and environments assist people in healing. These stories changed how I think about the disruption to learning. It was not just a loss of classroom time but a disruption to the emotional and developmental learning foundations of the kids. The different impacts of the floods on learning were discussed in Chapter 1. Chapter two is more about how ECED teachers can regain their confidence and create solutions to help kids learn that are specific to the situation.

CHAPTER V
HOLDING THE CLASSROOM TOGETHER: ECED FACILITATOR'S COPING IN POST-FLOOD REALITIES

This chapter discuss about the coping methods used by the ECED facilitators in the aftermath of the floods and how they dealt with the challenges that followed. The main purpose of this chapter is to look at how facilitators of Early Childhood Education (ECED) manage stress, reorganize their classrooms, change their teaching strategies, and utilize the support of the community and families to maintain consistency in the learning environment. The chapter explains insights into effective disaster-responsive teaching practices. It demonstrates how teachers play a central role not only in responding to immediate crises but also in laying the groundwork for sustained educational recovery. Based on the second research question, I have mentioned that the chapter explores the teachers' coping strategies through five sub-themes, i.e., i) Redrawing the Learning Space, ii) Guiding Children Through Emotional Waves, iii) Ecologies of Collective Care and Collaboration, iv) Pedagogical Adaptation, and v) Holding It Together: Teachers' Emotional Coping Journeys.

Redrawing the Learning Space

The floods had a major effect on the physical learning environment at Flood-Affected School 1, rendering the school building unusable and necessitating the relocation of the entire teaching-learning process to temporary classrooms (Temporary Learning Classrooms/TLCs). While this move helped sustain the educational process in such an emergency, it was carried out in very cramped, inadequately resourced temporary classrooms that posed a major challenge for teachers and students alike. Space constraints, lack of proper seating, and learning resources made it difficult for children to move around and engage in play and classroom activities.

Setting up Temporary Learning Classrooms was not an individual decision made by teachers but an institutionally driven solution to the destruction of school structures. The flooding had damaged the school buildings so severely that normal classroom teaching could no longer be carried out in the usual classroom setting. In the absence of any proper physical infrastructure for continued teaching, the head

teachers and school managers turned to Temporary Learning Classrooms, rented premises, and community structures to continue teaching. These solutions were the first coping mechanisms employed by schools despite a lack of appropriate infrastructure. Nevertheless, while such structures enabled schools to conduct teaching activities, they posed challenges for teachers, especially in early childhood classrooms, which rely heavily on space and movement for learning.

In the light of these issues, the ECED facilitator's coping mechanisms took place within these spaces rather than the making of these spaces themselves. She said:

> *When our classrooms were destroyed, we shifted to Temporary Learning Classrooms. The rooms were small, and many classes had to share the same space. We didn't have proper furnishings, no educational resources, so it became imperative that I rely on music, on storytelling, on talking with the kids. I made the room as safe as I could so the children could sit together. To learn, we used stones, floor space and activities that included movement. "There was no playground but I always made sure that children could hop, dance and sing in the classroom so that they could continue studying without being interrupted.*

She argues that the destruction of the infrastructure disrupted not only the physical fabric but also the atmosphere in which the educational processes were carried out. According to Malaguzzi (1993), the modern concept of early childhood education believes that the environment is not only the setting in which children learn but also an active partner in the children's learning process. The environment is the "third teacher," as the space, materials, and organization of the classroom determine how the child interacts, explores, and makes sense of his/her world.

It reflects that the facilitator actively transformed limited and damaged spaces into functional learning environments. Despite the lack of space in the classroom, she was able to keep students interested in the class by rearranging the seating, using straightforward instructional strategies, and making inventive use of the materials that were already available. The reorganisation of the area had given the children back their enthusiasm in learning because it had focused more on movement, interaction and mental health than on physical infrastructure. As she spoke, her emotions overflowed. She paused, looked slowly at the bare walls of the room, and fell silent for a moment. She continued,

> *Even meals became part of the classroom routine. We ate together, washed our hands together, and lined up in the same small space. These routines helped the room feel like a classroom again. When it used to rain and storm, I would bring them close to me and sing them songs they already knew, as well as tell stories that had a sense of joyfulness in them. My voice saved them from the terror they knew. The broken and temporary place turned into a refuge of safety, belonging and peace thanks to these moments of connection. The chamber was not constructed of walls, but of trust and habit.*

The ECED facilitator's experience with re-building a classroom after a disaster is that it means making sure children are emotionally stable, that they feel like they belong and that they are ready to learn again. It shows that teachers are conscious of their emotional roles as educators and psychologists when they teach amidst storms and thunder. It was shown that loving relationships help people learn, saying that the classroom had been rebuilt "not by walls, but by trust and routine." This is consistent with a constructivist approach to learning which emphasizes the importance of individuals constructing their knowledge through supportive connections.

The story is heavily influenced by the constructivist theory of learning which says people build up their knowledge through actively engaging with their environments, even when they lack resources (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2011). The theory posits that knowledge is something that is constructed. The teacher used everyday items and limited places as tools to make sure that the students can learn through experience and social interaction. The classroom space has been re-arranged to mirror the adaptive coping methods discussed in resilience theory. This shows how educators change their learning contexts, both physically and pedagogically, when learning is interrupted by a crisis (Ungar, 2011).

Her practices not only show us adaptations but also provide us with insight into a highly relational and contextual pedagogical approach. While she narrated how she brought the children close together in the rain, how they ate together in the limited space available, and how they made stones and the floor a part of their learning experience, her practices spoke to more than just adaptation. Nel Noddings wrote of an ethic of care, where responding emotionally to children's needs and paying attention to their feelings are important to their learning. This is what she did.

These kinds of activities fit with the ideas of continuous education and safe space for learning as it pertains to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). This framework

emphasizes the necessity of keeping learning places and processes in operation before, during and after tragedies. The teacher's use of routines, predictability in space and flexible classroom layout all show that they are following DRR principles. The ideas are aimed at helping students to be more prepared, to be aware of risks and to be able to cope with mental and social problems while they are learning.

The story aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as well. The theory posits that the interaction of a child with his or her immediate environment is very important in his or her learning and development.

Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, the teacher reduced the adverse impact of environmental instability by building a supportive microsystem. In this way, the supportive environment for reconstruction was created in the disrupted context. Overall, these perspectives on resilience and theory show that innovative classroom restructuring is not only a practical approach but also a necessary pedagogical one.

Temporary Learning Classrooms (TLCs) were not within their reach in the FAS 2. Instead, learning shifted to a rented house within the community, which was pretty small and rather congested. Due to space limitations, the school was required to combine multiple grades in a single classroom, necessitating extensive reorganization of the classroom and instructional arrangements. ECED facilitator, on her sad tone, reflected,

> *After the flood, we moved into a rented house. The rooms were very small, and there was no separate space for each grade. We had to mix classes in the same room. At first, it felt difficult to teach in such a crowded place. I rearranged the room every morning so the children could sit closely together on the floor. There were no benches, no carpets, and very few materials. I made a small learning corner using whatever was available.* There was no pitch, no space to move around, so I changed the way I taught. Young or old every child got to join in with songs, stories and actions.

I struggled to maintain emotional neutrality as I listened to her story. When she spoke of teaching in a room rented by the hour, of mixing grades, of calming frightened children, I could feel my own feelings rising. I paused and looked outside the classroom window, where the November breeze gently moved the trees. I remembered about the multi-grade teaching approach, thinking that was the approach she could have applied at that time. On second thought, I realized the space, room size, materials, and her situation. That moment of stillness stood in contrast to the

turbulence she described, yet it deepened my understanding of the emotional weight teachers carry in post-flood contexts.

> *When we first entered the rented house after the flood, I felt overwhelmed. The rooms were small, the floors cold and the walls bare. I looked around and thought how to make this place a classroom again. No chairs, no rugs, no toys. Just the kids, the floor and whatever we could find lying around.*

This event made me think back and understand that changes to the classroom setting were not just the plan, but feelings involved, like grief, duty, and care. It became obvious that the ECED facilitator's efforts to make good use of the crowded rented room revealed not only her creativity in teaching but also her mental strength and capabilities. From the perspective of trauma-informed teaching, the teacher provided students with a safe, reliable, and emotionally supportive environment, which contributed to their feeling of stability and security needed for recovery after a disaster (Judith Herman, 1992; Perry, 2006).

The teacher remade the little rental space each morning, gathered the children closer, and reconsidered ways in which they could learn through songs, stories, and group activities. It was obvious that the way they were teaching was very problem orientated in social terms. Noddings (2005) suggested the ethics of care which can be applied to her methodology as follows: attention, response and emotional presence are all essential components of the learning process. Moreover, the transformation of a room lacking any resources into a useful learning space is an example of a place-based approach, which is in line with the claims made by Sobel (2004) who claims that the environment can be used as an educational instrument. Merleau-Ponty's (1962) view that learning is a living experience in the interaction with the place is reflected in moving, working together, and doing practical tasks.

The teacher also drew on Luis Moll's concept of "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al. 1992). In this sense, "funds of knowledge" are the regular social interactions and events that are considered as valid sources of learning. This is achieved through employing existing routines, narratives, and minimal materials. These layered practices not only align with trauma-informed pedagogy and constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) but also reflect a broader pedagogical reorientation in which care, context, and collective engagement become central to rebuilding both the classroom and the conditions for children's learning in the aftermath of disruption.

The story of FAS 3 was no different from the others. The school buildings were severely damaged. The flood destroyed all classrooms, learning materials, and familiar educational environments. The teachers could not work from the rented house as it was too small and crowded, and there were students from different schools in the same class. Teachers didn't have many resources, so they had to change their teaching methods, rearrange the classroom, and find new ways for students to learn. When I requested the ECED instructor to reflect on her performance, she did so,

> *The first day of school after the flood, I felt completely lost. There were no carpets, cushions, or learning materials. I started by cleaning the space, drying what little remained, and making it safe for the children. I rearranged the children's seating every morning so each grade could participate without overcrowding. Small learning zones were created on the floor using floor markings so that the children can read, count, and play. To assist the children in learning letters, numbers, and social skills, we allowed the children to role-play stories. Children who were struggling with Nepali began to improve through gestures, peer assistance, and repeated practice. Little by little the kids started laughing, asking questions and helping each other song after song, word after word.*

As we discussed the changes the teacher has made to how things are taught and the way the classroom is set up, it was clear that a lot of thought and work has gone into it. Through everyday activities such as role-play, movement exercises, and stories, she was able to make this small crowded room useful for learning by holding the kids' attention and making things seem more normal. In an effort to demonstrate how important the physical room, teaching methods and the mental health of students is, I spoke about how the teacher's calmness and regularity can help them deal with their fears.

"I remember the first day, after the flood, when all the children recited the alphabet together. I cried. I realized that learning could continue, and we could rebuild hope even in this broken space." ECED facilitator shared in a broken voice.

These findings confirm the constructivist theory of education, which holds that children develop knowledge through interaction with their environment and peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Trauma-informed education also supports her techniques. Trauma-informed education focuses on creating a safe place, procedures, and emotional security that would facilitate recovery from traumatic experiences (Perry, 2006).

According to the theory of resilience, her flexible practices demonstrate how teachers can contribute to the recovery process by facilitating learning and psychological and social stabilization in the post-disaster context (Masten, 2014). Her focus on reorganizing space and following learning routines is also consistent with DRR principles in education which focus on consistency, a safe learning environment and getting individuals active in the community after catastrophes (UNESCO 2020).

Her attention to the two also reflects the principles of DRR. The Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) facilitator model is a great model for trauma-informed education (Perry, 2006). This approach highlights the role of routines, emotionally safe environments and frequent adult involvement in helping kids learn after a traumatic event. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) social theory of how learning occurs and the role that language and interaction play in this process.Without learning resources, children will use talking, storytelling, and singing as means of maintaining cultural awareness, continuing learning, and making friends at the same time. It was once more proved that reorganization of the classroom following a natural disaster is not only a functional matter.

Through these combined efforts, teachers rebuild not only physical learning spaces but also children's confidence, curiosity, and capacity to engage with education despite adversity. This demonstrates that innovative classroom organization in emergency contexts is a holistic intervention that simultaneously addresses the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning.

Guiding Children Through Emotional Waves

As the school resumed its learning processes, the ECD facilitators had the daunting challenge of assisting children who were suffering from fear, anxiety, withdrawal, and other behavioral changes, while also reinstating their learning process. This made the job of the ECD facilitators not only to assist children in their learning processes but also to establish an emotionally sensitive classroom environment for the children. When I asked the ECD facilitator to reflect on her experience in handling children's trauma and behavioral changes after the flood, she said:

> *I introduced small learning stations in the room so each group of children could focus on a different activity, reading, counting, or drawing, without feeling crowded. We practiced breathing exercises and gentle stretching to help calm anxious minds. The kids took turns leading simple games, and*

> *showed their friends how to do things like write letters or count. This gave them confidence and it was easy to work together." In class we had fun with story cards, puppets and play pretend to help us understand harder ideas. Lunch was meant to be a time of relaxation for everyone. The children would sit together, wash their hands, and talk quietly. Some of the children would be frightened at the beginning of the rain, and I calmed them using awareness exercises and soft stories. Over time, laughter returned, children participated willingly, and their curiosity for learning blossomed once again.*

It is obvious that the ECED facilitator employed somatic regulation and multimodal expression, such as stretching, drawing, and giving an opportunity to be quiet. Both are essential strategies that can help the wounded nervous system cope with stress and regain its vital sense of control without words. In case any external trigger takes place, for instance, the sound of rain causes a trauma reaction in children, the teacher immediately switches from teaching to creating a feeling of safety and uses soft stories in order to return the attention of the overexcited minds of children to the current moment. The teacher demonstrates bodily co-regulation by maintaining a calm attitude despite feeling very upset. It provides a biological basis for children's imitation. If we consider the principle of "Maslow before Bloom," it becomes clear that this emotionally difficult task is an excellent example of teaching.

I felt the depth of emotional labor involved after listening the facilitator's narrative. Her strategies went beyond teaching content; they actively addressed children's trauma, fear, and behavioral changes. The establishment of routine, allowing the children to play, and constantly reassuring them was what made the environment stable enough to inspire them to learn once again. The kids felt safe because the guide could hold herself back and provide continuous support in the midst of the chaos all around them. She further shared,

> *I used simple activities that allowed movement and expression. Sometimes we stretched our arms together, sometimes we traced shapes on the floor, sometimes we acted out small stories. I let the children talk, draw, or sit quietly if they needed. There were days when no learning happened at all, only listening and comforting, and I learned that this was also teaching. When it rained, their fear returned. I could feel the tension in the room. I gathered them close, told gentle stories, and reminded them that they were safe. Even*

> *though my heart was racing, I tried to keep my voice calm. They began to trust each other again after a while.*

It was clear from listening to the facilitator's story that much emotional labor was required. The facilitation methods employed by her not only ensured learning but also addressed the anxiety, fear, and behavioral change of the children. She provided the kids with a safe, orderly environment that made them want to learn by following the rules and being supportive. This was an example of "contextually grounded pedagogy." It is a form of pedagogy where lessons are not imposed through standardized methods, but co-created from students' lived realities, the fragile materials of the classroom, and the emotional climate produced by disasters (Paris & Alim, 2017). Learning, in this sense, emerged from attentiveness to context, in which care, space, rhythm, and interaction became pedagogical tools. She went on to describe,

> *One day, I noticed something small but powerful. The children started laughing. They asked questions. They helped each other. That was when I knew healing had begun.* The classroom was no longer just a place to learn numbers and letters. It was a place where fear lessened and hope slowly returned.

Instead of beginning the academic rehabilitation process, the teacher concentrated on the kids' mental health, slowing the lessons down, establishing routines and comforting the kids in her interactions, she said. In disaster-affected areas, this means teachers view children's emotional safety as a prerequisite to learning, not a consequence of learning.

Consequently, the facilitator's coping strategy can be seen as redefining educational continuity as something other than simply continuing classroom lessons, in which continuity was achieved by first establishing children's feelings of emotional security and well-being. This finding is supported by Noddings' (1984) idea of the ethics of care, in which meaningful learning is grounded in caring interactions, especially when people are vulnerable. The findings of this study can also be linked to the ideas of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), in which children are believed to become more willing to learn because of an emotionally secure relationship with adults.

Philosophically, her approach is in line with the notion that information is not simply transmitted, but emerges from the experience of being involved in particular

situations (Vygotsky, 1978). This is in line with the principles of socio-constructivism, especially those developed by Lev Vygotsky. In the socio-constructivist view, education is a socially constructed and highly facilitated endeavor. In this case, mediation is not only about cognitive scaffolding but also about emotional scaffolding. The teacher's voice, behavior and dependability are reassuring cultural instruments that re-establish a child's sense of security and significance. The emphasis is on slowing the teaching process, paying attention to emotion regulation, and giving children the opportunity to be silent and withdraw when they want to. It is similar to Bruce Perry's concept of trauma-informed approach, which states that regulation is necessary before reflection, and safety precedes learning (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006).

FAS 2 states that there was quite some destruction caused by the flood to the infrastructure of the school, as well as the houses situated in its vicinity. The classrooms, teaching materials, and students' belongings were washed away. This resulted in the suspension of formal education for several weeks, and when it resumed, it did so in a very limited capacity. ECED facilitator shared,

> *After the flood, the children could not focus at all. They would sit with their pencils in hand but just stare at the page. I felt helpless. From then on, I started distributing chocolates to them regularly. This was communicated to them: "If you write well, you will be rewarded with a chocolate." I communicated this to them. Seeing the smile on their faces, I came to know that I had made the right choice. It was not about the chocolate but rather about bringing happiness back to the learning environment.*

As she reflected on the school she had attended before the flood, she paused and smiled as she recalled how the classroom was filled with a variety of pillows, toys, colours, and pleasure.. She continued to say that,

> *My classroom looked magnificent. While I was working, I was proud to tell other teachers about the beauty of my classroom. But then everything disappeared one fine day. Rubbish was everywhere. Everyone in my classroom was quiet. Whenever I visited there, I could not stop crying.*

As she narrated her experiences, I realized how heavy the emotional burden was for her as a teacher and mother experiencing pain herself. It is evident that using chocolates was not merely a reward system but a means of associating fear and engagement through emotion. Joy was purposely reintroduced to the classroom as a

response to the situation. The teacher's ability to mask her fear even in rainy conditions was evidence of the invisible emotional labor teachers perform to maintain children's emotional well-being. Applying the culturally responsive educational framework, these measures are not only mechanisms meant to manipulate people; they are also responses to emotional breakdown caused by a lack of resources and psychological distress. Her own home had been damaged too. She further shared,

> *As a mother, I held my children when they screamed during the rain. As a teacher, I had to hide my fear. When I walked into class, I smiled—even when my heart was heavy because the children were watching me. Whenever rain fell during class, children ran to me, climbed onto my lap, and clung tightly. I sang songs, danced, and told happy stories. Slowly, the fear left their faces.* She ended quietly, "We lost everything, but we are still here. We teach with songs, stories, and hope. That's how we survived.

Listening to the ECED facilitator as she spoke about herself, it became clear that both her career passion and the losses she experienced shaped how she approached certain situations. Her narrative alternated between her teaching career and her life at home, making it clear that the flood experience had torn down the boundaries between her and her mother. This is seen in the way the facilitator expressed her trepidation with the rain, children crying at home and students clinging to her at school. Her calm demeanor in class was deliberate, as a means of protecting her pupils' emotions.

I became aware that she used chocolates to enhance her motivation. Initially, this appeared to be a simple reward strategy; however, through her reflection, it became evident that it functioned as an emotional intervention rather than a behavioral one. The chocolates symbolized normalcy, care, and joy elements that had been abruptly removed from children's lives by the flood. When she tested the absence of this reward and observed children disengaging again, it revealed how fragile their motivation remained and how closely learning was tied to emotional reassurance rather than academic readiness. I also reflected on the invisible emotional labor the facilitator carried. She openly admitted her fear, but she did not want the children to know about it because she realized her emotions affected them. This kind of emotional control was not taught in schools; rather, it arose from the need for survival, resulting from circumstances and care. It was not only about teaching that

she chose to do what she did when she was afraid; it was also about connecting with others.

Her consistent nurturing and emotional availability contributed to children's self-confidence and change despite the uncertainty about the surrounding environment (Masten, 2014). She can be regarded as practicing the principles of constructivist learning, as she has created the conditions for children to learn through socially significant relationships rather than through direct instruction. Shared pleasure, company of peers, and encouragement have aided children in concentrating and building their confidence (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, her approaches align with the Education in Emergencies approach, which focuses on continuity of education, the psychological rehabilitation of children, and the important role of teachers in providing a safe learning environment.

In FAS 3, months after the flood, the river appeared calm, yet its memory lingered in every conversation. The ECED facilitator greeted me with a wide smile, but her eyes betrayed the burden of the past year's flood, as she knew what I was going to talk to her about.

"It was the worst day of my life as a teacher," she said, resting her hands on one of the few cushions that survived the flood. *I didn't know where to begin,"* she admitted. *"I felt as if I had failed them.* Despite these feelings, she persisted. She began by making the classroom safe again, drying the remaining cushions, cleaning chairs and floors, and improvising learning materials using stones, leaves, and sticks. She further said,

> *That night, I stayed awake, listening to landslides near my home. Roads were blocked, the river rose rapidly, and by morning, the school was underwater. These classes were full of trash, dirt, sand and rocks. Everything that I had put in order, such as carpets, pillows, books, and other learning materials, was gone. Those were the hardest weeks after the store opened. Many children had forgotten letters, numbers, and songs. Some refused to speak; others cried throughout the day. Gradually, learning resumed one word a day, one song at a time. At first, children remained withdrawn, some hiding in corners. They started taking part by degrees. Kids who knew their letters and numbers helped the kids who didn't and kids just naturally helped each other out.*

I felt emotional as the ECED facilitator talked about her efforts to soothe her students' fears and help them feel safe. That conscious control of feelings, like

singing and smiling and continuing on with routines even when it hurts, made me think about the emotional labour that goes unseen in early childhood education. I noticed that the teachers rarely talked about their pain unless asked directly. Instead, they only spoke about what the students wanted.

The headteacher's comment also changed how I thought about rearranging the classroom. At first, I thought of reform as a way to deal with disaster at the physical and educational levels. I understood this from their comments; however, the process was also emotional and social. Adjusting the environment, adjusting the lesson, establishing habits, were wise not only in themselves but healing and comfortable. For the kids, every song, meal and task that they did again and again was like a message that said, "You are safe here."

They demonstrated they cared about the kids' emotional and social health by sitting with scared kids, comforting them and managing their own sadness while also doing their jobs as teachers. This shows that teaching is not only about passing information but also about making friends (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Moreover, the way teachers improvised lesson plans using rocks, leaves, and sticks illustrates concepts from Adaptive Leadership theory (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The teachers identified new challenges, developed creative solutions, and facilitated collaboration between peers and children to solve them in the absence of conventional resources.

Ecologies of Collective Care and Collaboration

Flood had made FAS 1 physically and emotionally traumatized to the extent that the learning process could not be sustained, and the safety and security of the children were seriously compromised. With learning materials damaged, classrooms inundated, and traumatized children returning to school, the ECED facilitator faced the difficult task of rebuilding the learning process and restoring children's confidence. The ECED facilitator shared:

> *I was scared and I felt responsible but I knew the children needed peace and quiet. I helped establish a Temporary Learning Center (TLC) and enlisted the assistance of parents, local residents, and nearby groups. We got help from a lot of NGOs and non-profits who gave us food, lunch, and other things. That meant parents and other community members trusted us and sent their children to our school." My coworkers talked about their plans and helped each other, while I entertained the kids with songs, stories and games in the crowded room.*

The guide's determination as she talked about what she went through during and after the flood amazed me. From the stories that were told, I learned that activities like singing, sharing stories, and playing with other kids were important for more than just learning. They were also important for keeping kids emotionally stable and learning all the time. I thought about how the woman kept her own fear in check to make sure the classroom was a safe place. This is an example of how a teacher's persistence can directly help a child learn and get better.

> *The children were slow at first, but eventually they were singing and leaping, too. They became comfortable answering questions like "What are your feelings during the rain? or "What scared you the most?" Small gestures such as these made it easier to regain their trust and interest. Local people contributed in all possible ways: logistically, with construction work, and emotionally.*
>
> *The application of creativity in tool use, openness in teaching, the provision of emotional comfort, and my capacity to improvise allowed me to continue teaching despite the difficulties I experienced in class. However, they were only effective because of the supportive actions from the parents, peers, and the community. This allowed me to turn an emergency into an opportunity for resilience. It is clear that an adaptive strategy in early childhood development in response to disasters involves more than problem-solving on my part alone.*

The most outstanding quality I learned from her, after listening to her stories, was flexibility. She was flexible in that she would adapt activities to limited space, use substandard materials for teaching, and rely on community support. Her use of collaboration, among other methods, as a means of coping indicated the social-healing aspect of ECD following disasters. In her view, following meant collaborating with others as none of the approaches worked independently. In early childhood development (ECD), I learnt that resilience is a process that requires creating relationships, which is characterised by trust, shared responsibility, and creative problem-solving of unforeseen obstacles. This was something that I learned from the teacher's tale.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, development is a process that takes place inside a system that interacts with other systems. These systems may range from the microsystems of the classroom and the family to the

macrosystems of the community and the organization. This can be exemplified by interactions among parents, community members, NGOs, and peer groups.

This multi-level approach reflects the impact of interactions among people from school, family, and community on a child's development. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the development occurs through interaction between multiple systems such as microsystems like classrooms and families and the larger community and organizational levels such as the cooperation of parents, community members, NGOs and peers. The multi-level collaboration reflects the impact of interactions among the school, family, and community members on the recovery process from the disaster and on child development.

The resilience theory states that resilience is not a trait but a process that involves protective factors such as supportive relationships, flexibility and problem-solving, and emotional security that allow positive adaptation under adverse conditions. The facilitation strategies reflect the practical application of these theories. A sense of safety, mental support, and community involvement are among the physiological, psychological, and social factors that play important roles in research on resilience in ECD (Ungar, 2011).

This is an informal discussion held between the ECED facilitator in FAS 2. The facilitator revealed that she quickly realized she could not do everything alone when the floods struck. The destruction was too great, and the children's fears were overwhelming. Parents came to her worried, some with tears in their eyes, saying they had lost all their children's books, bags, and even clothes. She had to reassure them and keep telling them, *"We will start again, together."* Their trust in the school and in me gave me the strength to keep going. She further narrated,

> *The community became an essential part of our recovery. Neighbors helped us find safe spaces for classes, and local volunteers helped organize activities for the children. Even though our resources were limited, parents sent their children to school every day, believing in our dedication. This led me to think that I needed to continually develop new methods to retain the children's interest and increase their self-confidence. It was also important to me to collaborate extensively with my colleagues on ideas for helping children feel better when they were scared, using our resources to the fullest, and adapting our classes to the small room. We lifted each other's spirits, celebrated our small victories, and drew energy from our teamwork. NGOs and non-profits*

> *provided us with food, books, and educational materials, while the local community members contributed to the donations process.*

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, who asserts that learning is a social activity and that it occurs through interactions (Vygotsky, 1978), is evident in how she used songs, storytelling, and play. The teacher used guided participation, cooperative learning and play-based learning to help the children get back on track, focus and make sense of a situation that had disrupted their normal learning processes.. To the children, these processes were not only important for developing their cognitive abilities but also gave them opportunities to express themselves, make friends, and build confidence in their ability to learn, thus underscoring the importance of social support for recovery. She also stated that,

> *I found that resilience is not something experienced individually but is created through collaboration, cooperation, and trust. We did not rebuild the school alone; we also rebuilt the children's trust, enthusiasm, and desire to learn.*

Attachment theory is directly connected with the facilitator's efforts to create a protective and supportive relationship with children. The leader tried to stay calm and close to the kids when they were scared, to help them feel better. Thus a “safe base” was created, from which the children could gradually venture out to explore, play and learn. The teacher was consistent, responsive, and the kids felt safe and understood. This shows that mental support is important not only for coping with stress but also for relearning.

This case serves as an example of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which states that children develop through the interactions between many connected systems. Parents, friends, non-governmental organizations and society as a whole have been working together to create a supporting mesosystem, in which kids feel safer and more grounded. This example of multi-level support demonstrates that early childhood recovery is not only an in-school process, but also depends on strong social networks that address all needs of the children.

The ECED facilitator’s experience allows for the observation that resilience is constructed through joint efforts within the framework of early childhood education following catastrophes. Proactive and adaptable behavior on the part of teachers, engagement from families and partnership with the community all contribute to the development of resilience to guarantee that children are developing in a holistic manner. This concept is further supported by the United Nations Children’s Fund

(UNICEF) social-ecological model of child development and protection, which emphasizes the significance of inter-systemic functioning in assisting children to recover and remain healthy.

The flood in FAS 3 caused disruptions not only in the classrooms but also in the entire neighborhood that was situated around the school. Even before I asked how important communal support was for recovery, the ECED facilitator shared,

> *I realized that recovery was only possible through collaboration among community, parental, and peer groups. We did not wait for outside help; instead, teachers joined together to clean the school, remove mud and debris, and make the classrooms usable again. Parents, even though they were frightened whenever it rained, stayed in close contact with us, calling to check on their children and trusting us enough to send them back to school when learning materials were still scarce*.

From her narration, recovery after the flood was deeply rooted in community, parental, and peer collaboration. As soon as the floods subsided, the teachers and some of the parents helped clean up the school and organize the classrooms without any outside assistance. It goes to show that everyone felt that the school was their own property. Parents, though traumatized and fearful during heavy rains, maintained close communication with teachers, trusted the school enough to send their children back, and relied on school routines and the lunch program to restore stability in their children's lives. It was an essential method of teaching that enabled children to improve their understanding by having children who knew things teach those who did not, translating for friends who found Nepali difficult, and boosting confidence through music, games, and daily activities.

Within the classroom, peer collaboration became a key pedagogical and emotional strategy, as children who remembered lessons supported those who had forgotten, translated for peers struggling with Nepali, and rebuilt confidence through shared songs, games, and daily routines. Together, these forms of collaboration created a collective safety net, enabling.

I wonder how the school was revived. I couldn't wait for the ECED facilitator to answer my curiosity. She looked around, and then the head teacher looked at me. She wasn't holding back to share the stories of bouncing back; she shared, "

> *For more than a month, our school was closed. But learning did not disappear completely; it waited. When the water went down, we returned together*.

> *Teachers, parents, community members, and non-profit-making organizations came with bare hands and hopeful hearts. No one asked whose responsibility it was. The school belonged to all of us.*
>
> Adding to what the head teacher said, the ECED facilitator added,
>
> *As an ECD facilitator, I felt an overwhelming fear. I kept asking myself, how will I begin again? When the children finally returned, they were not the same; some did not speak at all. I felt as if I had failed them. The presence of family and friends played an extremely important role in the healing process. They shared their fears with me each morning and showed their trust to me once again by bringing their children to me. Some families stayed in the class for a longer period during the first couple of weeks to reassure their children that it was safe.*

What struck me most about the school's environmental conditions around the river was not only the restoration efforts in the classroom, but also the people's quiet cooperation that helped bring about the place's recovery. It took more than one person to get the school back on track. It took the school, the parents, members of the community and even the students themselves working together to get it done. At the neighborhood level, cooperation was easy and quick to achieve. This collective labor was not framed as volunteerism but as shared ownership. The school was clearly understood as a community space; its loss was everyone’s loss, and its recovery was a collective responsibility.

Both the Head teacher and the ECED facilitator served as connectors within this collaborative network. The headteacher did not see herself as the only person in charge. She saw herself as someone who could help make the school safe, routine and reliable instead. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory states that a child’s development is influenced by interactions with several systems including family, school, community, and larger social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The collaborative recovery at FAS 3 is very much this exo-system. Parents supported emotional safety, teachers restructured learning environments, peers facilitated relearning, and the community physically rebuilt the school. The interplay of actions thus helped to strengthen the child’s microsystem (family and school) and the mesosystem involving parents, teachers, and community members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In such a way, the school could be regarded as a living community where learning, improvement, and emotional restoration occurred simultaneously. However, such interplay of actions prompted an interesting reflection on one's part: collaboration not only provided continuity but also revealed the unequal distribution of responsibility in education in the post-disaster period.

Pedagogical Adaptation

The stories of ECED facilitators at the three schools affected by the flood indicated a remarkably similar theme – the floods were not just disruptive events that led to temporary closure of learning and teaching; rather, they led to fundamental reconstruction of theories and practices of early childhood education. Schools differed in the physical damage they sustained from floods; however, they all faced common difficulties, including the loss of classrooms, learning materials, play areas, and the disruption of routine. Alternative modes such as Temporary Learning Classes (TLCs), rented houses, and other shared spaces were used instead of conventional classrooms. The post-flood period was characterized by continued fear and confusion; children's irregular attendance became an issue. However, facilitators did not simply view these problems as hindrances to their work; but they rebuilt pedagogy based on children's needs.

Another facilitator said: *"I stopped making my classes difficult because I could not depend on textbooks or other official sources. I had to sing, tell stories, talk to other people. For number and drawing games, I used whatever I could find. Another teacher said: "I had small classrooms, but I found ways for them to deal with their stress through music, stories and activities to get their attention back.*"

Giving them sweet items was one such small reward that I offered to motivate them to learn again. It is evident from the above stories that the teaching process, after the flood, was not simply adjusted according to the lost items; rather, the whole teaching process was restructured according to the realities of the lives of the children.

In constructivist and sociocultural approaches, where children are seen as knowledge producers through interactions with their environment (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978), these findings are highly relevant to these theories. The facilitators did not suspend learning because conventional resources had disappeared. Instead, they redefined what counted as a learning resource. The use of stories replaced textbooks, while songs helped develop language skills. Movement exercises also helped involve children in a learning activity within a restricted area. Counting

material was provided through stones; objects for classification and observation were provided through leaves; and textbook material was replaced with storytelling.

This is because the knowledge was acquired through children interacting with familiar objects in their immediate environment, rather than through instructional materials developed by commercial companies. This is also consistent with the Reggio Emilia approach in which the environment is the 'third teacher' (Malaguzzi, 1993). The managers made it a good place to learn even when the flood rendered the space unusable because they knew the kids would learn from interacting with the space, the objects, each other and the teachers. The space had been converted into an ecosystem in which the kids could play, ask questions, and attempt to make sense of what was happening around them.

The facilitators' stories also revealed that traditional knowledge systems had a significant influence on their teaching and students' learning. They didn't wait for outside organizations to bring in new learning materials; rather they used songs, stories and other cultural materials that the kids already knew. "*We used stones, floor space, movement activities for learning*," one leader said. I also made sure the children could jump, dance and sing in the classroom even when there was no playground. From this finding, it appears that indigenous knowledge was used not only as a short-term solution in times of emergency, but also as a real source of education, so that people could continue learning. Battiste (2002) explains that knowledge was created through knowledge systems imposed from outside. Indigenous knowledge, in contrast, comes from a genuine connection with land, culture and community.

Similarly, Dei (2000) talks about the importance of situated knowledge, something that is often ignored in official education systems. This study is an example of this in that the facilitators were taught using local knowledge and materials. So the flood demolished the idea that good education needs commercial goods. And it made clear how important local knowledge and local ways of doing things are.

Changes in education have also been influenced by the idea of praxis from Paulo Freire (1970) that education is an ongoing process of thinking about and acting on what students have experienced. The guides didn't just wait for institutions to improve and help them. They thought hard about their problems and created learning opportunities where they were. Survival skills were not only used to challenge resource-based models of education, but teachers also did things on purpose to do so.

"*It helped me to see how flexibility with planning can make an opportunity out of the lack of something*," said one of the guides. This is important because it means the facilitators' ideas of how to teach have changed. Instead of something to avoid, people thought of shortage as an opportunity to be creative, flexible and use good judgement. These results, along with Freire's ideas, show that educational change after a disaster is not only about dialogue, but also about teachers' ability to build lessons from what children are actually experiencing.

Another striking finding across all three schools was that emotional recovery consistently preceded academic recovery. Facilitators repeatedly described children returning to school as fearful, withdrawn, easily distracted, and frightened whenever it rained. A facilitator said, *"Many children were fearful, especially when it rained.*

> *I kept my emotions in check, remained calm, and sat down beside them as they wondered what to do next. We began to jump, dance, sing rhymes, and assist each other. Another ECED facilitator stated, "I have found out that teaching in the aftermath of a disaster is not only about teaching academics but being patient, emotionally present, and flexible. "These narratives clearly depict that the ECED facilitators did a lot to ensure that children are psychologically ready before they taught them academics.*

In light of the completion of the stories, it is evident that the ECED facilitators were very careful in ensuring that the children felt emotionally secure before undertaking any academic work.

While they could have begun teaching right away to get the job done, they took the time to ensure that the children regained their self-esteem through routines, physical activities, social interaction, music, storytelling, and loving relationships. According to Noddings's Ethics of Care (1984), true learning occurs in caring relationships, particularly when individuals are vulnerable. That is indeed highly relevant to what was stated above. Actually, trauma-informed education states that traumatized children should first be ensured of security, emotional stability and friendships before any learning is possible (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). In this case, things like music, play, storytelling, sitting next to a fearful child, or giving them some chocolates should not be seen merely as management tactics; they were deliberate pedagogical actions that helped restore their ability to learn.

Such caring practices also align perfectly with the teachings of Eastern philosophy. In this case, the facilitators always practiced Karuna (compassion)

through patience and empathetic care, not as a moral concept but as an educational process. The emphasis is not on completing the syllabus and assessments but on the well-being of the children, in which healing cannot be separated from learning. The practices of these facilitators illustrate yet another teaching of Buddhism, Pratītyasamutpāda, which holds that learning emerges through interconnected relationships rather than from isolated individuals. Here, children were healed not just by teachers but also by peers, family, community, municipalities, and the reconstructed learning environment.

Moreover, their capacity for constantly adapting themselves to changes is another demonstration of the concept of Anicca, which means impermanence, because it shows the understanding of the inevitability of change and how resilient one should be, not in trying to return to what was before, but in finding innovative solutions to new challenges. Eastern philosophies contribute to post-disaster education through relationality, compassion, and interconnectedness, rather than individual resilience alone.

The research results show that there were changes not only in the curriculum during post-disaster pedagogical reconstruction but also in class structure. Because of irregular attendance and a lack of room, teachers stopped expecting strict age-related progress and applied multigrade learning methods. "*I stopped looking at who was falling behind and started looking at engagement, participation and effort*," one facilitator said. Often the gaps were filled in by the group support, with different ages and levels of children learning together. Multi-grade classes were initially seen as a problem but the teachers turned them into opportunities for kids to learn from each other and work together. This idea is related to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the "Zone of Proximal Development" which states that you can learn through working with more experienced peers. It also fits the idea of cooperative learning which states that people can learn by helping each other and sharing their knowledge (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

These results are important for recognizing teacher agency and new ways of teaching but they also show major problems with the way things are set up. Since formal disaster preparedness systems had failed to protect the schools before the flood, facilitators were able to rebuild the learning process. This was made especially clear in the head teacher's testimony that disaster preparedness strategies within the

School Improvement Plan had mainly been developed under administrative pressure and were not, in fact, preparedness strategies at all.

These findings highlight an obvious gap between policy and practice (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, most of the task of re-establishing the learning process fell to the teachers, who addressed the lack of proper infrastructure and resources through their outstanding dedication. However, such adaptive approaches should not be romanticized as the means by which teachers repeatedly compensate for system failures. There is a need for disaster preparedness, resilient infrastructure investments, and appreciation of indigenous knowledge and pedagogic approaches in the framework of national ECD and DRR policies.

All these stories indicate that pedagogical adaptability following disasters cannot be limited to the continued delivery of classroom education. The facilitators did not just survive amid the disruption; they reconstructed early childhood pedagogy through care, compassion, local wisdom, community collaboration, and their own agency as professionals. It should be noted that these insights dispel the conventional notions that high-quality education is based on formal structures and commercialized teaching aids.

The findings suggest that learning occurs through relationships with others, culture-based activities, interaction with the environment and teachers' ability to use problems as an opportunity for kids to grow, but not. In other words, the flood became not only an interruption of education but a stimulus to reconsider early childhood pedagogy from a relational perspective**.**

Holding It Together: Teachers' Emotional Coping Journeys

During the field visit, I engaged with ECED facilitators to better understand the emotional and psychological coping strategies they employ to manage stress and maintain a consistent teaching routine due to the damage caused by the flood. The facilitators were willing to discuss their personal experiences and shared how they cope with the various emotional challenges they face. We learned useful things from their words about how they take care of their own health and create safe places for children to learn.

With the high floods, FAS 1 had to cope with a number of difficulties that needed to be addressed. The classroom was destroyed, and no teaching materials were found. It was scary. It was stressful for kids. Not only did teachers have to get kids back to school, they had to help them deal with the emotional effects of the flooding.

The head teacher pointed out that the Temporary Learning Classrooms (TLCs) were set up in crowded, poorly equipped rooms, thereby forcing teachers to adapt their teaching while also ensuring their own psychological well-being. As I played the conversation back slowly, the ECD facilitator shared with me how she coped and how she felt during this difficult period.

> *Initially, I felt as if I was right there with the children. I was frightened, just like them. Before helping them, I needed to sort out my own emotional needs.* So I started to do different things with the kids to make them feel better like singing, telling stories, playing games. *In many cases at TLCs, the most important thing I could do was to be right there next to a child, listening. The way they described their emotions and thoughts helped me feel relieved, too. Little things and daily routines, such as singing a rhyme or telling a story, contributed to the sense that life was returning to the way it used to be.*

In addition to observing the lessons, during the break, I managed to observe the ECD classes and saw how the teacher tried to regulate herself and use flexible classroom management to cope with the problems that arose after the flood. They were responsible for stability, which was the basis of the children's security at school. The ceiling was decorated with banners and paper flowers. This reminded me of times when facilitators changed their teaching style in an effort to keep students interested and motivated. She also mentioned,

> *Our approach provided personalized care for the children by sitting next to those who were most fearful, listening to their worries and fears, and helping them become more expressive, which enabled them to slowly build their confidence and trust. Donor care, in terms of material supplies, and care and patience emotionally, enabled the children to reconnect with their studies.*

Recent frameworks for trauma-informed education strongly support this story. In this context, they emphasize the role of co-regulation, in which teachers' emotional stability and conscious regulation of behavior affect children’s ability to regulate stress responses (Porges, 2017). The calmness, patience, and repeated reassurance helped teachers create a safe, predictable environment that allowed children to cope with stress and return to their study routine. With regard to FAS 1, co-regulation employed practical techniques, including a predictable daily routine, individual care for stressed children, and singing, storytelling, and engaging activities.

Furthermore, teachers' stress management approach could be considered philosophy-based in resilience. Learning was provided even in TLCs with limited resources through emotional support, flexible teaching, and the use of existing resources. Collaboration with community members, NGOs, and funders intensified the teaching response, indicating that social networks help teachers manage stress. In this way, the teachers not only managed their own psychological and emotional stress but also contributed to the children's psychological and social well-being by turning the chaotic situation into an opportunity for learning.

There have been a number of floods in the past at FAS 2, damaging classrooms, buildings and school supplies. I started talking about how they bounced back from such scary events and the ECED teacher told me how she helped kids deal with stress and still keep learning after the floods,

> *By 2076 we'd been swindled out of everything. The sudden flood had totally covered our houses and school with mud. Then in 2082 we were again damaged by another deluge. The kids were scared and crying because they lost things. I knew I had to do little things to help them feel safe again." To make them feel relaxed and secure, I used to entertain them through music, stories, and dancing whenever I was with them. Whenever there was a need to express what they felt inside, we used to do it through painting, sketching, and molding. Sometimes we would enact stories with puppets or masks, and I could see the smiles slowly returning to them. While we did simple breathing exercises together, I would ensure the classroom had a place for a child to sit quietly if he felt scared. I tried to establish a consistent pattern by including fun educational activities that covered topics such as counting, colors, and the alphabet.*

When I heard the ECED facilitator, I only understood that instructors usually manage to control themselves coping with feelings of dread, worry and grief so that they can show how calm and determined they are." And things had to change to make sure the children were at peace, as well. Ingenious methods involving the use of stones, leaves or other objects found around the home.

She continued telling her story effectively, with particular emphasis on the children's emotional state due to the floods.

> *I rearranged the classroom to create comforting spaces and soft corners with cushions, familiar objects, and children's drawings. Sometimes, they just*

> *needed a quiet place to sit or be alone for a while," she said. She also introduced simple breathing exercises and short moments of silence to help children calm themselves. Slowly but surely, these simple and goal-oriented activities began to bear fruit. The children began interacting more with each other and with the activities themselves, thereby regaining their confidence.*

Her tales revealed that teachers employed different ways to handle stress, not only to meet their own personal demands but also those of children, whose lives had been affected by the stormy weather and the rains. They were aware of the fact that the fear and trauma of the children made it difficult for them to concentrate and take part actively in the classroom activity. To address the problem, teachers ensured that the kids followed certain routine activities day to day. In doing so, the children felt a certain level of security and safety in the otherwise unpredictable environment. For the younger lot, predictability was highly significant as it helped them overcome their anxiety.

In addition to routine, teachers implemented methods to motivate and engage students and get them interested in learning again. They would often employ tactics such as positive reinforcement, praising efforts and rewarding even the smallest of accomplishments. These strategies were not only useful for children to be more successful intellectually, but also for them to be emotionally successful so that they could have moments of enjoyment and accomplishment even as they were undergoing transformations and losses.

In line with the transactional stress and coping theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the strategies used by people under stress in FAS 2 were both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping methods. The emotion-focused coping strategy consisted of self-regulation, co-regulation with children and establishing an emotionally safe environment. Examples of problem-focused coping methods included adaptability in the classroom, creative use of available resources, and planning to complete tasks in tight areas. Also, trauma-informed educational approaches acknowledge the use of these coping methods (Porges, 2017). These models emphasize the importance of co-regulation, predictability, and the creation of safe learning environments during disaster recovery.

The way the ECED facilitators handled the consequences of the floods was evident, and some wonderful strategies were adopted to ensure that the teaching-learning process continued during my field trip to FAS 3. All the educational supplies

were damaged, the classroom was muddy, and the cushions were wet. Yet, she did not give up. She began by cleaning and organizing the space, drying the remaining cushions, and even using stones, leaves, and sticks as teaching materials. Hearing her share of stories, I could sense how she understood that the physical environment is the first step toward emotional recovery for children. She shared,

> *I felt that if I was afraid, the children would be afraid too. I had to bring hope first into my own heart. Slowly, I began teaching small lessons, one word a day, one song at a time. Playing hide-and-seek, clapping games, singing in small groups, and telling comedy stories were some of the strategies I used in the initial days. At first, the children were quiet and scared; some hid behind corners.*

She further explained,

> *I used simple strategies, such as group work and games, to support children's emotional recovery. I encouraged children to work and play together in small groups. It helped them interact, laugh, and eventually forget the trauma they went through because of engaging in such activities. It was helpful for them to increase their self-confidence by helping each other. Furthermore, it made my work very easy.*

Throughout the process, I saw the young ones having fun again and asking questions to help one another. The facilitator of ECED was patient despite the unpredictability of the environment and ensured that all needs of the individual child were met so that the children were guaranteed to be in a safe environment. She smiled as she said,

> *I used to tell the children that in a few months, we would have our classroom ready in the new space. It is brighter and more spacious. We will have new cushions and learning materials ready by then. I am really looking forward to that.*

In addition, the space of optimism was formed by virtue of her unwavering commitment in the classroom. Little by little, every day and every word, every song, the children began to heal, and the process of learning started again. It shows the significance of coping mechanisms, emotional and psychological support, and other forms of help in restoring learning and hope in ECD contexts affected by catastrophe. This example is in line with trauma-informed pedagogy philosophy as coping with children's emotional and psychological issues should be equally emphasized to

academic recovery (Cole et al., 2013; Perry, 2006). The educator successfully reconstructed the classroom environment and engaged the children through coping strategies. Routine and predictable activities helped the kids feel safe and secure by providing consistency.

Moreover, play-based activities, stories, songs, and clapping games served a dual purpose, helping children learn and express their emotions. Children should show that coping mechanisms help not only with emotions but also with building peer support and collaborative learning, which are essential to children's emotional and cognitive development.

Tools were scarce, but the teacher used stones, leaves and other hand drawn elements to change the setting and continue teaching. This kind of change is an example of how coping skills can re-create the learning space to make it work better and be safer for everyone. The teacher created a space where kids could feel safe to trust, to be curious, to re-engage in the face of many unknowns in the classroom. She did this by keeping calm in a lot of rain, celebrating small wins and showing hope.

In light of the above discussion, the empirical findings from the analysis have been integrated into five interrelated categories of coping strategies employed by the ECED facilitators in addressing the learning context after the floods, as shown in Figure 1. These coping strategies are the primary ways in which the facilitators addressed problems related to children’s psychological well-being and the continuity of their education. All these strategies worked together to help the children return to school amid the flood's effects.

Figure 1

Coping Strategies



(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Masten, 2014)

This number represents five primary, interrelated themes about the benefits of coping mechanisms, with the attributes associated with each theme (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Masten, 2014):

Coping: Improves emotional management, increases resilience and adaptability, fosters self-awareness and self-development, and optimizes proactive problem-solving.

Caring: Emotional and practical support helps with well-being and a sense of security. It helps environments, nurturing empathy and compassion.

Connecting: Encourages purposeful connections, reduces feelings of isolation, boosts sense of belonging and engagement, and offers access to resources and support

Collaboration: Utilizing a range of skills and perspectives within a group to improve problem-solving and decision-making, to share the responsibility and trust with each other, thus improving team effectiveness by virtue of complementarity.

Comeback: Supports recovery and renewal; strengthens resilience for future challenges; helps to "make things better" from setbacks; maintains motivation and hope. These themes of Coping, Caring, Connecting, Collaborating, and Comeback, explored in this chapter, are interrelated processes that facilitated ECED facilitators' journey through the challenges posed by the flood experience. Though the five themes are consistent with Michael Ungar's Resilience Theory principles (Masten, 2014;

Ungar, 2011), they can be viewed under the Eastern philosophy principle called Panchabhuta, where life is seen as the harmony of the five elements of life such as Prithvi (Earth), Jal/Ap (Water), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air), and Akasha (Space). It does not suggest the direct connection; rather, it provides a culturally relevant way to understand resilience as the process of restoring harmony of an individual, relationships, and the environment after disruption.

The theme Coping demonstrates the earthiness of Prithvi (Earth) since ECED facilitators needed stability and composure despite the uncertainty. The theme Caring correlates with Jal (Water), indicating compassion, nurturing, and emotional care that was necessary for children to feel safe and well. The Connecting motif is associated with Vayu (Air) as it emphasizes the sharing of support, communication and relationship between community members, parents, colleagues and children. Akasha or Space is linked with collaboration because it provides a scope for joint decision making, understanding and discussion. Comeback stands for Agni (Fire) as it highlights personal strength, hope, renewal and transformation.The analysis of the five themes in detail leads us to believe that resilience is not the ability of an individual to bounce back from adversity, but rather is a holistic process that involves the restoration of balance at all levels. The results can be logically interpreted in the framework of Panchabhuta theory, which adds to resilience theory incorporating culture in the recovery process.

Chapter Essence

The second research question was the focus of this chapter and relates to how ECED facilitators sustained small children's learning after the disaster. Facilitators' adaptive pedagogy, institutional support and community support were found to be factors for continuity of learning. Different ways that schools used to keep education going included moving classes to rented buildings, creating Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs), fixing damaged classrooms and getting help from local communities, organizations and municipalities to provide places for learning.

It was also noted that continuity of learning was not confined only to the physical reconstruction of learning environments. In response to damage to classrooms and a few teaching resources, the facilitators adopted pedagogical practices that included using locally available teaching aids, modifying learning activities, and attending to the emotional needs of children. All these practices exemplified Freire's (1970) idea of praxis, in which educators responded critically to

difficulties by turning knowledge and experience into educational practice. Far from regarding resource scarcity as a constraint, facilitators exercised professional agency to reconstruct learning environments for young children.

The results in this chapter reveal not only how learning continuity was maintained but also the resilience of ECED facilitators in coping with post-flood issues. Drawing from these results, the next chapter will analyze the resilience demonstrated by connecting the experiences of the ECED facilitators with theoretical perspectives and the available literature on resilience.

CHAPTER VI
THE EMERGENCE OF TEACHER'S RESILIENCE: A REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE

In the course of engaging with the narratives shared by the ECED facilitators, I found myself returning repeatedly to their words even after our conversations had ended. Their stories did not remain as completed accounts; instead, they continued to unfold in my thinking, carrying meanings that extended beyond formal interpretation. Yet, somehow, it wasn't feeding my soul. At some point, I became aware that I was not just listening to what was being said but also hearing what was not being said.

From the very beginning of my interactions with them, my engagement was based on a professional, analytical approach, with recuperation, adaptation, and resilience as my main concerns. However, over time, this shifted. I began to feel a deeper curiosity about the person behind the role of "facilitator." This shift unsettled me and opened new questions: How were they able to return to school each day while carrying personal loss and uncertainty? What enabled them to continue caring for young children while their own lives were marked by vulnerability? What sustained this form of everyday commitment in such fragile conditions?

These questions stayed with me and gradually began to shape the direction of further engagement. I returned to the field through follow-up conversations and phone calls, not to verify earlier interpretations, but to listen more attentively to what was still emerging in their lived experiences.

It is from this ongoing, relational process of listening and questioning that this chapter emerged. Rather than being a pre-planned section, it grew out of encounters that revealed something deeper within the narratives: the coexistence of vulnerability and resilience in the everyday lives of ECED facilitators in flood-affected contexts. This chapter, therefore, represents an interpretive and reflexive space where the researcher's curiosity, emotional engagement, and ethical responsibility intersect with participants' lived stories.

This chapter discusses teachers' resilience as a deliberate, relational, and active process developed through regular pedagogical activities rather than as passive endurance. There are various ways in which ECED facilitators demonstrated resilience, all of which are intrinsically linked to their professional identity. This includes intentionally creating emotionally stable work environments, rearranging

classrooms, and re-establishing routines. The facilitators' ability to stay calm, positive and provide emotional support to the children they are responsible for is a demonstration of resilience because it shows moral responsibility, compassion and steadfastness in the face of uncertain circumstances. It highlights the tactics, sacrifices, and inner qualities that facilitated both individual coping and group rehabilitation within school communities through the stories of facilitators and Head Teachers. Based on the third research question, I have mentioned the resilience in post-flood contexts in three sub-themes, i.e., i) adaptive resilience mechanism in post-flood recovery contexts, ii) resilience as place-embedded professional identity, iii) emotional containment as an expression of relational care.

Adaptive Resilience Mechanism in Post-Flood Recovery Contexts

In the wake of the flood, schools not only faced severe physical destruction but also social and emotional disruption. The ECED facilitators found themselves tasked with the challenge of re-establishing a conducive and safe learning environment for their learners, despite having gone through various experiences such as loss and trauma due to flooding. The narratives from principals and ECED teachers reveal a highly dedicated profession, as many chose to "put aside their own losses and suffering" to prioritize children's well-being.

This chapter concentrates on the emotional labor educators engaged in to maintain learners anxious, frightened or traumatized, in poise and comfort, and the resilience displayed in the process. The facilitators have shown that resilience is not only about surviving; it is the result of an active response to adversity, as evidenced by their efforts to establish a routine, reconstruct learning environments and foster hope.

In documenting these experiences, the chapter highlights the often-invisible labor, strategies and sacrifices of educators, and the intersection between professional responsibility and emotional strength in shaping the collective recovery of school communities and the teachers' identities in post-disaster contexts.

The effect of the flood was felt on emotional, physical, and psychological levels in schools, extending beyond mere disruption of the learning process and the repair of damaged buildings. Most of the ECED facilitators had gone through the process of loss and trauma; however, they also had the responsibility of providing a safe environment in which the children could learn. The headteachers and ECED

facilitators were seen to suppress their own emotions, often "forgetting their own loss and suffering," for the sake of the children's welfare.

In this chapter, emphasis will be placed on the resilient acts which illustrate how much effort was put into emotional management to maintain calmness and set a good example for children who were afraid and traumatized. Facilitators have found that resilience is more than survival, it is about taking proactive steps to solve problems by restoring behavior patterns and learning spaces. Through documenting these experiences, the chapter seeks to highlight the efforts, strategies, and even the personal sacrifices made by teachers. This highlights the interrelationship between professional responsibility and emotional resilience in the construction of teacher identities and in school recovery from disasters.

In FAS 1, the ECED facilitator sat quietly, gulping down her hot meal on that rainy afternoon. I deliberately asked, “Did you not lose anything at your home during the flood?” She paused, spoon halfway to her mouth, and took a deep breath. Her eyes grew distant for a moment, and then she began to speak.

> *I was so scared,” she admitted quietly. “The flood had taken everything. My neighborhood was half underwater, so was my home. My whole body trembled when I heard that my school had been flooded and that they had rescued the sisters (school helpers) who had been screaming for help all night. My husband suggested I should not continue teaching, that it might be too dangerous. But then I remembered the children’s faces, the trust in their eyes, the little smiles, the excitement they always had for learning. I remembered all the years I had poured into them, all the effort, all the care. I couldn’t let them down.*

Viewing her voice, I felt the weight and depth of what resilience actually means. It was not a dry, abstract concept for her; it was lived, embodied, and relational. The ECED facilitator’s courage was not about heroic survival or personal recovery alone. It emerged through her ethical commitment to the children, through deliberate acts of care, singing, storytelling, and holding trembling hands that maintained continuity and safety in a world overturned by flood.

She told me how she pushed her own fear aside. How, even while her heart pounded with panic, she sang songs, told stories, and stayed close to the children. When the rain fell, and they clung to her trembling, she told them, *“It’s okay. I’m here.”* She created small routines in the temporary classroom, gave hugs when

needed, answered every question, and tried to make the children feel safe, even when her own world felt broken. She said,

> *It wasn't about me recovering first. It was about showing up for them. Every song, every story, every hug it became my way of protecting them. I chose the children over my own fear, and that choice carried me through each day after the flood.*

In this case, her story brought the concept of resilience into perspective, but not the traditional psychological perspective on how to deal with challenges. The theories of Ungar (2008) and Masten (2014) emphasize resilience as a process that unfolds through supportive relationships and engagement in meaningful activities. Her resilience manifested as moral and social resilience through emotional control, sound decision-making, and presence, so that she retained the children's trust and sense of belonging. She did not recover, but served as an anchor linking them to their past and future.

At the same time, I began to critically question what this form of "heroic" resilience may conceal. What structural gaps make such sustained caregiving more necessary than a stronger institutional response and preparedness? Interestingly, when I shared some of these concerns with the facilitators, their responses were not framed in terms of burden, injustice, or institutional failure. Rather than complain of victimization from an unfair system, they expressed their love for, devotion to, and commitment to the children. It was not that they perceived themselves as victims, but rather that what they were doing was an expansion of their role as educators and caregivers. Their responses challenged my own assumptions and reminded me that critical interpretations do not always align with participants' lived understandings.

From her narration, I am drawn to the idea that resilience in such contexts is inseparable from care. It is an enactment of responsibility and moral attention. The ECED facilitator's resilience was performed in real time, grounded in the everyday rituals of ECD: sitting on the floor, noticing fear, responding to questions, and creating routines. In this context, resilience has nothing to do with what an individual holds inside him/her. Instead, it is a way of life in which one lives among other people despite pain and doubt. This brings me back to Noddings' care ethics, in which moral agency takes the form of caring presence rather than reason.

I understand that ECD after a disaster cannot be reduced to just rebuilding the physical structures. ECED facilitators embody a resilience that is ethical, relational,

and profoundly human, a resilience that cannot be measured by recovery alone, but by the continuity of care, trust, and belonging they create amid disruption.

In FAS 2, the story was no different. I was very nervous to ask the ECED facilitator if she stayed at home managing herself and her family, but even before I finished my question, she spoke about the nights she lay awake thinking about her own children at home, and how she forced herself to come to school the next morning anyway. She reflected,

> *Despite my own loss back home, we gathered, cleaned the classrooms, and made arrangements for the children. Our lands had been swept away, our homes damaged, but I knew that the children needed us. I put aside my fear, my grief, and even the sleepless nights thinking of my own family, and focused on making the school a safe space again. We repaired what we could, arranged the few surviving materials, and created small corners for learning and play. Every act, no matter how small, felt like a step toward restoring a sense of normalcy for the children.*

The head teacher admired her strength and the courage that the whole school team put together, she said,

> *It's enormous and unbelievable at the same time what you and your colleagues did to stand strong during and after the flood. We raised ourselves from nothing. We had to begin exactly where the flood left us. No one waited for perfect classrooms or materials; everyone started acting and working together, and in doing so, we gave the children safety, hope, and continuity. We didn't just teach lessons; we held the school together when everything else was gone."*

Hearing their words, I realized that all their efforts, the singing, the stories, the comforting hugs, the repeated lessons, even the chocolates, were more than survival strategies. They were deliberate acts of resilience. The ECD teacher further opened up,

> *We kept showing up, day after day, despite our own losses, because the children's trust, safety, and learning depended on us. That is when I truly understood that resilience is not just about bouncing back; it is about holding on for others while your own world is falling apart.*

Listening to the ECED facilitator's story, I began to understand resilience not as recovery from loss, but as action taken while loss still lives in the body. She lost

her land, her sense of security, and the stability of everyday life, yet she did not wait for her own world to settle before returning to the classroom. She began exactly where the flood had stopped amid mud, fear, and uncertainty. Her actions show resilience as something lived and practiced, not possessed. It emerged from her interactions with children, colleagues, and families, and from a sense of responsibility, rather than simply from her own coping strategies (Southwick et al., 2017; Walsh, 2016).

What stands out most in her story is the ethical weight of her choices. She did not deny her fear or grief; she carried them quietly while placing children's emotional safety at the center of her work. When rain fell, and children trembled, she sang. When they lost focus, she stayed close. When classrooms lay broken, she cleaned and rearranged what remained. These were not accidental gestures of kindness but conscious decisions to protect children's sense of trust and continuity. Recent work on relational and moral resilience highlights such everyday acts of care as central to sustaining life and learning during crisis (Gilligan, 2014; Tronto, 2013).

The ECED facilitator's experience also unsettles the idea that resilience means "bouncing back." There was no return to what existed before. Instead, she raised herself and her classroom from the point of rupture. She adapted within limits, rebuilt meaning through teaching, and reimagined the classroom as a space of emotional anchoring rather than perfection. Current socio-ecological and meaning-based definitions of resilience are described as "the ability to adapt, create meaning, and endure in unity despite persistent disruption" (Ungar et al., 2021). The definition of resilience is consistent with present definitions of resilience.

Reflecting on the ECED facilitator's story, I now understand resilience not as a strength that hides vulnerability, but as courage that lives alongside it. She remained fearful, grieving, and uncertain, yet she continued to show up for children every day. Her resilience lived in persistence in singing through fear, teaching through loss, and refusing to abandon children when material, emotional, and even institutional support collapsed. In her narrative, resilience becomes a moral stance: a commitment to safeguarding children's safety, sense of belonging, and hope, even as her own life remains deeply unsettled.

In FAS 3, I was looking around the classroom and lost my train of thought somewhere. It felt like awakening from a deep sleep when the ECED facilitator poked

me and screamed *Ma'am, what are you thinking?* Then she started sharing as if she knew what I was about to ask her.

> *I still remember that night. I did not sleep at all. Even though it was raining throughout the entire night, the noise coming from the landslides made my heart beat fast. All night long, I kept on wondering about the school and the children, as well as the possible surprises for me in the morning. By dawn, the roads were blocked, and the river had already crossed its limits. When I finally reached the school, my classroom was no longer a classroom. It was filled with mud, sand, and stones. Everything I had prepared with so much care, carpets, cushions, books, and learning materials, was gone. For a moment, I felt empty. I thought, how will I face the children now? I had lost my land in the flood. My own home did not feel safe anymore. Still, I knew one thing clearly: I could not stop being a teacher even when I was hurting from my own personal loss.*

I felt extremely broken listening to her. I turned my head down and acted like I was writing something in my notebook. I couldn't look into her eyes, fearing I might start crying even before she completed her story. Listening to her narrative, I came to understand resilience not as recovery after loss, but as action taken while loss remains unresolved. The ECED facilitator had not "healed" from the flood—her land was gone, her home felt unsafe, and the fear of rain still lived in her body. Yet she returned to the classroom and chose to prioritize children's emotional safety over her own distress. This finding is consistent with the current body of research on resilience which conceptualises resilience as a dynamic process-oriented construct, influenced by context and connections rather than an individual ability or outcome (Southwick et al., 2014; Ungar et al., 2021).

The ECED facilitator somehow read my emotions; she tried to distract me, saying, " The river would look so beautiful otherwise. This is the same river that we need during Ashar/Shrawan for paddy plantation, and see what it does during Ashoj/Kartik when the paddies are at their peak of growth. I tried to make the moment lighter by adding humor, "pahila asharai mahinama pani paryo rujhaune / shawane jhari ……jasta geet hunthiye aba ashojai mahina jasto geet ni nikalnu parcha". We couldn't agree less. Picking up the conversations where we left off, she pointed towards the remnants of the temple and further shared,

There stood a great Bhairav temple, whom we worshipped as a protector of all beings, but the flood spared nothing, not even God, so who am I? This was one of the many ways I tried to calm myself. I have people around to look after me, but in my classroom, there are children who barely see their parents' faces because of their parents' busy work schedules. Then, I realized I should let my guard down and be there for my children. So, I began…I cleaned the classroom with my own hands. I dried the few cushions that survived. I used stones, leaves, and sticks as teaching materials. I started with one word a day, one song at a time. I sang when the rain came because I knew it frightened them. I stayed calm in front of the children and showed courage when I knew my own body was trembling inside, flashing back that terrifying night."

Reflecting on these narratives, I rethink resilience in the post-disaster ECD context as a moral and relational stance rather than a psychological endpoint. The ECED facilitator did not wait for stability before acting; she acted within instability. Her resilience lived in persistence, emotional labor, and the refusal to abandon children when material, emotional, and institutional supports collapsed. In this study, resilience emerges as the courage to remain present with children in uncertainty, protecting their right to safety, learning, and hope, even when her own life remains fragile.

From a socio-ecological perspective, the ECED facilitator's resilience cannot be read as an individual attribute. Her capacity to continue teaching emerged through relationships with children who needed reassurance, colleagues who cleaned and reopened the school, and routines that re-anchored everyday life. Resilience here is distributed across people, practices, and place, reflecting ecological resilience frameworks that locate strength in interaction rather than personality (Walsh, 2016). In terms of the collaborative meaning-making process and shared accountability, the ECED facilitator was not someone who "coped alone"; rather, the facilitator displayed resilience among the participants.

I was impressed by her decision to return to school, to clean classrooms, to comfort scared children, and to start studying again in a destroyed school building. This story made me experience both respect and discomfort at the same time. What motivated her to be present, cleaning mud in the classroom when her house was being flooded? Why should she comfort the children of other people when her family needed to be taken care of, protected, and emotionally supported, too? When I shared

these ideas with her during a conversation, she did not describe her situation as difficult, unfair, or unpleasant. She expressed herself using the language of attachment, responsibility, and love for the children instead. In her view, her behavior was not an obligation – it was something she could not help doing as a teacher and caretaker. This idea made me feel uncomfortable at some point during interpretation. Of course, the ECED facilitator showed great dedication to her job. However, her behavior can be viewed as another manifestation of the expectations that teachers, especially female teachers, face to take care of others, even when they themselves are vulnerable. Though her actions did indeed help maintain a sense of safety and stability among children, they also reveal the broader system of expectations placed on female teachers, who carry the emotional load while still caring for others. Seen through a critical lens, her story is not just one of resilience but of resilience as a replacement for responsibility.

Resilience as Place-Embedded Profession Identity

Regarding FAS 1, the ECED teacher-maintained focus on her kids despite numerous personal difficulties. She would always think of the kids' faces, which pulled her back into the classroom despite issues at home. This enduring connection indicates that commitment in such cases transcends mere professional obligation because it is linked to personal identity, care, and moral obligation. She shared her thoughts,

> *I have worked here for 12 years. I have built this classroom with my own hands. I have helped shape the children's dreams and carried their parents' dreams, too. It is true that my own house was half drowned in the flood, but how could I forget that the school I have devoted myself to was gone as well? I remember seeing the head teacher's face, my colleagues, the staff, and the children's little faces; I couldn't control myself. It felt like the time had come to test my strength and patience. I kept thinking, if I don't go there and support the school and the children now, then when? It was this thought that inspired me to return.*

In cases of crisis, a professional commitment goes beyond fulfilling one's obligations. This case study shows that the response is driven by emotion and morality. The way the facilitator comments on her experiences indicates how entwined emotional grief and professionalism are to her. She does not view it as an entity separate from her life but as an extension of herself. Because of the personal

relationships that she has developed with children, colleagues, and other members of the community, she is not obliged to act professionally due to institutional demands but because of these relationships. I started to wonder, though, whether her strength was something she chose to have or whether it was due to professional duty, moral obligation, and the lack of other support systems. When the storms happened, they destroyed more than just things. They also put at risk years of mental investment and relationships. But she never had the choice to leave.

The stories that emerge from the areas affected by the floods show not only the extent to which the people have been disrupted, but also the high degree of professional commitment amongst the teachers. Her story exemplifies resilience in a dramatic way, rooted in fear and responsibility. She reflected on the twelve years she had devoted to building her classroom not merely as a physical space, but as a nurturing environment where children's dreams were shaped and sustained.

The headteacher, in his broken voice, shared,

> *When we found our sisters trapped inside the school and half submerged, it felt like the whole world had crashed. For a moment, I felt helpless. I screamed for help. The rescue was carried out with the help of the police and community members. I thought the teachers wouldn't come, but contrary to my thought, everyone stood up for this school. We all agreed to run the lessons in TLCs. The ECED teacher cared more for the little children than her own struggles back at home. In that little space, she tried creating a world of their own.*

The story emphasizes the well-being of children and the continuity of learning, and highlights the commitment of facilitators in a crisis. In these real-life events, resilience is not an abstract idea, but a deeply human response, cultivated by relationships, purpose, and an unshakeable commitment to the futures of their students. The ECED facilitator's narrative reflects the philosophy of the ethics of care by Nel Noddings which gives priority to relational responsibility over duty in professional practice. The fact that the school affects her personally but she cannot detach herself from it, suggests a caring relationship in which her professional behavior is characterized by attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness to others, especially children. In contrast, Andy Hargreaves's ideas of moral purpose and emotional labor in education could make sense of her experiences. "First of all, teaching is an emotional profession and a profession with many values," he stresses.

She feels compelled to do her best for the children's education and health, no matter the personal safety risks. So the teacher's relation to the children and others in the educational situation is existential rather than instrumental. Noddings' ethics of care provides an understanding of the facilitator's relational commitment to the children, but a critical approach suggests not romanticizing such commitment. The fact that she still feels attached to the school could also point out the way in which gendered norms, institutional negligence, and the task of performing emotional labor are placed on teachers working in high-risk contexts. In the same manner, Hargreaves, (1998), the idea of emotional labor could help us understand some affective aspects of being a teacher, although it would mask the structural conditions that made such a task necessary.

One of the stories of ECED facilitators from FAS 2 explains this issue more clearly:

> *From 2076, this is the kind of flood that we have been facing. We have suffered much, but we have not wavered in our stance. I have always seen this school as my home. Of course, my own house was severely affected by the flood, but so was this school. I have grown here, learned here, and earned here—I cannot just leave it like this. And the little children… where will they go, what will they do? Some of them are economically disadvantaged. I am like their mother, and this school is their home. So, I decided to gather my strength. No matter the size of the classroom, no matter the structure, I took it as my duty, as my moral duty to continue.*

It is a good example proving that living through a crisis does not produce feelings of disengagement but, on the contrary, contributes to the formation of a sense of grounded ness and responsibility in a person. The stories and narratives shared by the ECED facilitators reflect a well-formed identity related to place, in which the school is not just a workplace but a part of oneself. The caring professional identity, shaped by empathy, social sensitivity, and relational engagement, is expressed in her ethical approach to teaching, especially for children from poor families. To be "like their mother" is a metaphor that illustrates how thin the line is between professional duties and caring responsibilities. The metaphor also underscores the idea that education serves as a form of protection in such situations.

I could see how enthusiastic she was with her profession as an ECED facilitator. She further shared her feelings,

> *We always stand together and celebrate during happy times, so how can one leave during difficult times? It's actually the time when we should support each other, lift up, and continue working, and that's exactly what we did. This school is a home to me as well. This is the place where I myself grew up, learned, and earned. So, there is nothing more important to me than the betterment of this school and my children.*

Communities of Practice, as explained by Etienne Wenger, are communities whose existence lies in the making of collective meaning from shared experience and participation, especially under challenging conditions (Wenger, 1998). This is akin to Wenger's idea of "communities of practice." The fact that she insisted on "standing together" Here resilience is not a personal thing as it is something that is built by the society through cooperation and commitment. Rather, it is a process that society creates. Her frequent use of the word "home" to refer to school, and her growth, learning and moneymaking there suggest a strong attachment to the place, making her more committed. Christopher Day researched into teacher resilience which supports this. He says that resilience is not only about surviving but also about having a moral purpose, identity and relationships (Day, 2008).

She is concerned about the kids and asks them where they are going and what they are going to do. It indicates that she believes it is her responsibility to dedicate herself to her work, considering the instability in her students' lives. This is not a temporary commitment. It's a long-term commitment based on love, sense of community and a strong sense of duty to the children and the community."

In the third part of the series, the teacher of Flood Affected School 3 is another example of professional dedication born out of loss, reflection, and a strong sense of personal responsibility.

> *Our losses were significant. A landslide took part of my kitchen away, my buffalo was swept away by the flood, and our paddy land was destroyed. My uncle's newly built house was also swept away. But one thing kept pushing me—we didn't die. Some people even lost their loved ones. This school has children from diverse backgrounds. Whatever happens, they will come to the classroom looking for me. As they enter the school, I have to act as their mother in some ways. Playing, reading books, and singing are some of the activities that we do together. Since that school is a place for all of us, we must all be at that place.*

Her story demonstrates that personal loss does not reduce one's commitment to profession but instead reshaped the commitment by creating awareness of the need for survival and responsibility. The decision she has made to keep teaching despite obstacles is prompted by the saying "we didn't die" – this is the moment when her ethical compass changes course. The idea that meaning-making in suffering provides humans with strength and reason – that adversity becomes responsibility – aligns with Viktor Frankl's theory (Frankl, 1959).

The manner in which she portrays herself as "like their mother" is indicative of a loving ethic, which is an attitude that is consistent with Nel Noddings' methodology. As per the latter, education relies on attention, responsiveness, and affective involvement in children's lives (Noddings, 2005). Her daily engagement, such as "playing, reading, and singing," further emphasizes that care is not abstract but enacted through everyday pedagogical practices.

As we sat down quietly reflecting on the challenges she had to go through, the head teacher shared,

> *This school is a communal property. We could have shifted the location but we only have one school here. If we just leave things as they are, where will the children in this community go to study? Some children in the ECD class come to school just for the snacks, and they are cared for all day while their parents are away at work. I could also shut down this school and opt for another profession, but I couldn't. It was not possible for me to allow this institution to come down in this fashion; it is for this reason that, despite the fact that there was a crisis taking place in each one of our houses, we got together and decided to work towards reviving it to its former glory.*

It was also found that the kids come from "diverse backgrounds," which shows that they are aware of problems of social injustice and being vulnerable. Freire's theory of duty and care suggests that teachers should help socially disadvantaged students (Freire, 1970). The promise to "be there" for the students is in line with that idea. They also believe "the school is a provider for everybody."

This reflects their belief that the school is the institution where everyone receives assistance. It is consistent with Christopher Day's concept, according to which the teachers' resilience arises through the combination of moral purpose, identity, and commitment to the welfare of their pupils (Day, 2008).

Thus, they demonstrate their professional commitment not in spite of the crisis but because of it: a crisis wrought by loss, buoyed by meaning, and revealed through loving, responsible action. Taken together, her narrative suggests that professional commitment in crisis is not simply persistence; it is a morally and relationally constituted practice. It emerges through meaning-making, is sustained through care, and is enacted through a deep sense of responsibility toward children and the community.

Emotional Containment as an Expression of Relational Care

In FAS1, as we were conversing, children came out of their classroom, peered through the door, and laughed, not knowing who their Miss was talking to. The teacher-student relationship looked visibly friendly. She kept telling them to eat their lunch and play, but they were impatiently waiting for her to join them. Then I asked the ECD facilitator whether she had shared her emotions and difficulties with the children she was caring for during the flood. The ECD facilitator, without hesitation, shared,

> *The weight of my loss was more than a child's weight. It was too heavy for me at times, but I didn't share it with them. Do you think they would understand what I was going through? When I was looked at as a pillar of strength, how could I open my chest to them? I stood firmly and fearlessly every day in front of them. The strength I showed made them believe their miss was unshakeable, which is one of the reasons they seek comfort with me whenever they're scared.*

The facilitators' narratives reveal that resilience was not simply an inner capacity to endure hardship, but a contextually grounded moral practice shaped by their responsibility toward young children. These feelings were experienced by participants, but they did not express their fears and sadness in front of the kids. As one of the teachers said, "*We were also scared, but we could not show that in front of the kids.*" *If we cried, they would feel more unsafe."* Another teacher explained, *"Children think teachers are strong, so even if we were not okay inside, we tried to act normal."* These accounts illustrate that teachers were actively negotiating between their internal emotional realities and their professional and ethical obligation to provide a sense of safety and stability for children.

Further, the ECD facilitator narrated,

> *These little children worked like therapy to me. The time I spent with them made me forget my own troubles at times. The dancing, singing, and the smallest of the activities we collectively did inside the classroom brought us even closer. The teaching-learning approaches were more flexible, which made the children happier. They were asked to do whatever they felt like, and I fully engaged with them. This brought us even closer*

Instead of being emotionally available and responsive, they "hardened their hearts". They shifted their teaching to focus on mental health, to give kids space to express themselves through play and to ensure kids had safe places to learn and support from other kids. In keeping with Palmer's sense of the importance of community, these teachers helped kids connect with family and neighborhood networks. This gave kids a sense of connection during the crisis. Thus, the practical experience of ECED facilitators working in flood-stricken communities proves that resilience is based on strong connections and authenticity. It is an effective way of communication, healing, and commitment to helping kids develop as people.

In FAS 2, the ECED facilitator got nostalgic, thinking about the past year's flood crisis at her home and school. In between, I asked her, "What made you come back to the class, given that you have your own share of destruction back at home?" She smiled and said,

> *The love I feel for these little children draws me back to them every day. If I miss even a single day, they notice my absence. Questions like, 'Miss what do you do? What is the meaning of bhol aaunu? The kids ask this question. One of those. They always ask honest, simple questions and it makes me feel like I know them better. Meeting their simple needs, like a piece of chocolate, would make their day. They do not expect anything huge or expensive. The recession did so much to bring me closer to them. While I could afford to offer them tea from a nearby chiya pasal, I prefer to offer them sweets. I enjoy looking after my children and playing with them and talking to them, considering that they are grown up now.*

In the process of listening to my participants' stories, I shifted from an impersonal researcher to someone personally involved in their lives. Her stories about children who were waiting for her, wondering why she had been gone, and finding joy in little things not only became facts for me but also evoked an emotion I still feel. It became evident that her activity was not only caring for the children in the traditional

sense, but also an emotional protection of them through the control of one's own emotions.

After going through the story, I had to rethink my perspectives regarding care and social boundaries within educational institutions. While Noddings' theory of the ethics of care made me see the ECED facilitator's actions as attentive to children's needs, a closer look at the situation reveals the pressure of emotional labor and the need for teachers to hide their vulnerability. Giving out chocolates, holding conversations, always being there, and maintaining emotional connection could definitely be considered an act of care, but could also extend beyond formal teaching and may reproduce expectations of self-sacrificing femininity.

This story has also made me rethink Palmer's concept of professional boundaries in the teaching profession. Although emotional boundaries are crucial to teachers' well-being, her story shows that maintaining them in the context of a disaster is quite hard. Instead of opting for emotional boundaries, she stayed with the children while taking care of her own emotional well-being. This must not be portrayed as the perfect way of teaching. On the contrary, this illustrates the emotional labor that is invisibly performed by the ECED facilitators, and the vital question that arises from this is why teachers have to deal with issues that should ideally be addressed by other systems.

In FAS 3, our conversations did not begin as formal interviews. They unfolded gradually between classroom pauses, while sitting on low benches, and sometimes in the quiet moments when children were absorbed in play. It was within these in-between spaces that my participant began to share her story, not as a structured account, but as lived fragments of experience shaped by the flood.

> *More than my personal troubles, I am concerned about them. Some children come from very far away, and some are economically disadvantaged. I feel like a mother figure to them. Despite so many challenges, the children are still coming back, so why wouldn't I? What could be more important than being* there for them?

At this juncture, our discussion took an entirely new direction. It seemed as though there was no clear line dividing her personal and professional identity, suggesting that care was indeed present in both. This was when she told me that she returned to school with her baby. The image itself was powerful of a teacher-mother stepping into a fragile, post-disaster classroom, holding both her fear and her child. As

I listened, I began to see how *emotional shielding* was not an abstract concept but an embodied practice. She did not deny her fear; rather, she held it alongside her responsibilities, consciously choosing to foreground care, presence, and attentiveness in her interactions with children.

> *I have a nine-month-old baby. After the flood, I myself was scared to death as a landslide hit my home. I was skeptical about coming, but when I thought of those little faces, it felt no different from thinking about my own baby. So I came, carrying my baby to school. The children were amused by my baby, and I was amused by their happiness. That is how I forgot my difficulties and was able to fully focus on them. Equally helpful were the teachers and the administrator as we worked together to gradually and cooperatively rebuild our classroom.*

The other blurring of the lines of caregiving roles was caused by her baby being in the classroom, creating a relational environment in which caring was shared, visible, and very much human. She also emphasized that this process was not carried out alone. “The teachers and the principal were equally supportive,” she noted. There was a sense of collective effort; a quiet, collaborative rebuilding not just of physical classrooms, but of emotional environments. They worked together to slowly recreate an environment where the children would feel safe again, despite any ambiguity in the outer world.

Being a researcher by profession, I found myself deeply influenced by the way this story unfolded, not by logic but by emotion. Her narrative illuminated how care, in post-disaster contexts, becomes a shared and negotiated practice. If a place children used to feel safe to play in is now considered dangerous, they may not want to play there anymore. So when the water drained the flood was not yet considered over. The ECED facilitator observed that the young people were still afraid on subsequent rainy days. Still some youngsters could not go out because they recalled something awful. These kinds of questions surfaced naturally as I engaged with her lived experience, making me more aware of the emotional and ethical dimensions of interpretation itself.

However, in subsequent interviews conducted after completing the main research phase, participants noted how the process was influencing their professional practice. Even as they admitted having regained most of the physical structures and learning spaces destroyed by the floods, they agreed that the disaster would always

influence how they perceive learning and children's well-being. Many facilitators have admitted to prioritizing children's emotional readiness to engage in academic activities through predictable routines, keen observations, and strong parent-facilitator communication whenever the environment is unpredictable. They have also confirmed that disaster management preparations are now part of classroom activities, with a greater focus on ensuring that the children remain safe rather than scared. In addition, although participants felt increasingly confident about managing future disasters based on their personal experience, they still mentioned the importance of institutional support, psychosocial preparation, and disaster-response materials. It seems that, in this case, resilience has moved beyond a means of coping with the effects of disasters to a full pedagogical framework.

Chapter Essence

Instead of a latent psychological quality, the discourses which were provided by the teachers imagine resilience as an essentially interpersonal and situational phenomenon. This creates resilience as an entrenched part of the distinct social conditions within which these individuals operate. The main caregivers in this study were women who faced the dual challenge of personal disaster recovery and the obligation to continue institutional practices and provide emotional security to their students. This implies a display of resilience which is culturally contingent, especially in the South Asian context, and defined by a praxis of interpersonal care and shared perseverance.

Integrating the social-ecological approach of Michael Ungar with care ethics, it is possible to consider the quality of relations in pedagogical practice in terms of attentiveness and responsiveness. This enables one to see recovery not as a psychological event that takes place in a vacuum, but as a socially mediated process that arises out of the mutual interactions that exist between the individual and the environment.

The assertion of Palmer concerning the assertion of authenticity and vulnerability as the main channels through which educational connection may occur, is one such departure. The participants were using a method referred to as emotional shielding, a deliberate control of anxiety and unpleasantness that is intended to work as a voluntary act of care. This has been done instead of the conventional way of establishing connection through emotional receptiveness. The simulating of stability

and the deliberate acting of strength becomes a more responsive version of situated ethics in the early childhood contexts, which were impacted by disasters.

I began to ask myself difficult questions: If I were positioned in their place, carrying my own losses while being responsible for the emotional well-being of young children, would I have been able to return to school each day? Would I have had the strength to set aside my own fears in order to reassure others?

Standing at the Edge of Chapter Seven: A Personal Monologue

I woke up to the nauseating sound of the alarm slicing through the early morning silence. For a moment, I stayed still, half-awake, trying to make sense of where I was between sleep and awareness. Then, suddenly, I hurriedly opened my eyes and reached for my mobile phone to turn off the alarm. It was 4:30 AM, my regular set time for yoga.

I sat up slowly.

Outside, the world was still dim, wrapped in that early morning haze. I turned my gaze toward the window. It was raining again. Not just a light drizzle, but that steady, familiar rainfall that seems to settle into everything—roofs, soil, memory. It reminded me of the other day when my neighbor casually said, “barkha lage jastai pani parna thalya cha, dhan ko biu thik parne bela ni bhayo aba.” Her words had stayed somewhere in my mind, like background noise that you don’t notice until it returns again.

And just like that, something in me shifted.

My thoughts began to drift, almost unconsciously, into a flashback. I ended up mentally transported to Godawari, where I have been going back and forth to meet and talk with ECED facilitators and head teachers. Lately, this has been a place of constant changes, left and rightProblems have again re-emerged like unusual rainfall, flooding, disruption of school routine, children's absence from school and the unpredictability of changes regarding weather patterns. And on top of these problems there were the fears and anxieties hidden behind the gates of every school.

This was a hard moment for me.

Yoga or write?

It was as if everything was moving more slowly and intensely in the rain. There was something about the sound of rain that made me not want to begin work on

my thought-out plan. The thought crossed my mind to practice some yoga positions, but I have not decided yet. This was somewhere else, wandering through the field notes, discussions, reflections, and thoughts that have been lying behind my academic progress.

So, I paused again.

Since it was raining heavily, I decided to change my plan. I got up and went to the kitchen instead. I prepared a simple cup of hot lemon water. I added a slice of ginger and a pinch of pepper, just enough to give it warmth that spreads slowly through the body. At that moment when I had the first sip, I could feel the sharpness of the ginger coming into me, fully awake and taking me back to reality. The taste was simple, but it felt almost therapeutic, like my body was agreeing with my decision before my mind fully did. As I finished the cup, I was wide awake.

Not just physically, but mentally alert in a different way.

There was a clarity that came with the rain, the warmth of the drink, and the stillness of the morning. I realized I didn't want to rush into yoga today. Instead, I wanted to sit with my thoughts. To write. To allow the pieces of memory, field experiences, and personal reflections to take a beautiful shape on the page.

And so, I made an intentional decision.

I chose not to go to my yoga class today.

Instead, I chose to write this chapter.

Maybe it was the rain. Maybe it was the memory of Godawari. Or maybe it was simply one of those mornings where life gently redirects you without asking for permission. Regardless of whatever it was, I found myself here between reflection and writing, between lived experience and academic inquiry, between routine and spontaneity.

And in that space, I began to write.

Maybe it was also the quiet echo of my professors' words lingering somewhere in my head: *"When you come to the class next time, come with complete chapters."*

CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings reported in Chapters Four, Five, and Six in relation to the theoretical framework, philosophical assumptions, and relevant literature that guided the study. The discussion aims to interpret the participants' narratives by connecting the emergent themes to existing scholarly knowledge and theoretical perspectives. The chapter is organized around the major themes identified in the findings chapters, examining how these themes support, extend, or challenge existing literature and theoretical understandings related to the study. In this way, the chapter draws attention to the implications of the findings for advancing knowledge in Early Childhood Development and disaster education.

Teachers' Storied Perceptions: Rewriting Early Learning in Flooded Realities

The stories brought by the ECED Facilitators are quite detailed on how natural disasters, especially floods, have affected the basic early childhood education environment. The teachers' stories, when they brought together different pieces of this disruption, for instance, the children's learning experiences, cognitive engagement, spatial awareness, feelings, and psychosocial wellness, brought forward one significant point about early childhood education. The development of young children is closely linked to physical infrastructure and emotional security.

A more detailed analysis of the teachers' stories reveals that this process of disruption took place in several interconnected stages. The first stage was the loss of the security of the learning environment due to floodwater and the temporary shelter of the classrooms and their contents. Then came the emotional impact of the disaster, where children's educational experience was full of fear, doubt, hesitation and disrupted engagement. But the stories were also of the mayhem and the losses. ECED Facilitators and children discovered new ways to learn through play, movement, songs, stories, and whatever resources the surroundings had to give in unusual and constricted settings.

Thus, three interrelated sub-themes—When Learning Spaces Are Lost; Fear, Uncertainty, and Disrupted Engagement; and Finding Learning in Unfamiliar Spaces—bring these atypical experiences together. Taken as a whole, these themes

demonstrate how the ECED facilitators perceived the disruption of early learning as a journey from the loss of familiar environments and emotional insecurity to new learning opportunities.

When Learning Spaces Are Lost

The teachers' narratives revealed that the flood disrupted not only the physical structure of ECED classrooms but also the familiar spaces, materials, routines, and everyday conditions through which young children experienced learning. Classrooms were submerged, filled with mud and debris, or rendered unusable, while learning materials were damaged or completely lost. In some situations, ECED classes had to be moved to rented, temporary, or shared spaces that were smaller, congested, and under-resourced. If a place children used to feel safe to play in is now considered dangerous, they may not want to play there anymore. So, when the water drained the flood was not yet considered over. The ECED facilitator observed that the young people were still afraid on subsequent rainy days. Still some youngsters could not go out because they recalled something awful.

In early childhood, familiar objects and spaces provide opportunities for children to touch, manipulate, explore, move, and make meaning from their experiences. When these familiar learning environments were disrupted by floodwater, mud, damaged materials, or temporary arrangements, teachers perceived that children had fewer opportunities to engage with the surroundings in their usual ways. The loss of the physical learning space, therefore, became closely connected with the disruption of children's everyday learning experiences.

The ECED facilitator's narratives can also be understood through Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective, which emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and is mediated by cultural and material resources. Children's learning does not occur independently of the people, materials, routines, and environments surrounding them. The flood interrupted several of these interconnected elements. ECED facilitators described circumstances in which children could no longer move freely, play in familiar ways, interact with peers as before, or access the materials that had supported their everyday activities. Consequently, the disruption of the classroom also represented a disruption of the social and material conditions through which learning was ordinarily mediated.

This understanding is further illuminated by Malaguzzi's (1993) conception of the environment as an important dimension of children's learning. The environment is not merely a physical background in which teaching occurs; it communicates, invites interaction, supports relationships, and influences children's experiences. From the ECED facilitator's stories, the damaged and temporary learning spaces offered fewer opportunities for movement, exploration, play, and interaction that had characterized children's earlier learning experiences. UNICEF (2025) stresses that familiarity of routine, surroundings, and possessions is important for children post-crisis. Familiarity can provide continuity and a sense of security when other aspects of children's lives have become uncertain.

Therefore, the ECED facilitator's stories suggest that a learning space is more than four walls, furniture, and teaching materials. It is a familiar environment in which children know where to sit, where to play, whom to interact with, what to expect, and how to participate. When this space was lost, an important part of children's everyday learning landscape was disrupted as well.

Fear, Uncertainty, and Disrupted Engagement

Alongside the disruption of physical learning spaces, the ECED facilitator's narratives revealed a strong emotional dimension of children's experiences. They found that the children were afraid, hesitant, confused, withdrew, and were less excited to participate in learning activities following the flood. The children were still afraid when it rained heavily or when they found themselves in situations reminiscent of the flood. Their testimonies reveal that the flood continued to haunt the children even after the physical threat was over.

Taking a trauma-informed approach, such reactions could be regarded as signs of possible coping mechanisms from the children who have experienced threats and uncertainties. Perry (2006) argues that threatening experiences could affect children's stress response and regulation skills. Van der Kolk (2014) points out that a person could still be affected by his or her traumatic experience in terms of experiencing one's body, environment, and safety. From this point of view, when a child withdraws, hesitates, becomes afraid, and is reluctant to participate in activities, the first thing to consider is the child's need for safety and emotion regulation.

In addition to changes observed in children's engagement in learning, the ECED facilitators also noted changes in children's engagement. These facilitators spoke about occasions when they observed children struggling to focus on tasks such

as letters and numbers they had previously known, songs, and other classroom activities. Such narratives are important because they shed light on how teachers have perceived the connection between emotional disruption and children's engagement in learning. It is not, however, the objective of this study to demonstrate any causative link between flooding and children's cognitive development.

Another theory applicable in this context is Bowlby's (1969) theory of attachment, security, and children's exploratory ability. Exploring requires reliable attachments and a secure base. If a place that children used to feel safe playing in begins to be thought of as dangerous, then they may not want to play there anymore. Therefore, when the water receded, the flood was still considered incomplete. The ECED facilitator noted that the kids were still afraid on subsequent rainy days. Still, some kids could not go out because they remembered something bad.

This view is also in line with the observations of Norris et al. (2002), who noted that disasters can be followed by prolonged psychological and emotional responses among affected populations. Within the ECED facilitator's narratives, children's hesitation, fear, withdrawal, and reduced engagement can therefore be understood as part of the broader emotional disruption associated with experiencing a disaster.

The ECED facilitator's stories also consequently challenge a post-disaster understanding of education that focuses only on restoring academic routines. Before children can fully re-engage with learning, they may need to experience the learning environment as safe, predictable, and emotionally secure. Therefore, emotional security, familiar relationships, predictable routines, and opportunities for play become important conditions for children's renewed engagement with learning.

Finding Learning in Unexpected Places

The flooding destroyed all the classrooms and learning materials, but according to the ECED facilitator, learning continued even without a normal learning environment. Instead, they found opportunities for learning in their immediate surroundings and through whatever resources were available. Songs, storytelling, movement, stones, leaves, sticks, floor space, and even simple objects such as chocolates became part of children's learning experiences.

These narratives invite a reconsideration of what constitutes a learning resource in early childhood. From Piaget's (1952) perspective, children construct knowledge through active engagement with their surroundings. likewise, Vygotsky

(1978) strains the significance of social communications and cultural/physical tools for children's learning. The ECED facilitator's experiences demonstrated that learning could continue through interaction, imagination, movement, language, and play even when conventional teaching materials were unavailable.

The ECED facilitator's use of stones, leaves, sticks, songs, stories, movement, and available spaces can also be understood through a place-oriented understanding of learning. Sobel (2004) emphasizes the value of connecting children's learning with their immediate environments and lived experiences. In their stories, the surrounding environment was not simply a space in which learning had to take place because the classroom was unavailable; it became a source of possibilities for learning. Objects found in the environment could be counted, compared, arranged, touched, described, incorporated into stories, or used in imaginative play.

This perspective also connects with Malaguzzi's (1993) understanding of the environment as an active dimension of children's learning. Although the post-flood environments were not necessarily ideal, teachers' narratives showed that learning possibilities could emerge through creative engagement with available spaces and materials. But the lack of traditional learning resources was not tantamount to a lack of learning; on the contrary, it meant that the learning experience would be different for both teachers and children.

In that regard, discovering learning in unfamiliar spaces means a change in how early learning is viewed during disruptions. However, this does not mean that safe classrooms, proper materials, and sufficient infrastructure are not important. Rather, it highlights that young children's learning is not completely confined to conventional classroom arrangements. Their learning can also emerge through movement, play, storytelling, imagination, interaction, and engagement with the immediate environment.

Thus, the ECED facilitator's narratives contribute to the idea of "rewriting early learning" in flooded realities. Their experiences revealed both the vulnerability of conventional learning spaces and the possibilities that emerge when teachers work with the resources, relationships, and environments available to them. The stories move from loss, to emotional disruption, to the discovery of alternative possibilities for learning: When Learning Spaces Are Lost → Fear, Uncertainty, and Disrupted Engagement → Finding Learning in Unfamiliar Spaces. This progression captures how the ECED facilitators experienced the disruption of early learning while also

revealing their changing understanding of what learning can look like when the familiar classroom is no longer available.

ECED Facilitators' Coping Strategies

The stories of the ECED facilitators show that coping during the flood was not a single response or a clearly defined set of strategies. It unfolded through small, everyday acts of responding to children, adjusting to damaged learning spaces, using whatever resources were available, and maintaining relationships within the school and community. As facilitators, they too were experiencing fear, uncertainty, loss and chaos. "With all of this, they were still able to give the kids chances to feel safe, to participate and to stay connected to the learning process." The stories of these teachers can be divided into three interrelated sub-themes: Caring in Times of Crisis, Creativity in Times of Scarcity, and Connecting, Collaborating and Continuing.

Care in the Midst of Crisis

The flood did not only damage the classrooms, the teaching materials and the buildings. The emotions of the children and the ECED facilitators also took a toll. The facilitators described children as frightened, unsettled, hesitant, and sometimes withdrawn after the flood. At the same time, the facilitators themselves were not outside the disaster. They too had experienced fear, uncertainty, disruption, and, in some cases, personal loss. Their stories, therefore, reveal a difficult balancing act: while carrying their own experiences of the disaster, they also had to create a sense of safety and familiarity for young children.

In these circumstances, care became part of how the ECED facilitators continued teaching. Instead of keeping the issue of emotional support separate from learning, they attended to the children's immediate needs through reassurance, familiar routines, singing, small talk, and their physical and emotional presence. For instance, one of the facilitators used candies not only as a reward but also to uplift the children's spirits. Songs and familiar routines were kept going because they provided a sense of familiarity in an otherwise alien and disrupted situation. In case of fear due to heavy rain, the facilitators comforted the children with their physical and emotional presence.

All these ordinary practices reflect Noddings' (1984) ethics of care, in which learning is understood as a fundamentally relational process that takes into account the learner's needs. From this perspective, caring was not an additional activity that the ECED facilitators performed after teaching; it became part of the teaching itself.

Their stories show that, in the aftermath of the flood, knowing when a child needed reassurance, when to pause, when to sing, and when simply to remain present became part of their pedagogical response.

The ECED facilitators' responses can also be read through the Buddhist idea of Karuṇā, or compassion, as a way of responding to suffering with concern and a desire to ease it. Their actions were small, but they were meaningful within the children's immediate circumstances. Upekkhā, which is keeping your emotions in check during hard times, is also another idea that can be used to understand how hard it is for the facilitators to keep calm when the children are frightened and uncertain. These ideas are used in this study to help us understand what the facilitators experienced, but they are not evidence that they used Buddhism in their practice. The emotional presence is also similar to trauma-based approaches. Perry (2006) discusses the importance of providing children who have experienced trauma with safety and rules, and van der Kolk (2014) discusses the impact of trauma on children’s feelings of safety, attention, and engagement. Thus, creating routines, providing reassurance to children and maintaining their regular activities are all sensible ways of providing consistency during a time of confusion.

Care thus turns into a kind of coping mechanism. The ECED facilitators lacked the means to quickly fix the classrooms and remove children's fear. What they could do was remain present, create familiar moments, and make the learning environment emotionally safer. In this sense, their stories suggest that, during a crisis, teaching young children begins not only with what can be taught, but also with how children are held emotionally while learning becomes possible again.

When Scarcity Sparked Creativity

As the flood damaged classrooms and destroyed teaching and play materials, the ECED facilitators had to work in spaces very different from the environments they had used before the disaster. In FAS1, FAS2, and FAS3, learning spaces and teaching materials were damaged or lost, while temporary, rented, or shared spaces often remained limited and poorly resourced. The facilitators could not simply return to the previous classroom arrangement. Their narratives instead show how they began to look differently at what was still available around them.

Sticks, stones, leaves, bottle tops, floor space, movement, songs, and stories became part of children's learning experiences. Materials that might ordinarily have been considered part of the surrounding environment became useful for counting, sorting,

storytelling, movement, or imaginative play. Rather than stopping learning because commercial teaching materials were unavailable, the facilitators adapted activities to the materials and spaces they had.

This practice can be understood through the idea of Upāya, or skillful means, in which action is responsive to the particular circumstances of a situation. The facilitators' responses were not made against an ideal classroom that no longer existed; they emerged against the backdrop of the possibilities available in the given context at the time. The narratives of the facilitators thus reflect a sense of practical pedagogical responsiveness—the organization of learning was made possible according to the existing possibilities.

It echoes the theory put forward by Piaget (1952), who argues that children learn through interaction with their surroundings. In the absence of conventional learning tools, the physical surroundings became a means of learning for the children. Likewise, Vygotsky (1978) points out that children's learning is mediated by social and cultural means.

Sobel (2004) highlights the issue regarding place-based learning, in which children's immediate environment can serve as the context for learning. As emphasized by Merleau-Ponty (1962) from a phenomenological perspective, there is also the issue of embodied learning of the relationship between people and the environment. In the flood-ravaged environment of the ECED facilitators, children's learning could not come just from books, tables, or other teaching aids they had.

Nonetheless, their creativity should not be romanticized to imagine that scarcity is desirable. Their ability to innovate demonstrates professional ingenuity, yet it also reveals the unequal situation in which the ECED facilitators were expected to continue teaching. The use of things such as leaves, stones, sticks, or even bottle caps made the learning possible, yet this cannot compensate for proper learning materials and disaster preparedness. The significance of these stories lies precisely in this tension: the facilitators created possibilities within scarcity, while the scarcity itself exposed gaps in preparedness and support.

Their narratives therefore show that coping was not simply about "making do." It involved reimagining what could count as a learning resource when familiar resources were gone.

Connecting, Collaborating, and Carrying On

The ECED facilitators' stories also show that coping did not occur in isolation. As classrooms became crowded, temporary, or shared, relationships became increasingly important in keeping children engaged. There were times when children of different ages or grades had to share a small space, and the older children had to help the younger ones with their work. Songs, stories, experiences and facts from the area were also used to help people learn. These events show how important relationships were to keep things going where there was no formal system.

The involvement of older children helping out younger children can be explained using the concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development' by Vygotsky (1978). In the flood-affected settings, peer relationships therefore became part of how learning continued within constrained spaces.

The facilitators also drew on knowledge that was already familiar to children and their communities. The use of local songs, stories, experiences, and environmental knowledge was not just an alternative to curriculum texts but rather an attempt at a meaningful connection between the children and their own socio-cultural context. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of socially and culturally mediated learning and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) stress on the significance of the local socio-cultural world in education.

The stories also went beyond the walls of the classroom. The parents took part in clearing mud-filled classrooms, and the headteachers coordinated efforts in meeting the immediate needs of the communities and other local actors. From such experience, it is clear that the environment in which the child learns is not limited to just the classroom. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development, a child's experiences depend not only on the classroom but also on the relationships among the family, school, and community.

Thus, for the ECED program's facilitators, collaboration was not just an abstract institutional concept. Collaboration was evident in concrete actions, such as children collaborating with one another, parents collaborating with the facilitators to clean up the learning environment, coordination among school administrators to arrange resources, and facilitators leveraging community knowledge. Such collaborative relationships helped sustain the learning process when usual school structures had been dismantled.

The facilitators' experiences also reflect the notion of praxis put forward by Freire (1970). Specifically, the relationship between reflection and action is highly

relevant here because the facilitators were not using a pre-designed instructional guidebook to teach the children in a damaged school building, makeshift structures, or under uncertain circumstances. Instead they had to understand the situation, meet the needs of the children and change the way they did things to fit. So knowledge is made by working in the real world.

The 2024 INEE guidelines on Education in Emergencies also state that continuing education in crises is more than just reopening schools. It covers safety, relationships, routines, play and the ability to adapt to new situations. Their stories suggest that there was continuity, not only physically, but in their relationships..

Thus, connecting and collaborating became ways of carrying learning forward. The ECED facilitators' coping was not an isolated individual effort. It ran through children, peers, families, school administrators, community members, local knowledge, and the local environment.

Together, these narratives reflect the dynamic nature of coping rather than a rigid strategy. Care in the Midst of Crisis reflects the way in which ECED facilitators have coped with children's fear and uncertainty. When Scarcity Sparked Creativity reflects how they have redefined the possibilities for learning through the materials and spaces at hand. Connecting, Collaborating and Carrying On reflects the way in which connections between children, families, schools, and communities have sustained learning amidst disruptions.

Read together, these stories reveal the emerging five Cs of coping—Coping, Caring, Connecting, Collaborating, and Comeback. At this stage, however, the emphasis remains on coping: how ECED facilitators held children, adapted practice, and sustained relationships within disrupted circumstances. The fuller question of how these experiences transformed their professional identity, agency, and capacity to move forward belongs to the subsequent discussion of resilience.

Resilient Narratives in the Process of Learning after a Flood

The narratives from the three flood-affected schools invite a reconsideration of what it means to "recover" education after a disaster. Recovery is often imagined through visible signs: classrooms are repaired, materials are replaced, and regular schedules resume. Yet the experiences of the ECED facilitators suggest that something much less visible must also be restored—the sense of safety, continuity, relationship, and belonging that enables young children to return to learning. Their narratives, therefore, position resilience not as a return to the condition that existed

before the flood, but as an ongoing process of remaining present and making meaning within changed circumstances. This resonates with Ungar's (2008) and Masten's (2014) understanding of resilience as dynamic, relational, and contextually embedded rather than as a fixed individual trait.

Holding Hope in the Midst of Uncertainty

The ECED facilitators' narratives reveal that resilience began not when uncertainty disappeared, but while uncertainty was still present. Even when heavy rain returned, and children became frightened, the facilitators continued to sing, tell stories, hold children close, and reassure them, saying, "It's okay, I'm here." Such moments may appear small in the face of the scale of flood destruction, yet they were pedagogically significant. The facilitator's presence became a form of continuity when the physical environment could no longer provide it.

Here, resilience can be understood through Noddings' (2005) ethics of care, in which ethical action emerges from attentiveness and responsiveness to another's needs. The facilitator was not simply delivering a lesson; she was reading the child's emotional state and responding with presence. The song, the story, the reassuring voice, and even the simple act of staying nearby became ways to restore a sense of relational safety. In this sense, care was not separate from pedagogy; care was the condition through which pedagogy could continue.

This interpretation also resonates with trauma-informed perspectives. Perry (2006) emphasizes the importance of safety and regulation in children's responses to adversity, while van der Kolk (2014) highlights how traumatic experiences can disrupt a person's sense of safety and connection. The facilitators' narratives do not establish a clinical account of trauma, nor do they allow me to claim that their practices "treated" children's distress. What they do reveal is that the facilitators perceived fear and uncertainty among children and responded by creating familiar, predictable, and relationally supportive moments.

Interestingly, their own emotional experiences were also present beneath these practices. The facilitators were not untouched by the disaster; they, too, had experienced fear, loss, and uncertainty. However, from the stories they tell, one can gather that they sometimes served as intermediaries in expressing such feelings in front of the children. It is in this respect that I see a form of emotional protection—a withholding of distress to enable the facilitator to maintain a calm demeanor.

Indeed, such a practice poses a challenge to any simplistic interpretation of authenticity and vulnerability in the educational relationship. In times of crisis, exposing oneself emotionally may not be seen as a loving act. The facilitators appeared to make situated judgments about what children could carry and what they needed from the adult beside them. Their stability, therefore, was not necessarily evidence that they were emotionally unaffected; rather, it may have been evidence of the emotional work required to remain available to children while carrying their own uncertainty.

Seen through the Eastern philosophical lens of Upekkhā, this can be interpreted as an attempt to remain steady amid circumstances beyond control. Similarly, Anicca foregrounds the impermanent, ever-changing nature of experience. I do not suggest that the facilitators consciously practiced these philosophical principles. Rather, these concepts provide an interpretive language through which their narratives can be understood: the flood changed the conditions of learning, yet the facilitators continued to create moments of steadiness within that change.

So hope wasn't always believing things would get back to the way they were in these stories. The hope came from the simple promise that people could keep learning, keep making connections, even when they didn’t know for sure what would happen.

Beyond Bouncing Back: Reclaiming Professional Persistence

We can learn more about this by looking at the story of the ECED teacher who built her classroom over 12 years. The flood was not just damage to a building for her, but damage to a place where years of relationships, experiences and growth had been built up. Her decision to remain and rebuild, therefore, cannot be adequately described as simply “bouncing back.”

The metaphor of bouncing back assumes that resilience involves returning to an earlier state. The facilitator’s experience suggests something different. She returned to a school that had changed, carrying her own experience of loss into a learning environment that also had to be reconstructed. Her statement that she could not simply leave the school because she had “grown here” reveals how professional identity had become intertwined with place, relationships, and responsibility.
This is consistent with Sobel’s (2004) conception of place as important for learning, as well as with Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) phenomenological focus on embodied experience and being situated in the world.

The classroom was not simply a container for educational activities. It had become a lived place. Its meaning came from the relationships and experiences that had unfolded there. When the flood disrupted that place, it also disrupted part of the continuity through which the facilitator understood her work.

Masten's (2014) conceptualization of resilience as a process of adaptation becomes particularly relevant here. The facilitator did not demonstrate resilience because she returned to exactly what existed before. Rather, she adapted her professional purpose to a changed reality. In a similar vein, Ungar (2008) points out that resilience results from interactions among people and the resources and relationships available to them in their environment. In addition, Theron and Ungar (2021) stress the role of contextually and relationally based processes in finding ways to sustain oneself and create meaning following adversity.

This meaning-making could be seen in the most ordinary pedagogical acts. Sitting on the floor, talking with the kids, maintaining one's routine, singing, and interacting were ways to re-create the classroom as a meaningful space. Even though these acts might seem trivial compared with the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, they clearly show how professional purpose can be recreated through practice.

The facilitator's continued presence, therefore, represented more than professional duty. It reflected a relationship with the children, the school, and the community. Yet this is precisely where the discussion must remain critical. Her commitment is meaningful, but it should not be taken as evidence that ECED facilitators can or should simply absorb disaster and continue regardless of their own circumstances. Resilience is not the same as returning to normal; sometimes it is the difficult work of creating a new sense of normality within conditions that remain unsettled.

Resilience Through Relationships and Collective Care

The narratives further challenge an individualistic understanding of resilience. The facilitators did not rebuild learning alone. Children sought comfort; colleagues cleaned mud and debris; parents participated; school leaders coordinated; and community members contributed to restoring spaces. Even the facilitator who brought her baby to school described how the presence of the children, colleagues, and administrator helped her continue.

Her experience is particularly revealing because it brings together vulnerability, care, professional responsibility, and collective support in a single story. She herself had been frightened by the damage to her home, yet she returned with her nine-month-old baby. Rather than presenting this simply as extraordinary personal strength, the narrative can be read relationally: the children's response to the baby brought moments of happiness; colleagues supported her; and the classroom gradually became functional through collective work.

This resonates with Walsh's (2016) understanding of resilience as relational and emphasis on social support in the aftermath of disaster. What initially appears as individual resilience becomes more comprehensible when viewed as something held within relationships. The ECED facilitator could continue not because she was independent of others, but because she was connected to others.

Noddings' (2005) ethics of care further helps illuminate why these relationships mattered. Care in these narratives was enacted through attentiveness and responsiveness: noticing a frightened child, helping a colleague, cleaning a learning space, sharing available resources, or simply remaining present. Such actions demonstrate that recovery was not only an institutional process but also a social and relational one.

This also gives deeper meaning to the earlier 5Cs of Coping, Caring, Connecting, Collaborating, and Comeback. The "comeback" evident in these narratives was not an individual return to normality. It was made possible through caring relationships, connection, collaboration, and repeated acts of coping. In this sense, the five dimensions are interdependent rather than sequential.

The same idea can be interpreted through Prithvi, Jal, Vayu, Akasha, and Agni as an interpretive synthesis. Prithvi evokes the grounding and stabilizing work necessary after disruption; Jal evokes nurturing and care; Vayu and Akasha suggest movement, connection, communication, and relational space; and Agni represents renewal. These are not presented as established resilience theory, but as a philosophical synthesis through which the interconnected nature of the facilitators' experiences can be interpreted. Resilience, then, was not located inside the ECED facilitator. It moved between people.

When Resilience Reveals What Systems Lack

Yet, the more closely I listened to these narratives, the more difficult it became to celebrate resilience without questioning the conditions that demanded so much of it.

The ECED facilitator who carried her baby to school was caring for children while also caring for her own infant. They cleaned damaged classrooms, searched for materials, managed frightened children, reconstructed routines, and continued teaching while their own lives remained unsettled. These actions demonstrate agency, but they also raise a more uncomfortable question: When does resilience become a responsibility unfairly transferred from the system to the individual?

This question is particularly important in relation to emotional labor. Hargreaves' work on the emotional dimensions of teaching draws attention to the ways educators' professional practice is inseparable from relationships, values, and emotional demands. In these flood-affected settings, such labor became intensified. The ECED facilitator was expected not only to teach but also to reassure, regulate, comfort, organize, rebuild, and remain emotionally available.

The idea of the school becoming "home" and the ECED facilitator becoming "mother" therefore requires careful interpretation. On one level, the metaphor expresses profound belonging and care. On the other hand, particularly in the story of the facilitator who brought her baby to school, it raises questions about how care work can become feminized and absorbed into women's professional responsibilities. The issue is not whether her action was caring—it clearly was. The deeper question is why adequate institutional arrangements were not available to reduce the burden of holding both responsibilities simultaneously.

This is where resilience becomes politically and ethically significant. If facilitators are repeatedly praised for their ability to "cope," "adapt," and "bounce back," there is a danger that resilience becomes a way of normalizing inadequate preparedness. The very qualities celebrated as professional strength may conceal the absence of psychosocial support, disaster preparedness, relief mechanisms, and adequate learning resources.

The narratives, therefore, require us to hold two interpretations together. The facilitators were resilient, and the system asked too much of them. These are not contradictory statements. Indeed, the stories suggest that the facilitators sometimes became the school's emotional infrastructure when physical and institutional

infrastructure was damaged. Their presence created continuity when classrooms could not. Their emotional labor helped sustain children when formal psychosocial structures were limited.

This is precisely why resilience should not be romanticized.

A resilience discourse that celebrates only individual sacrifice risks obscuring structural responsibility. The question should therefore move from "How resilient were the ECED facilitators?" to "What conditions enabled them to continue, and what support should have been available so that they did not have to carry the burden alone?"

From this perspective, the narratives speak not only to resilience theory but also to praxis. Freire (1970) understood praxis as the movement between reflection and action. The facilitators did not wait for ideal conditions before acting. They interpreted their changing circumstances and responded with whatever possibilities remained. However, praxis is also reflective about the conditions. Thus, their actions reveal agency and the necessity to think critically about the structures within which such agency was exercised.

The philosophical idea of Upāya, or skillful action, offers another interpretive layer. The facilitators repeatedly adapted their responses to the situation. But skillful adaptation should not become an excuse for permanent scarcity. Creativity can make learning possible in difficult circumstances; it cannot replace the responsibility to provide safe, adequately resourced, and disaster-responsive early learning environments.

Ultimately, the resilience narratives reveal a paradox. What looked like the strength of individuals also revealed the weakness of systems. Their stories demonstrate that human relationships can sustain learning in extraordinary circumstances, but they also show that care should not have to become the primary resource available when institutional resources are absent.

Thus, resilience after the flood was neither simply "bouncing back" nor merely surviving adversity. It was a relational and ethical process of holding hope, reclaiming purpose, sustaining relationships, and creating continuity within uncertainty. The ECED facilitators demonstrated professional agency in their everyday actions, yet their narratives simultaneously call for greater institutional responsibility.

The deepest lesson emerging from these stories is therefore not that ECED facilitators can endure almost anything. It is that young children's learning can continue because people create relationships, meaning, and safety even when ordinary structures are disrupted—and that such human capacity must be supported, not exploited.

That, for me, is where resilience becomes more than a story of strength. It becomes a question of care, responsibility, dignity, and justice in rebuilding early learning after disaster.

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The last chapter has provided an overview of the study's findings in relation to the research questions and the theoretical perspectives considered alongside the empirical studies. On this basis, this chapter presents the study's conclusion by summarizing the key findings and their significance for early childhood education in disaster-affected areas. This chapter will highlight the contributions of the study of theoretical, methodological, policy, practice, teacher education, and disaster preparedness, and provide the way forward for future research in this area. The chapter will also discuss the limitations of the current study and provide some directions for future research on the topic. The conclusion of the chapter will include some personal reflections of the researcher on her experience of narrative inquiry.

Unfolding the Researcher Within

This study is not only about how floods affected early childhood education, but also about the intimate process of becoming a researcher, a gradual process, much like stepping into a river without measuring its depth. I entered the field as a novice, careful, hesitant, and often uncertain, holding tightly to structured interview guides and believing that order would bring clarity to emotionally layered and contextually complex lives.

But the field did not respond to structure in the way I expected. Instead, it asked for presence. It asked me to slow down. With time, however, I have learned that some meanings can be found in a silence held gently, rather than through aggressive questioning. Before, I used to ask questions, but now I have learned to listen, which made me learn how to be with stories, rather than tell them. To get along did not come immediately; it slowly formed like silt, with the help of trust, pauses, and reverence for the hard-to-understand emotional territories. At times, the stories I listened to were more profound than my questions could carry, and I felt unprepared to cope with them. And yet it was in those muddy spots where meaning started to emerge. I learnt that probing is not necessarily about getting answers but opening up a room for reflection.

Ruptural Pedagogy: Reflections on Conclusion for Flood, Care and Resilience

This research aimed to investigate the impact of flooding, one of the environmental hazards that recur in Godawari Municipality of Lalitpur district, on ECD learning experiences beyond the moment of destruction itself. What emerged from the narratives of teachers and head teachers is a layered understanding of disaster as not only an infrastructural breakdown but as a profound disruption of children's emotional worlds, relational stability, and meaning-making processes.

At the most visible level, floods were experienced as material devastation. Classrooms were damaged, learning spaces became unusable, and essential pedagogical materials such as cushions, carpets, and play-based resources were lost or rendered unusable. The effects described above effectively prevented systematic learning and made it much more difficult to use the play-based teaching methodology, which is an essential component of early childhood education. The above results in turn suggest that the idea of "learning disruption" cannot be fully understood by simply looking at it in terms of changes to normal classroom activities. Rather, disruptions to learning ought to be viewed as threats to the child's safety, consistency and sense of connection in the learning space.

These concepts demonstrate that the process of learning is not only about information transmission but also about physical and emotional aspects. When classrooms are destabilized, what is unsettled is not only curriculum delivery but the relational architecture that supports early learning trust between teacher and child, familiarity with space, and emotional security. The flood, therefore, emerges not simply as an environmental event but as a pedagogical interruption of being-in-the-world for young children.

Yet, the study also reveals that disruption does not produce only absence; it generates transformation. During the first few days following the floods, teachers and schools displayed extraordinary flexibility in adapting to the situation. Some transferred their students to other classrooms in leased buildings, whereas others joined efforts to create temporary learning spaces. The responses given were not just pragmatic but also constituted a reorganization of teaching. In collaboration with communities, social groups, and municipal governments, teachers created an opportunity for learning under difficult circumstances.

This study finds that flooding has effects on early childhood learning beyond cancelled classes, damaged classrooms and lost school supplies. Facilitators in flood-

affected community schools in Lalitpur say the floods have disrupted the ecology of early learning experiences. This covers environment, routines, relationships, emotional safety, play and the way children interact with their environment. Thus, in relation to the first research question, the study argues that learning disruption after flooding is not merely an infrastructural problem; it is a disruption of the physical, emotional, social, and pedagogical conditions through which young children experience learning. The facilitators' narratives suggest that continuity of early learning, therefore, requires more than reopening classrooms. It requires the restoration and reconfiguration of safe, familiar, relational, and responsive learning environments.

Regarding the second research question, the study further argues that coping was not merely a matter of applying predetermined strategies. It emerged as a situated pedagogical agency. As traditional teaching tools and familiar teaching spaces became unavailable, the ECED facilitators used whatever was available to them, such as leaves, stones, sticks, music, dance, movement, and the children’s immediate surroundings. Thus, the idea of scarcity became a space where teaching could be reimagined.

The concept of praxis sheds light on how this move is negotiated through reflection and action, as facilitators continually interpret the changing context and act (Freire, 1970). The facilitators' practice is also congruent with Sobel's (2004) place-based perspective on learning and the philosophy of embodiment highlighted by Merleau-Ponty (1962). This also helped dissolve the boundary between school knowledge and life knowledge by grounding learning in the child's lived context. It must be noted here that the finding must not be interpreted as an embrace of the condition of scarcity.

Regarding the third research question, the study's findings challenge the notion of resilience as a personal quality that enables one to “bounce back” from adversity. Rather, resilience is understood as a relational, social process. While feeling scared, losing things, and uncertain themselves, ECED facilitators still cared for the children, maintained their routines, reconstructed their learning environment, maintained relationships, and stayed present. This view aligns with the idea proposed by Ungar (2008) from a social-ecological perspective and by Masten (2014), who conceptualize resilience as a process rather than a personal quality. In this case, the resilience of

ECED facilitators was sustained by their relationships with others – children, colleagues, parents, school administrators, and community members.

This idea was central to the relational resilience that arose during this experience. Noddings's (1984) ethics of care approach is useful for explaining the extent to which the facilitators' responses during the disaster were rooted in sensitivity to the children's affective needs. Calming fearful children, maintaining familiar songs and routines, offering consolation, and creating an atmosphere of security became part of the educational recovery process. However, in many cases, the narratives show that the caring response did not necessarily require emotional engagement. In some cases, even when the facilitators felt scared and uncertain, they intentionally kept their emotions in check.

I see this as an example of emotional shielding, a form of care in which emotional constraint serves to protect vulnerable children. Rather than making authenticity irrelevant, this finding suggests that in disaster-affected early childhood settings, ethical care may sometimes be expressed through deliberate calmness and emotional containment.

The narratives also raise a critical question about the meaning of resilience itself. Although the commitment of ECED facilitators reflects professional agency, care, and moral responsibility, it also reveals how employees can compensate for a lack of support from their organization and shoulder a tremendous burden of emotional and practical labor. Hargreaves' (1998) discussion of emotional labor is useful here, particularly because the facilitators were negotiating their own experiences of disaster while continuing to hold emotional space for children. The experience of an ECED facilitator who returned to school while carrying her nine-month-old baby illustrates both profound relational commitment and the need to question the support systems available to educators who are themselves affected by disaster.

Thus, resilience should not be romanticized as an unlimited capacity to endure. The narratives show that individual and collective resilience can coexist with institutional vulnerability. The very strength demonstrated by ECED facilitators can therefore make visible what educational systems still fail to provide in terms of preparedness, psychosocial support, resources, and care for educators themselves.

Taken together, the three research questions lead to a broader understanding of post-flood early childhood education. The study suggests that educational continuity

is created through the interconnected processes of coping, caring, connecting, collaborating, and gradually creating a comeback. The process is neither a step nor a predetermined plan, but rather actions taken by the leaders of ECED and their communities in response to continuously changing circumstances. In such a sense, "comeback" does not imply a return to the pre-flood situation but creation of new learning possibilities in new realities.

From a research perspective, the research has significantly influenced my thinking. I came into this research area with a deep-seated assumption that organization, consistency, planning, and institutionalism of learning tools, classes, and lessons were necessary conditions for good education. Through listening to the narratives of ECED facilitators, what I initially interpreted as “lack” gradually became visible as pedagogical agency, creativity, and contextual intelligence. My reflexive journals and memos helped me recognize this shift from viewing education as something delivered into a space toward understanding learning as something co-created with place, relationships, people, and circumstances. The research process, therefore, changed not only what I understood about flood-affected education but also how I understood knowledge itself—as something that unfolds through attention, listening, reflection, and engagement with lived experience.

Ultimately, this study argues that flooding should not be understood only as a natural event that interrupts schooling. For young children, it can unsettle the entire ecology through which learning, belonging, safety, and relationships are experienced. Yet the narratives also demonstrate that educational continuity can be re-created through care, local knowledge, pedagogical improvisation, collective action, and relational commitment.

The central contribution of this study is therefore not simply that ECED facilitators are resilient. It is that resilience, learning continuity, and pedagogical agency are relationally produced within particular places and circumstances, while the need for such resilience simultaneously reveals the responsibilities of institutions and systems. The stories of these ECED facilitators do not merely ask us to admire how much educators can endure; they ask us to create educational systems in which they do not have to carry the burden of continuity alone.

Implications

The significance of this research lies in its far-reaching implications for many stakeholders in early childhood education and disaster risk reduction. For instance, it

shows that policymakers need to look at disaster preparedness and educational recovery through the prism of restoration of not only physical infrastructure but also the socio-ecology and psychology of children. Thus, policies on education should support a trauma-sensitive and child-centered approach where the well-being of children and their safety, playfulness, relationships, and belonging are seen as part of educational continuity. Policies around the curriculum should also be more flexible after disasters and allow short-term changes to learning outcomes and academic standards.

The findings of the research are no less important for curriculum developers and educational planners. TLCs should be created as developmentally appropriate learning environments, not merely temporary shelters. They should give children an opportunity to play, move, communicate, and recover psychologically while learning meaningfully. Moreover, place-based and environmentally responsive approaches to education should be used to plan for educational continuity and to enable schools to use the local environment and community for learning during emergencies.

This study provides useful recommendations to ECED facilitators, teachers, and school leaders. The analysis of the story makes it clear that for healing education to be successful, teachers need to be able to create a safe space where kids can feel mentally safe, use new ways of teaching, get resources in the area, and work with families and the community. It is important to note, however, that teachers need to take care of their own psychological well-being and get enough support as they experience trauma, as well as support young children in their recovery process.

Finally, the findings of this study can serve the interests of local governments, municipalities, disaster management authorities, and international development partners by highlighting the need to include the educational and psychosocial components in their disaster preparedness efforts, beyond rebuilding the necessary infrastructure. Training teachers, providing psychosocial support, creating child friendly learning environment and involving the community are essential measures in building up the educational resilience of disaster-prone communities. Finally, the study's findings have implications for parents and communities on the need for partnerships in sustaining children's education after disasters.

Additionally, the study provides further insights for experts and academia regarding the existing knowledge base on educating young children in disasters. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of resilience by showing that the notion

can be understood not as a personality characteristic but as a relational, contextual, and environmental process. The study provides a novel framework for understanding post-disaster recovery in early childhood institutions through incorporating narrative inquiry with concepts such as place, practice, resilience, and the Eastern spirituality of Anicca, Karuṇā, and Upāya.

This study provides researchers with many thoughts for future studies. More research needs to be done on how teachers look after their own mental health and how they help children's mental health bounce back during and after disasters. Such research would allow us to understand the emotional side of teaching young children. Research focusing on parents, caretakers, school administrators and community members can provide more information about how these groups work together to keep schools running during crises. Finally, further investigation could examine how early childhood education curricula should be developed to become more resilient in the event of disasters, with regard to the local context, indigenous knowledge systems, and caring practices.

Limitations

My study only covers the limited areas of experience and perception of ECED facilitators regarding floods and their effects on their day-to-day educational activities. The study also examined the coping mechanisms and adaptive practices adopted by ECED facilitators under difficult circumstances, particularly when school buildings, learning materials, and familiar learning spaces were damaged or lost.

Furthermore, it highlighted how facilitators drew upon their creativity, professional commitment, relationships, and available local resources to sustain learning for young children despite the challenging conditions. However, the scope of the study was limited to the experiences and narratives of ECED facilitators and head teachers, and therefore, it could not fully capture the diverse experiences of parents and stakeholders involved in children's learning during and after a flood.

The study was conducted in only three schools of Godawari Municipality, district Lalitpur. As such, the findings cannot be generalized to all schools affected by floods as experiences may vary across geographical and social contexts. Nevertheless, the findings do provide context-specific insights that may be useful in similar settings.

This research could be taken forward in future studies with more schools, multiple stakeholders, and different geographical locations to develop a better understanding of educational continuity and resilience in early childhood education in

times of and after disasters. More comprehensive insights into the interconnected ways floods affect children, families, schools and communities can be obtained through interdisciplinary research that brings together early childhood education, disaster management, psychology, public health and environmental studies. Longitudinal studies would also help to examine changes over time in children's learning experiences, mental health, and educational participation, and the development of preparedness and adaptive practices by ECED facilitators and schools following repeated flood experiences.

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Epilogue: Holding Hope at the River's Edge

Often investigations begin with a question that won't go away. The stories I've heard about flood and the way it altered the lives of young children and the teachers who were with them in the chaos captured my interest in this topic. Initially, I was interested in the obvious effects of the disaster: classrooms that were flooded, learning materials that were damaged, learning spaces that had to be relocated, and school routines that had to be interrupted. But listening to stories from ECED facilitators and head teachers in Godavari Municipality, Lalitpur about schools that had been flooded, I began to realize that floods have impact far beyond damage to buildings. They are integrated into the children's daily lives, disrupting places where they are used to being and their sense of safety, and altering the relationships and experiences that support their learning right away. This investigation became more than just a look at how disruptions in education can happen through the stories of the six people who participated. At the center of the conversation were ECED facilitators who continued to care, teach and find meaning in situations for which they were not always prepared. Their stories proved that it wasn't only the loss of school supplies when classrooms were destroyed and common learning materials pulled out. There were problems with children not being able to play, interact, discover, express themselves and follow the usual routines of early childhood education. Fear, doubt, skipping school, going places you didn't know before became regular parts of school. These stories were a reminder of how a child's relationships, feelings, environment and daily events influence the way they learn.

With the investigation unfolding, I began to question my assumptions about what makes learning possible. I used to think meaningful early childhood education was about having the right tools, a classroom setting, planned activities, and a stable place to learn. These still matter but the lived experience of the people made me want to look beyond these common notions. I saw how stones and leaves and sticks and songs and stories and movement and kids' imaginations became tools to keep them interested through their stories. The spaces that didn't feel right, initially, became spaces where teachers could be creative and use their professional judgment." In contrast, scarcity should not be romanticized. The creativity of teachers was a sign of their commitment, but also a sign of how ill-prepared the schools were and how

teachers were expected to cope with situations differently. Their imagination was a sign they were in control, not proof they could handle anything without help.The stories helped me learn more about what it means to be resilient too. I stopped thinking resilience was a personal quality or the ability to bounce back. It was, I realized, something relational, situational, and always being negotiated. The participants' stories underscore the interconnected nature of coping, caring, connecting, working together and finding a way forward. These five Cs were not steps or a method to improve. They came from ordinary things like listening to children, changing activities, sharing limited resources, helping each other and somehow getting back to old routines. It could be seen in the relationships that allowed teachers to keep working and in the group efforts that made it possible for learning to happen again over time. From this perspective, resilience was not just a matter of bouncing back after a flood, but of the ways of moving forward, aware of loss, of uncertainty, of the continuing need for care.

This question has also changed me as a researcher. I learned that listening is more than a way of knowing; it is an obligation to listen to how people make sense of their experiences through narrative inquiry. I had to slow down, notice silences and emotions, rethink what I thought I heard, and think about how my assumptions shaped what I noticed and how I understood what they said. One important aspect of the research process was being able to move between their experiences and my interpretations. I learned there is more to a story than theme. They have meanings that depend on who is involved, where events take place and how much time has elapsed between what has happened, what is happening now and what may happen in the future. Most importantly, this trip changed the way I think about schooling in general. At first, I thought about what was lost to children and schools in the flood. Finally, I want to recognize the importance of educators continuing to create things through care, creativity, relationships and teamwork. This is not to minimize the importance of the material losses or the need for stronger support services. Instead, it illustrates the types of educational knowledge that are often lost when we assess recovery merely by such things as rebuilt buildings, new materials, or school activities resuming. By their stories, the participants show that continuity in early childhood education also means reestablishing confidence, a feeling of safety and social bonds, and letting the kids learn at their own pace.

Even as this inquiry draws to a close, I am aware that it does not answer all the questions the flood raised. Instead, it makes me feel that I need to think again about how early childhood education can better reflect the real lives of children and better prepare them for the unknowns of a changing world. In particular, there is a need for further research that integrates ideas from early childhood education, disaster studies, psychology, environmental studies, and community knowledge to develop approaches that respond to children's emotional, social, physical, and educational needs in and after disasters.

Ultimately, Tales from the River's Edge is about change, but it's also about care, choice and banding together as a group. It showed me that learning is not only done in a classroom or with school supplies, but it is also done through relationships, imagination, meaningful participation and a sense of belonging. The river can alter the landscape, break routines, and leave uncertainty in its aftermath, but the stories of those who still care for children reveal that learning can be found even in places we don't know. I am not sure that resilience alone can solve all problems, leaving this inquiry. Instead, I am more convinced that resilience needs to be combined with care, shared responsibility and institutional commitment. Learning doesn't simply go back to what it was by the riverside. The new version of the story is formed by the stories of those who still give young children hope, meaning and opportunity.