

Title: Mental health concerns and disorders on Azad Kashmiris on the rise; is economic diversity the cause?

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Research Title:

“Mental health concerns on Azad Kashmiris on the rise; is economic diversity the cause?”

Introduction

Mental health disorders are listed among the highest-burden in disease affecting a larger proportion of the population globally. According to Gopalkrishnan (2018), mental health disorders usually result in decreased productivity and have a severely negative impact on the efficiency and productivity of the workforce, eventually impacting on the overall performance of the state or nation. As far as the impact of economic recession in terms of a country's setting is concerned, the condition of vulnerable countries has been found to be substantially worse, and where the rate of unemployment is precariously high on global platforms, is much less with a deteriorating labour market. On the other hand, Diana et al. (2015) identified via literary analysis that economic diversity is the force increasing unemployment and economic recession across the country or state. As the relationship between unemployment and economic diversity have some deeper roots, Watson & Deller (2017) believe the economic diversity of the neighboring country is found to impact on the rate of unemployment. Similarly, in the case of Azad Kashmir, the economic recession of Pakistan and India due to Brexit has affected the economic sustainability in Azad Kashmir.

Aims and Objectives

This study investigates the major force behind the increase in mental health concerns and disorders in Azad Kashmir. However, as per the literary evidence, it is perceived that the economic recession is the factor influencing economic diversity, eventually affecting the mental health and wellbeing of the population living in Azad Kashmir. In addition, Brexit is supposed to

be an agent behind the economic recession; however, this research will explore and ensure the role of Brexit in economic recession and the influence of economic diversity over the mental health of the residents of Azad Kashmir.

Research Question

As the literary evidence has revealed that the mental health concerns and disorders are relatively higher in the population of Azad Kashmir, it is time to identify the potential behind it. However, some reliable resources claim that the economic recession is the cause behind the increased prevalence of mental disorders. This research will explore multiple resources to ensure whether the economic recession is the cause of rise in mental health concerns or not. The study question of this research is as follows:

“Is economic recession the cause for a rise in mental health concerns and disorders on Azad Kashmiris?”

Review of Literature

According to the statistical investigation conducted by Dar (2020), it is significantly evident that the residents of Azad Kashmir perceive a greater level of psychological disorders. As per the article published by Chawla & Sodhi (2011), in “The New York Times”, several causative forces, including the prolonged period of war and violence, lockdowns and economic recessions, were highlighted. The factor that Housen et al. (2017) discussed are found to be the major cause of the ongoing surge in mental health crisis across the population of Azad Kashmir.

While discussing the ongoing surge in mental health concerns in Azad Kashmir, the survey conducted by Diana et al. (2015) revealed that even before the outbreak of the global crisis

“Covid-19 Pandemic,” fifty per cent of the women, and thirty-seven per cent of men reported having clear symptoms of anxiety disorder. On the other hand, whilst exploring typical factors impacting on the mental health of individuals, Kohnert (2021) stated that the economic recession is the major cause identified as the force influencing mental health instability. However, Watson & Deller (2017) emphasised that the economic recession is more impacting on the vulnerable population. Diana et al. (2015) considered populations in countries who have been “hardest hit” by Covid Pandemic for a longer period or recently are the most vulnerable segment.

In terms of economic recession, the vulnerable countries are found to be under the most adverse impact. As Deller & Watson (2018) stated, the rate of unemployment is reported to be severely higher during the recession period of countries, eventually affecting their performance on a global scale. As the economic recession is supposed to be intertwined with the deteriorating labour market and disrupted employment and economic plans, Prescott et al. (2016), via literary analysis, surfaced that the economic diversity and increased unemployment are heavily interlinked and have a direct impact on the economy of the state. In other words, the most vulnerable population suffers the most. In the case of Azad Kashmir, the economic recession is always linked with the increased rate of suicide, while the cases of psychological traumas and mental health deterioration remain unnoticed.

Following the literary pieces of evidence, it is suggested that there is a diverse need for the effective implementation of “mental health awareness programmes” where the provision of adequate and timely intervention is also necessary to reduce the risk of suicides and increased prevalence of mental distress and mental disorders (Repper & Stickley, 2021). As evident, the residents of Azad Kashmir are severely vulnerable in terms of economy, health and mental care

services; the region is required to introduce some of the potential interventional plans for the welfare of mankind.

In addition, MacLeod & Brownlie (2014) recommended that implementing cost-effective preventive measures might minimise the reoccurrence of mental concerns and disorders among the vulnerable and disadvantaged populations during the recession period. As James & Prilleltensky (2012) believe, incorporating effective measures for unemployed people via social assistance, media, and human welfare organisation support can effectively reduce the rate of mortality and mental disorders. Hussain et al. (2021) stresses the need to introduce quality primary and mental health care services so disadvantage population needs can be dealt with appropriately, typically during the recession period.

The literary evidence so far has revealed that the smart use of social and fiscal policies is an effective approach to deal with the recession. As evident, Repper & Stickley (2021) state that proactive use of effective policies may be very helpful for the facilitation of the labour market, domestic support, community, health and mental care needs, and debt relief programs. As Deller & Watson (2018) believe, cutting the budget for mental health services during the recession is not an effective measure; instead, the governmental bodies must ensure the effective implementation of a care plan and interventional financial policies to ease the burden for disadvantage population.

As the mental health consequence, after the recession phase is severely dependent on the context-dependence, James & Prilleltensky (2012) suggests that the regulating bodies must monitor the justifiable implementation of facilitation as well as the provision of appropriate support so that the rate of mental health concerns and mortality can be reduced.

Research Methodology

In accordance with the settled aims and objectives of this research, i.e., exploring the relationship between economic recession and increased mental health concerns among the population of Azad Kashmir, the most effective research paradigm is interpretive research philosophy. According to Baker (2000), the interpretive philosophy is based on the firm belief and perception of the researcher. It is more about the interest and belief of the investigator. Simultaneously, Ketchen & Bergh (2006) stated that the research approach is an elaborated systematic plan that allows the researcher to conduct the entire investigation while focusing on the study's fundamental aims. As far as the research approach of this investigation is concerned, it is perceived that the qualitative research approach would be the most appropriate. According to Goddard & Melville (2004), the qualitative research approach typically involves collecting non-numeric data sets, typically the ones based on opinions, concepts, ideologies, experiences, concepts, and existing theoretical evidence. According to the concept proposed by Ketchen & Bergh (2006), the research strategies can simply be elaborated as a comprehensive, structured plan to conduct particular research. However, the selection of an appropriate research strategy is crucial for the acquisition of appropriate research outcomes. As per the nature of this research and the requirement of the settled research objectives, it is expected that the secondary research strategy would be the most appropriate choice for the acquisition of suitable research objectives.

For the acquisition of appropriate research objectives, the selection of an appropriate data collection approach is essentially necessary. The researcher of this research project, in accordance with the research approach and research strategy and settled research philosophy, decided to explore a number of authentic databases, including “*EbscoHost, Web of Sciences, Scopus, IEEE Xplore, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ERIC, JSTOR and Google*

Scholar". Where the search strategy will include the use of effective keywords including "Mental health", "Mental distress", "Mental disorders "Azad Kashmir", "economic recession", and "economic diversity". However, screening literary evidence will be done based on precisely developed inclusion and exclusion criteria, as illustrated in table 1.

Table 1	
Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Studies conducted or published within the past ten years, i.e. 2011-2021.	Studies conducted or published before 2011.
Studies documented in Standard English Language.	Studies documented in a language other than Standard English Language.
Studies focusing on mental health and economic recession.	Studies focusing on areas other than mental health and economic recession.

Results and Discussion

As stated earlier, this research is based on the principles of qualitative secondary research, i.e., desk-based research. According to Goddard & Melville (2004), desk-based research typically includes a wide range of literary resources to explore the answers to a settled research question and meet the research objectives appropriately. For that purpose, the researcher of this study has settled some inclusion and exclusion criteria as illustrated in table 1. In accordance with the settled criteria, four of the essential resources are selected. According to the evidence and conclusions presented in the literary resources, the investigator will conduct thematic analysis to propose an effective conclusion in later sections of the study.

Data extraction table				
S no.	Author and year	Research Title	Research objective	Research Findings
1.	Diana Frasquilho, Margarida Gaspar Matos, Ferdinand Salonna, Diogo Guerreiro, Cláudia C. Storti, Tânia Gaspar & José M. Caldas-de-Almeida (2015)	“Mental health outcomes in times of economic recession: a systematic literature review”	The aim of this research is to explore the impact of economic recession on mental health.	It is revealed that the period of recession is highly associated with the increased prevalence of mental health.
2.	Tambri Housen, Annick Lenglet, Cono Ariti, Showkat Shah, Helal Shah, Shabnum Ara, Kerri Viney, Simon Janes,	“Prevalence of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in the Kashmir.”	This article aims to investigate the prevalence of mental health concerns across the residents of Kashmir and identify their possible causes.	This quantitative study identified that the prevalence of mental distress/disorder among the adult population of Kashmir is recorded as around 45 per cent, where 41 per cent

	Giovanni Pintaldi. (2017)			showed the symptoms of depression while 26 per cent reported anxiety, and 19 per cent have reported having probable PTSD.
3.	Brian Cooper (2011)	“Economic crisis and mental health”	This research aims to identify whether economic recession affects mental health or not while exploring the possible reasons.	The results surfaced that the economic recession is highly associated with the increased rate of unemployment and mental health concerns. In addition, mental health instability can also be identified by the increased rate of suicide and suicide attempts.
4.	Camilla Haw, Keith Hawton, David Gunnell, Stephen	“Economic recession and suicidal behaviour: Possible	This study explores the interaction between the economic recession and the increased rate of	This research endorsed the impact of economic recession on the increased prevalence of

	Platt (2015)	mechanisms and ameliorating factors.”	suicide and mental health concerns. In addition to that, the study will also explore the ways to reduce this adverse impact of the recession on mental health and suicidal behaviour.	suicides and mental distress/disorder.
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Thematic analysis

According to Baker (2000), a thematic analysis is an essential analytical approach suitable for qualitative data analysis. This data analysis allows the researcher to find the embedded repetitive themes within the literary resources to find the settled research questions. Following the principles of thematic analysis, the researcher identified two essential themes identified by the researcher i.e. “Theme 01: Economic recession is highly linked with mental distress and disorder” and “Theme 02: The prevalence of mental health concerns is increasing exponentially amongst Azad Kashmiri residents”.

Thematic extraction table				
Sn o.	Author and year	Research title	Key Findings	Major themes
1.	Diana	“Mental health	It is revealed that the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic recession

	Frasquilho, Margarida Gaspar Matos, Ferdinand Salonna, Diogo Guerreiro, Cláudia C. Storti, Tânia Gaspar & José M. Caldas-de-Almeida (2015)	outcomes in times of economic recession: a systematic literature review”	period of recession is highly associated with the increased prevalence of mental health.	is highly linked with mental distress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prevalence of mental health concerns is increasing exponentially among the residents of Azad Kashmir.
2.	Tambri Housen, Annick Lenglet, Cono Ariti, Showkat Shah, Helal Shah, Shabnum Ara, Kerri Viney, Simon Janes, Giovanni Pintaldi. (2017)	“Prevalence of anxiety, depression and ptsdpost-traumatic stress disorder in the Azad Kashmiri population.”	This quantitative study identified that the prevalence of mental distress among the adult population of Kashmir is recorded as around 45 per cent, where 41 per cent showed the symptoms of depression while 26 per cent reported anxiety, and 19 per cent	

			have reported having probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
3.	Brian Cooper (2011)	“Economic crisis and mental health”	The results surfaced that the economic recession is highly associated with the increased rate of unemployment and mental health concerns. In addition, mental health instability can also be identified by the increased rate of suicide and suicide attempts.
4.	Camilla Haw, Keith Hawton, David Gunnell, Stephen Platt (2015)	“Economic recession and suicidal behaviour: Possible mechanisms and ameliorating factors.”	This research endorsed the impact of economic recession on the increased prevalence of suicides and mental distress.

Theme 01: Economic recession is highly linked with mental distress.

As per the precise analysis of literary evidence, it is concluded that the phase of an economic recession is highly associated with the increased prevalence of mental distress and mental health problems. According to Dean et al. (2011), the study revealed that the recession period involves mental distress. The increased rate of suicide is also observed, along with the increased use of illicit substances and suicidal behaviour. On the other hand, MacLeod & Brownlie (2014) endorsed the relationship between recession and mental distress and stated that the recessions period is found to be heavily tangled with the higher suicidal rates and increased suicide attempts. However, the studies so far revealed that the actual cause of increased suicides, self-harm and mental distress is prolonged recession of the economy. As Watson & Deller (2017) believe, the economic recession significantly caused unemployment, job insecurity, reduced production in production units, and reduced consumer demands and export. Where the other essential factors include financial losses, house repossession and bankruptcy. Deller & Watson (2018) believe the concerns associated with the financial issues, directly and indirectly, lead towards the mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal behaviour. Countries that do not have appropriate plans for their residents' welfare are more likely to witness increased suicide rates than countries with better welfare plans.

According to Gopalkrishnan (2018), the impact of the global economic down turn on the population is reported to be expressed by the increased mental health concerns. Considering the historical basis of financial crises globally, it is identified that the stress of increased unemployment, social insecurity, and poverty have always forced the vulnerable population

towards suicides, increased psychiatric illness, substance and alcohol misuse and related disorders. Simultaneously, Cooper (2011) stated that the countries during their recession period usually cut back their budget for mental health services as part of “government austerity programs”. Cutting the budget short, affects the performance and proficiency of psychiatric service severely while the population is in increased need of mental and psychiatric care and assistance.

Theme 02: The prevalence of mental health concerns is increasing exponentially among the residents of Azad Kashmir.

In accordance with the literary pieces of evidence, it is revealed that the estimated prevalence of mental health concerns and mental distress among the adults from Azad Kashmir is found to be 45%, in which 41% were found to be adults with clear symptoms of depression, whilst 26% showed symptoms of severe anxiety and 19% had a probability of PTSD (Diana et al., 2015). Factors found to be persistent across responders included, an unsatisfactory source of income, traumatic events or experience in terms of financial crises, and their belonging from rural areas with limited access to quality facilities.

According to Kohnert (2021), the Asian economic crises severely involved an increased unemployment rate, leading to a prominent surge in the suicide mortality rate. This direct influence of economic recession over the weakening of financial management is an extreme factor causing the vulnerable population mental distress and an increased rate of suicidal mortalities.

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