

# Decolonizing Mental Health in Humanitarian Crises

## A Mixed-Methods Synthesis of Cultural Resilience and Structural Equity in India and the Global South

By Supriya Krishnan, PhD

### ABSTRACT

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Humanitarian crises in the Global South, intensified by climate change and conflict, expose deep inequities in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), rooted in colonial legacies that marginalize local epistemologies. This study advances a decolonial framework through a mixed-methods synthesis, integrating reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Drawing on studies, anonymized X posts (2023–2025), and participatory action research from Bihar’s floods and Kashmir’s conflict, we identify six themes: historical neglect, cultural misalignment, co-creation, cultural innovations, worker trauma, and decolonizing systems. SEM examines pathways such as epistemic colonialism, driving distrust and community-led innovations improving service uptake. Sensitivity analyses ensure robustness across LMIC contexts. Findings advocate for NDMA-mandated MHPSS screenings, NHM-funded storytelling, and worker support, emphasizing data sovereignty and equity. This framework reimagines MHPSS as a conduit for epistemic justice, offering scalable strategies for resilience in crisis-affected communities.

**Keywords:** decolonial MHPSS, cultural resilience, structural equity, mixed-methods, participatory action research, humanitarian crises, epistemic justice

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Due to the length of this contribution, the complete article is published separately in PDF format, along with supplementary materials in their original format.

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