



Severity of Natural Calamities

Jeetesh Joshi

Lecturer, Department of Geography, JDB Govt. College Kota (Rajasthan)

Abstract: *Nature balances itself through several natural changes. Natural calamities play a vital role in causing natural changes. The world as whole witnesses several types of natural calamities and natural disasters which not only disturbs Nature but also shakes the life and economy of the countries. Floods, earthquakes, droughts are the popular names of such disasters. The roots of all the natural disasters lie in Nature itself. However, no such disaster is without fatal results.*

The history witnesses that whenever there is any natural calamity, there is the casualty to man and animals; it shakes and disturbs the economy, and creates the worst conditions in the various camps as refugees. As a result of the natural disasters, mass killing and disappearance of the people is witnessed; the situation abolishes the traces of nativity and human presence; and the things that come across are found unbearable.

The severity of the natural calamities is not hidden from any sensible person. The geographical and geological factors of such calamities and disasters are all approved ones. The severity is noticed most through the homeless refugees who have seen their near and dear ones dying in the calamities, and who find themselves all helpless while living away from their kinsmen in the camps and at other places.

The paper is a theoretical interpretation of the severity of natural calamities and natural disasters that disturb man's mental peace and that disturb national economies across the world.

Keywords: *Severity, Natural Calamities, Disaster, Human Life, Animal Life, Economy.*

Introduction

Changes are of two types-natural changes brought about by nature to balance itself and the changes caused by man for his betterment. Natural calamities, such as, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, landslides etc. are responsible for causing natural changes. Effect of these natural calamities is seen on both nature and people who find themselves great sufferers as a result of losing their near and dear ones in such calamities, or remaining helpless homeless having an uncertain life ahead.

Laws of Nature reveal the inevitability of transformation. Among the several transformations, natural calamities which cause and bring severe effects are there. The natural calamities are the natural events and the imbalance in nature is responsible for them. Every form of balance in nature brings calamities and disasters.

As we know, change is inevitable, and that no geographical area or society without change. There are both visible and invisible changes. The invisible changes are realized and seen much later by others. Natural changes are witnessed by earth and all its interior parts, earth's surface and outer parts.

We know that behind every happening there is essentially some reason or cause, and that everything that happens essentially brings some positive or negative results. The same is true about the natural calamities and disasters. There are several factors that are responsible for the happening of natural calamities, such as, weather, soil erosion etc.

No nation on the globe is untouched by disasters. The common thing, or say, the common about the natural calamities is that they cause damage to life and property; they cause imbalance in the national economies and make survival difficult afterwards. India is not an exception to it. India too has faced and witnessed several calamities so far.

- Drought which is perhaps the manifestation of desertification is faced by Rajasthan besides other Indian states. Soil erosion, deforestation and micro-climate change are the approved causes of droughts that cause the fall in the groundwater level. In Rajasthan, drought is usually faced by the inhabitants of the western Rajasthan where there is low level of groundwater.
- Floods are caused by heavy rainfall and catchments of rivers. India is country of rivers, lakes and dams. Hence, every year, floods are reported to have occurred in most of the rivers. Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh are the flood-prone states in India.
- Earthquakes are unstable geological formation. Several parts of India including many of its states fall under earthquakes-prone-regions where every year earthquakes are reported to occur with mass killing and damage to life and property.
- The historical perspective approves of the several earth's backbone-shaking earthquakes in India. Bhuj-earthquake in Gujarat remains unforgettable incident which killed thousands of people just in a few minutes.



- Cyclone occurs as a reaction of atmospheric low pressure and whirls. It is common to areas that lie near the sea. The Orissa cyclone which was witnessed in 1999, killed more than 25000 people, left the people homeless and caused damage to the property.
- Hot waves are another calamity. UP, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan are every year found in the grip of hot waves that make life uncomfortable because of highly raised temperature. Rajasthan is a hot waves-prone state. Rajasthan faces frequent hotwaves throughout summer, and the people suffer much in hotwates and sunstrokes.
- Cold Waves are another natural calamity which often takes the states, such as, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim etc. in their grip and make life all uncomfortable there.
- Some other forms of natural calamity witnessed in India include tornado, spiral tide etc.

Objectives of the Study

- To supply a feedback of the natural calamities and disasters
- To highlight common popular natural calamities
- To explore factors responsible for the natural calamities
- To reveal post-calamity scenes
- To discuss and interpret results of natural calamities

Review of Related Literature

- **R.K.Bhandari (1999)**, in **Disaster Management in India-a New Awakening**, raises the issue of both natural disasters and chemical and terrorist attacks in the study, and demands some effective and fast solution to them in the interest of the nation and its people. It informs that variety of earthquakes, cyclones, floods, landslides and storm surges are reported in India and many of its states.
The study cites fact that about 59% area of the India is earthquake prone area; about 12% is flood-prone area; about 8% falls in the cyclone prone area; about 2% is taken in grip by landslides. Drought begins in slow motion, but gradually, it takes about 68% area into its grip.
About 27 Indian states and territories face disasters every year. The study also highlights the chemical attacks and terrorist attacks besides the natural calamities, and concludes that the whole of the nation is vulnerable, and there should be some immediate sustained effort to check them.
- **Subrat Das & Nandan Kumar Jha (2004)**, in their joint study entitled **Natural Disasters and Relief Provisions in India: Commitments and Ground Realities**, find India as a calamity-prone nation, and asserts that there occur several natural calamities. The authors remind of the earthquakes and are grieved to say that the traces and the sad memories of Latur earthquake of 1993-94, the Orissa super cyclone of 1999, the Bhuj earthquake of 2001 will never be out of mind and hearts of the sufferers who saw their kinsmen and friends dying and disappearing before their eyes and they were unable to do anything to save their life.
The study further draws the attention towards the post-disaster scenario, and concludes that the worst of the remaining sufferers are the poor who suffer from pass through trauma and spend their life in scarcity.
The surviving people even fail to get what is essential for surviving properly. Such surviving refugees finally work at lowest wages or unconditionally to gratify their hunger and to bring up their children.
- **Jeff Dayton-Johnson (2006)**, in **Natural Disaster and Vulnerability**, discusses the devastating effects of the Tsunami of 2004 which caused millions of casualties. This natural disaster shook the entire world, and the governments of the various countries, extended much monetary and material-help, medicines, and other materials that could support the refugees and others affected directly or indirectly by it.
The study presents facts about Tsunami of 2004, and thus, generalizes that like Tsunami, all disasters and calamities are fatal to the people because they make the people homeless, cause mass killing in moments and make survival of the remaining people difficult afterwards.
- **Nilamadhab Kar (2010)**, in **Indian research on disaster and mental health**, produces a short list of calamities that occurred in India in various years and that shook away the socio-economic system of India to its core.
They include- Bhopal Gas tragedy which brought an unbearable shock in 1984; the Marathwada earth quake which was reported in 1993; the Andhra Pradesh cyclone which caused much socio-economic disturbance in 1996; the Jabalpur earthquake which took place in 1997; the super cyclone in Orissa which occurred in 1999; the Gujarat earthquake which was reported in 2001 and tsunami of 2004 in Tamil Nadu.



The study finds that the post-calamity and post-disaster effects were too touching and too unbearable. The calamity and disaster- victims lost much. The people left after these calamities had a hard life to lead because they were in a state of trauma.

They failed to manage themselves and to return to normalcy for a long period of time because the disasters suddenly snatched happiness and smile of the family and replaced the enthusiasm of the people by tears in the eyes of offspring, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, and friends.

- **J. Shah (2011)**, in **An overview of disaster management in India**, observes that of the various calamity and disaster prone countries in South Asia, India is one which frequently faces several natural calamities like cyclones, hurricanes, snowstorms or coldwaves, landslides, droughts etc. India always has a high risk of drought, floods and earthquakes because many of the states have disaster-prone area.

Obviously, due to this bitter reality, the safe and secure survival of the countrymen is threatened and disturbed, and disturbance is caused to the economy, infrastructure, agriculture and productivity which meet horrible losses.

The generalization of the study is that the natural calamities and disasters hinder the national development and prevent the country from making proper growth and development in all the fields. Even the emergency plan of the government does not bring any good to the sufferers and victims of the calamities.

Hypothesis

- Natural calamities are rooted in imbalance in the various aspects of nature
- Geographical and geological factors bring calamities in the world
- Human factor is responsible for many disasters and calamities
- Natural calamities are too severe
- The post-calamity scenes are too horrible
- Natural calamities are controllable

Method

Prepared on the basis of the secondary data in research journals, the paper is a theoretical study designed with a specific purpose to make the reader familiar with the nature, causes and effects of the calamities. The author's observations also find room in it. For making the work scientific and systematic, the author first selected the title of the study and focused on the selected theme through the available related literature.

The related literature developed in the author an adequate knowledge of the selected theme. The selected articles and research papers were reviewed with a concentrated focus on the different aspects. The review making further helped him grasp the spirit of the works and interpret accordingly in terms of the objectives of the study. The results and generalizations were found out on basis of a thorough and careful study of the selected studies as well as the observations of the author that made him realize the severity of the natural calamities and disasters.

Findings & Conclusion

- Natural calamities are brought by geographical and geological reasons.
- Man himself is to be blamed for causing natural imbalance and for bringing natural calamities.
- Man's love for nature can mitigate the natural calamities.
- Certain precautions, such as, being consciousness to and aware of the natural calamities, first aid tools etc. can assist people survive.
- Natural calamities test the emergency response capability of the communities.
- Droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, heat waves, tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones etc. are common natural calamities that are reported to occur every now and then in the country.
- Natural calamities cause large amounts of casualties and property damage.
- An advanced disaster plan that can ensure security, financial support, residential support and public health is needed.
- All the natural calamities and natural disasters cause several effects, such as, economic effects, social effects, physical effects, psychological effects. There is needed some plan that can ensure social security, adequate financial help, fast and speedy medical aid, and psychological remedies and treatment to the victims and the remaining surviving people.
- Natural calamities snatch lives, and disturbs the entire social system throwing the people in unexpected and unbearable situations.
- Psychological treatment, counseling and immediate help are to be given at once to all those who witness them.
- Victims or sufferer rehabilitation needs to be to be there with a purpose to guarantee security to life.



- Natural calamities are controllable through a proper understanding and sensibility.
- The Central Government, all the state governments, NGOs and volunteers can be helpful in normalizing the people in post-calamity scenario, and in bringing them new hopes to survive afterwards normally.

References

1. J. Shah-An overview of disaster management in India, *Disaster Management and Human Health Risk II*, WIT Transactions on the Built Environment, Vol 119, 2011
2. Jeff Dayton-Johnson-Natural Disaster and Vulnerability, OECD Development Centre, 2006
3. Nilamadhab Kar- Indian research on disaster and mental health, *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2010 Jan; 52(Suppl1): S286–S290
4. R.K.Bhandari-Disaster Management in India-a New Awakening, 1999
5. Subrat Das & Nandan Kumar Jha- Natural Disasters and Relief Provisions in India: Commitments and Ground Realities, CBGA, 2004

