

Disasters and Their Awareness in J&K

Meeru Abrol

Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, J&K. India

Email address: meeru.abrol@yahoo.in

Abstract— In this paper we study about the different types of disasters, their occurrence in J&K and preparedness about facing such calamities based on conclusions drawn on the basis of survey conducted, by using Likert scale.

Keywords— Disasters, likert scale.

I. INTRODUCTION

We know that nature's ways are beyond human comprehension and it has its own laws of creation and destruction. Human beings have been watching and observing these acts with great curiosity and they have always made efforts to safeguard themselves from the events resulting from natural disasters. We know that earthquakes, volcanoes, cyclones, famines, epidemics, landslides, etc., are major natural disasters that endanger the human life and its support system. Various types of disasters have been happening since the inception of mankind but only in the recent years this subject has attracted more significance to the environmentalists, technologists and social scientists. Thus, disaster management has emerged as a theme to evolve means and ways of effective prevention, protection, relief and reconstruction of the effected people and areas in a planned or desired manner. We also know that disasters are not confined to a particular location or nation but are transnational. It may be worthwhile to define disaster as a sudden or great misfortune or a calamity causing loss of life, material damage and distress.

A disaster can also be defined as an event, which may occur due to natural or manmade factors, sudden or disruptive, causing loss of life, property and creating both short and long-term hazards.

II. TYPES OF DISASTERS

1. Water & Climate related disasters such as flood drainage management, Cyclone, Tornadoes/Hurricanes, Cloud bursts, Thunder & Lightning, Snow avalanches, Heat wave & Cold wave, Sea Erosions & Droughts.
2. Geological related disasters which include earthquake disasters, land slides and mud flow disasters, dam failure/dam bursts.
3. Biological related disasters, epidemics, pests attack, cattle epidemics & food poisoning.
4. Chemical, industrial and nuclear related disasters.
5. Accident related disasters which include urban & rural fire disasters, series bomb blasts disasters, oil spills disasters, festival related disasters, road and rail accidents disasters, mine flooding, boat capsizing, major building collapse disasters etc, etc.

Water & climatic related disasters or geological related disasters are the natural disasters. Natural environmental disasters involve comparatively rare high-intensity processes and extreme events caused by both terrestrial and atmospheric processes. Generally, the environmental disasters are natural and hence these are termed as natural disasters. Others, which occur due to the interference of man, are called man-made disasters. These disasters have been happening since the existence of mankind and the human beings have been fighting them out. With the advancement of science and technology, we are in a better position to mitigate the effects of disasters on human life.

Now the planners, policy makers, professionals, thinkers and academicians are devising tools and techniques to manage disasters in a planned and systematic manner. The main emphasis is on prevention and protection and then providing prompt relief and rehabilitation to the victims.

Ever since the advent of man on this planet he has been facing numerous challenges and natural calamities and their management occupies the prime position. Early man had the idea that the natural calamities were caused due to the wrath of God, so according to him there was no way out but to face these calamities and disasters; but with the development of science and technology and understanding various phenomena responsible for these catastrophes man thought of preempting and managing these disasters to save human life and property. It takes decades to develop but only a few seconds to destroy. Therefore there is urgent need to understand these threats and manage these effectively

A friend studying in USA narrated to me that in every city the fire brigades are always on the move twenty-four hours (day and night). It seems as if the city were on fire. In India, however the scenario is quite different we all know about it. There is dire need in our country to educate the masses and also those associated with the mitigation of the agony about the effective ways of disaster management.

The main aim for the formulation of disaster management plan is to pre-equip ourselves to combat the disaster on account of natural calamity to save precious human lives, restoring essential supplies & to give safe passage to the stranded passengers/disaster hit people promptly within shortest possible time.

III. MAIN SECTION

To understand the disaster types, their pattern and to prepare us to face these and manage them effectively a survey was made by consulting persons from different walks of life especially those serving in departments concerned directly with disasters in our district like D.C office, police, town planning, fire-fighting deptt., engineering deptt's of flood

control, P.H.E., electrical, PWD, IMPA, municipality, Red Cross, NGO's, and PG dept's of Geology, Environmental Sciences, doctors, scouts guides, NSS & NCC, and educationists.

To analyze the information collected from different subjects the method used is Likert Method. Here the survey contains thirty statements, so the Likert scale in this case has 30 items. Out of these thirty, twenty-three are correct statements known as favorable items. The scoring rule followed is:

Option	A	B	C	D
Points	4	3	2	1

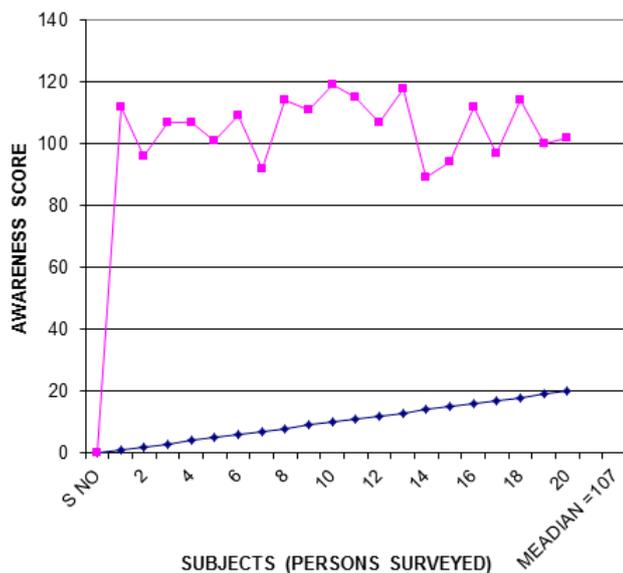
Likewise for seven incorrect statements known as unfavorable items, the scoring pattern is:

Option	A	B	C	D
Points	1	2	3	4

Where A stands for strongly agree, B stands for agree, C stands for disagree and D stands for strongly disagree.

The scores of the subjects are compiled and mean of the data comes out to be 105.8 and median 10.

ANALYSIS OF DATA



After analyzing the survey report it was observed that the overall opinion was less than 110 points out of 120 in favor of the following points:

1. Classification of disasters.
2. Awareness about the types of disasters.
3. General preparedness of the people, the Government agencies & various NGO's to face these disasters etc.

This is indicative in the graph also. The overall interpretation of this work is that very few people know about the types & causes of disasters. There is little preparedness with regard to pre-disaster & post-disaster management. Some areas especially the Meteorite strikes, volcanic eruptions,

over-population etc. are not considered as major disasters. Hence there is need to create awareness among masses about all these issues & prepare them in advance to face these disasters effectively so that there is negligible or minimum loss of life & property. For this it is suggested that the school children should be involved. The organizations like NCC, NSS, Scouts guides and Red Cross be associated with it in addition to using print & electronic media.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From the gathered information, interviews & interaction with different people I conclude the following:

- There is instantaneous response in humans to help each other during the time of disasters. The social response to disasters is largely determined by the communications of media like newspapers & TV reports. Thus, communications are of crucial importance in the assessments, managements & reduction of disasters. It is important to note, "It is a man & his responses to disaster that is at the heart of disaster management". It is heartening to note that social response to natural disaster is increasing positively.
- Disaster management is a multicultural & multidisciplinary subject, which involves many role players like Govt., NGOs & Communities etc. Proper planning at various levels should be considered meticulously with the involvement of common, man at a common platform & a well-defined policy with proper & appropriate planning.
- Pre-disaster measures in particular early warning systems should be created.
- Effective & efficient building of physical infrastructures such as houses, offices, roads, etc. should only be allowed.
- As flash floods occur in the district. Hence we need to learn all we can about why, where & when floods occur. There is an urgent need for a fresh approach on flood problems & to establish a fairly comprehensive integrated regional planning. Separate funds supported by proper legislation should be allotted for flood control to build longitudinal embankments, flood prevention reservoirs & diversion channels, besides issuing timely warnings to the inhabitants of the affected areas.
- Growth of population should be contained because there is an obvious link between the increase in losses from a disaster & increase in population as more people are forced to live & work in unsafe areas.
- People are vulnerable to disasters because they simply don't know how to take protective measures. This ignorance may not necessary be a function of poverty, but a lack of awareness of what measures can be taken to build safe structures on safe locations. Workshops, distribution of pamphlets & street plays should be organized to make people aware that our state is in the seismic zone of 4-5 Richter scale. Hence besides the role of Municipality & Town Planners, they should also be educated more on the precautions to be taken before & at the time of earthquakes.

- Children from primary classes should be taught about disasters so that they are not scared if they experience any. Subjects like Disaster management & Environmental Sciences should be included in the curriculum so that they come to know how deforestation & other factors lead to disasters and should be taken care of.
- Disaster management is more technical than perceived .It needs comprehensive study in risk evaluation of each single area, preparation or risk mapping plans for each zone, study of preparedness level in terms of special equipment & training of personnel, fool proof communication system & periodic mock drills. Plan alone without technical analysis & budget allocation is unlikely to yield positive results.
- It has been learnt that Fire & Emergency Deptt. of the district has modern & latest equipment to fight disasters like
 - I. Lightening tower used in case of electricity failure at the time of emergency.
 - II. Knumatic Jack, which works with air pressure to rescue victims, trapped under vehicles in accidents.
 - III. Modern cutters, chains & other tools.

IV. Victim locating camera with a thin wire to detect humans trapped under debris, which all were used at the earth quake which shook Uri on 8th October 2005, causing large-scale devastation to both human life & buildings and in Waltango area of Banihal where 1000 lives were claimed & many houses washed away by a snow Tsunami. More of such equipment should be added to the existing one.

I am sure that survival instinct in man will help him to find ways & means to overcome disasters as he has overcome other problems faced by him from time to time.

REFERENCES

- [1] Dr. Indu Parkash, "Disaster management," Rashtra Prahari Prakashan, Sahibabad, Gaziabad.
- [2] Five Day's Training Programme on Disaster Management, Reading Material of IMPA Rail Head Complex, Jammu Tawi, 2002.
- [3] Five Day's Training Programme on Disaster Management-Floods Earthquakes, Reading Material of IMPA Rail Head Complex, Jammu Tawi, 2004.
- [4] IEI News, June 2006.
- [5] Disaster Management in India-Status Report 2004.
- [6] Role of public Works - Director Public Works, American Works Association.
- [7] The Indian Concrete Journal, vol. 75, 2001.