

Disaster Impact and Response- A Retrospect of 2014 Flood in Kashmir Valley

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Disasters have been distressful issues throughout the human history but they have become more serious in recent years and will continue to be even more so in the decades to come seeing the current trend of climate change. They have become issues which touch upon all spheres of life. The consequences of such incidences are both material and social. Of all the physical, geological and natural phenomena that affect the earth, floods are the most widespread. Floods are so intertwined with human history that myths about floods abound in all civilizations. The entire planet is at risk of fundamental degradation and with it human civilization itself. Climate change is a burning topic at the present time and is believed to have altered the global climate in a very negative aspect in last some decades. It is projected to alter precipitation patterns, increase the frequency and intensity of major storm events, and increase risks of floods throughout the world. The occurrence of disasters has increased in last few decades for which anthropogenic causes are mostly responsible. While changes in average conditions can have serious consequences by themselves, the main impacts of global climate change are felt due to changes in climate variability and weather extremes like floods. In 2014, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a devastating flood which caused socio-economic and environmental problems throughout the state. It caused the death of almost 300 people. The environment was severely affected which resulted into soil erosion, deforestation, silting of Jhelum river and its tributaries, breaching of bunds, and wetland erosion. The environmental consequences affected the tourist places which in turn affected the influx of tourists in Jammu and Kashmir in years 2014 and 2015, which caused huge loss to economy. The 2014 flood resulted in tremendous amount of loss to agriculture especially to horticulture sector in Kashmir Valley. It resulted into the increase of poverty in the Valley and caused great suffering to people particularly the lower class as most of their property was damaged due to the 2014 flood. My paper will highlight the impact of 2014 flood on Kashmir Valley and the causes like unplanned development, weak infrastructure and political causes like unresponsive attitude of the administration which resulted into such a huge disaster in Kashmir Valley. It will also discuss the response of the people and administration in combating the flood as it was mostly people who did the rescue operations and saved thousands of lives. I would also like to suggest various solutions which can help in reduction of loss in future. In order to combat the problem of floods in Kashmir valley, understanding the perceptions of all that have stake in it provides with stronger ground for decision-making.

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