
Unexpected Tragedy in Jammu and Kashmir-flood-2014**Research Scholar: Hilal Ahmad Bhat (Department: SOSS DAVV, INDORE)****Abstract**

In this work, a brief history of disasters faced by the state and their causes and impacts are discussed. Also the responsibility of government and the common native of the state are highlighted. The unexpected rains, abrupt change in climate and contribution of man in the said evils are explained and how to overcome the issue is suggested. The main focus of the present study is the disastrous floods of 2014 that left the J&K state devastated. Problems faced due to it by the affected people, impact on common man of the state, government policies of rehabilitation, contribution to relieve the effected people by the Kashmiries, responsible personalities, state and central government have been given in detail. The impacts on the state by the floods 2014 and requirement of the hour are the focus of the present study. Also the destructions that effected roads and government buildings, losses that people concerned to agriculture, horticulture, tourism industries have suffered and bad impacts on the studies of the students.

Key Words: Flood 2014, Unwanted Climate change, Natural Disasters, State and Central Government policies and Rehabilitation process.

1.0.0 INTRODUCTION: *The state of Jammu & Kashmir is having a long history of natural disasters. The state has witnessed many natural disasters especially in the 19th and the 20th century. Owing to its peculiar topography, rugged terrain, extreme weather conditions and underdeveloped economy, the State has suffered a lot on account of both life and property in the past. Till date, the state is a prone region with natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, fires, droughts, avalanches and landslides, high velocity rains and untimely snowfall etc.¹ A heavy flood was witnessed in 1928 when the river Jhelum carried a discharge of 80,000 cusecs (2265m³/s) which was about three times the original capacity of 32,000 cusecs (906m³/s) resulting heavy loss of life and property in many villages across south and north Kashmir. Again a similar magnitude disastrous flood hit the valley in 1950 which badly influenced the areas of south and central Kashmir while in North the main sufferers were the areas like Hajin and Naidkhai. In July 1959, the heavenly valley again witnessed a natural disaster in the form of flood when River Jhelum overwhelmed suddenly with a huge amount of water resulting from glacial melt, breaching its banks at several points and the resulting in the huge loss of property and reportedly caused 82 deaths. All these disasters influenced the state in the form of economy, health and left long lasting impacts that pushed state backward in the completion of growth and development with other states.²*

The abrupt climatic change due to deforestation and excess use of land for cultivation to built houses, land mismanagement, heavy traffic and destruction of wildlife etc has become a major challenge for sustaining agriculture and horticulture and other allied sectors. This climatic change resulted in unexpected and untimely intense rains and heavy snowfall responsible for heavy flooding and high waters in rivers due glacial melt and severe landslides that were unprecedented in extent. The abruptly increasing uncertainties in the climate were the cause for the huge natural disastrous flood that the state faced in September 2014 which left vast areas of Jammu & Kashmir devastated. Sunita Narian, Director General of Central for Science and Environment (CSE) on 10 September 2014 said that the calamities in Mumbai (2005), Leh (2010), Uttarkhand (2013) and now J&K shows a similar pattern of extreme rainfall which can be the result of climate change.³ More than 15 districts were severally affected by floods in 2014. In particular, the districts like Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Kulgam,

Budgam, Rajouri, Poonch and Reasi were severely affected. It led to the loss of hundreds of human lives and washed everything that came its way including residential houses, schools, colleges, hospitals, paddy fields, orchards, government establishments and businesses etc.⁴



Figs1.1: The full scale of devastation in Jammu and Kashmir due to floods in September 2014.

Objectives of the Study:

- i. To highlight the causes and impacts of the disastrous flood of 2014.
- ii. To reveal the responsibilities of natives of the state in the change of climate and occurrence of such disasters.
- iii. To bring into light the losses that agriculture, horticulture and tourism industry suffered and mainly the education system where students lost the valuable time and in most cases their valuable possessions in the form of books, uniforms, delay in exams and collapsing of school buildings.
- iv. To divert the attention of all the responsible personalities of the state and nation, state and central government towards and the delays in the rehabilitation process and hence the problems faced by the flood affected people.

1.0.1 Disastrous Flood of 2014

In 2014, heavy monsoon rains started from 2nd September and continued till 7th September, 2014 have led to heavy flooding in J&K. It has rendered thousands of people homeless and jobless. The 300-km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was closed for traffic due to landslides and floods. Baramulla-Uri road has also been closed due to flood. Livelihood of tens of thousands was lost as businesses were washed away by the ravaging flood waters especially in Srinagar. Supply routes and transportation networks have been severely affected, and will lead to reduced availability of food stocks, increased prices and reduced access of households to food. About 60 major and minor roads have been cut off and over 30 bridges washed away. The violent and needless disturbance wreaked upon the state of Jammu and Kashmir by these floods can be gauged by the heart wrenching deaths and displacement of victims along with substantial financial losses.⁵ Near about 5642 villages were affected by flood and 800 villages which were completely submerged. Chief Secretary of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Iqbal Khandey said that for, during the month of September, the floods led to death of 281 people in J&K (196 in Jammu and 85 in Kashmir), 29 people are still missing in the valley and hundreds of houses were destroyed along with thousands of people displacing from their homes. He further added; 6,000 km of road length has been damaged while 3,000 water supply schemes were affected.⁶ Thousands of animals were died during flood in J&K. The People of Jammu and Kashmir is not prepared to handle heavy rainfall events. Thousands of

people continue to live in temporary shelters or with neighbors and relatives. Reconstructing homes and rebuilding lives will take years. The Centre for Science and Environment analysis that, “most climate models also predict that India will be hit more and more by extreme rainfall events as the world continues to warn in the coming decades”.⁷

2.0.0 Relief and Rehabilitation:

The floods of J&K during 2014, which were the worst-ever in the state over the past 112 years. J&K Said the preliminary assessment of cumulative losses due to floods in the state was in excess of Rs 1,00,000 crore and expressed hope that the centre will go out of its way to provide succour to the affected people. The Chief Secretary of CSE Iqbal Khandey said, CM Omar Abdullah has written a letter to the central government, requesting a special package for the rehabilitation of the flood affected people of the state. CM Omar Abdullah also briefed the PM Nerender Modi about the states relief and rehabilitation operation in the flood hit state of J&K and sought liberal financial assistance from the centre to rebuild and devastated areas.

To ensure timely relief and rehabilitation of affected people, the CM Omar Abdullah apprised that State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) has enhance the relief for flood affected people from Rs 20 crore to Rs 100 crore for the state and kept the same at the disposal of the administration both at Jammu and Kashmir.

1, 27,000 people have been rescued during flood 2014, in different areas of J&K by armed forces.

Fig.2.1



Source: Greater Jammu, Vol-6, No 353, www.greaterjammu.com, (13-9-14)

“Rs 3.50 lakh compensations would be given next to the kin of dead out of which, Rs 2 lakh has already been announced by PM and Rs 1.5 lakh would be given from the SDRF besides Rs 75,000 would be given as initial installment for repair of damaged houses.”⁹ The Prime Minister also said that Rs 50,000 would be provided to each person who is grievously injured. The funds will be provided from the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund.¹⁰

“This year was unprecedented situation. There is little that can be done to avoid this kind of a situation”¹¹

On Sept 7, 2014 After 5 days of heavy rains Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Rs 1000 crores worth Central assistance as first installment of relief taking total amount given to J&K during past two days to Rs 2100 crores including authorization to utilize Rs 1100 crores State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF). The Prime Minister, who was on a day's visit to Jammu and Kashmir to survey flood affected areas for on spot assessment of situation arising out of worst ever floods in the State, also declared floods as "national level disaster" and said pain and anguish of the people of the State was that of entire country and the Centre will work along with State Government and the people to rebuild damaged infrastructure and bring life back on rails. It was 2nd visit of Modi's to J&K after the recent floods. Modi also announced that boats, which were major requirement of the State Government, have been airlifted from Gujarat and Maharashtra while 5000 tents would be reaching the State very shortly. In addition, he said, he has sanctioned one lakh blankets from Prime Minister's relief quota, which the people in relief and rehabilitation camps would need.¹² PM Shri Narendra Modi announced in Srinagar (Kashmir) during his visit Rs 175 crore for renovation of 6 major hospitals and Rs 570 crore for the rebuilding homes damaged in the recent floods in J&K. He also assured of all possible assistance from the centre to the state to help it recover from the devastation caused by the floods. Modi said the loss memo of Rs 44000 crore submitted to the centre by the state govt was considered.¹³

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an appeal to all Indians to donate generously to the Prime Ministers National Relief Fund for the flood affected people in J&K. In his appeal, Modi said, "my fellow citizens, you are aware that unprecedented floods have caused havoc in the state of J&K. A large number of persons have died or have been displaced."¹⁴

Moved by devastating flood in J&K, Sachin Tendulkar has come forward extend a helping hand to the valleys people. The Indian famous batsman has donated relief material and Rs 25 lakh from his MP Fund for those affected by the flood. Tendulkar made sure 400 water filters, 1,000 blankets were also sent to the Valley.¹⁵

American business tycoon and philanthropist Bill Gates co-chair of the Bill and Malinda Gates foundation announced an emergency relief fund of USD 700,000 for the flood victims.¹⁶

"The Puducherry government would contribute Rs 1 crore as its assistance to the flood relief fund," Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy said that, if the State government employees intended to do so, they could also contribute one day's salary to the Prime Minister Relief Fund for relief and rehabilitation works in J&K.¹⁷

Recently the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Kashmir and announced a Rs. 80,000 crore rupee development package for Jammu and Kashmir. Out of 80,000 crore our government of J&K announced Rs 7,854 crore for **flood relief, reconstruction and flood management**. This includes monetary help to people for reconstruction of damaged houses and for infrastructure, restoration of livelihood for traders and small businessmen, a plan for comprehensive flood management of the River Jhelum and its tributaries and Jhelum-Tawi flood reconstruction project.¹⁸

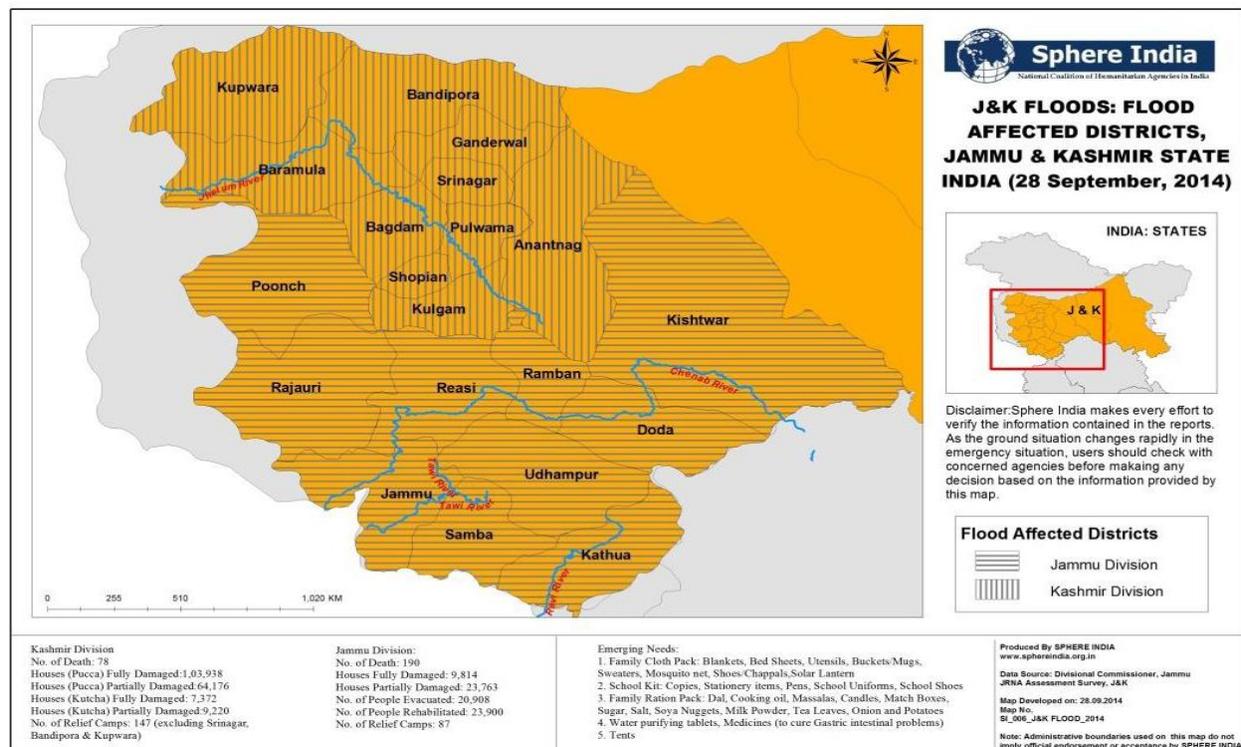
*"Drag Tselih to Dag Tselih na" which means that 'the famine goes but its stains remain'*¹⁹

3.0.0 Impacts of the flood 2014 on the State of J&K: The tragic and nightmaring impacts of the flood were long lasting in the valley in terms of the number of people displaced, houses damaged, crops destroyed, and productive enterprises lost. People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically,

institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change. The worst in living memory, these floods have been the cause of massive death and destruction in the northern state of India.

3.0.1 Impact on Horticulture and Agriculture: Agriculture and horticulture are the main livelihoods and economic sources of Jammu and Kashmir people and along with allied sectors like livestock and fisheries. The economy of the state is largely agrarian with 74% of the population dependent on it. About 49% of the working population engaged in the field of cultivation, which help in reducing poverty in the ruler areas of state. It also provides livelihood to thousands of other workers engaged in different other related agriculture activities like processing and distribution of the agricultural raw material and products. Rice, maize and apples are major crops in the state. ²⁰Floods arrived at the most crucial time as it was time for harvesting of rice and apples. The agriculture and orchards fields were totally damaged by water. Mr. Iqbal Khandey said; "The crop losses have been to the tune of Rs 5,611 crore including Rs 1,568 crore losses to horticulture sector". ²¹ Agriculture fields turned into mini-rivers. About 139,413 kanals of land or 17,426 acres were completely destroyed in the floods which made the life of the residents of the state like hell. ²²

Fig.3.1



Source: Joint Rapid Needs Assessment Report: Jammu and Kashmir Floods 2014.

3.0.2 Impact on Education: With the decision of J&K government not to reopen the schools after the devastating floods that hit the Srinagar and other parts of the state, future of the students enrolled in various private and government schools in the state hanged in balance. The state government had already postponed the examination of the students after the flood marooned the valley of Kashmir. Large

number students have lost their books as they were washed away by the flood water. Also most of the school buildings collapsed and majority of the schools in the flood hit areas were not in the condition to be opened shortly after the disastrous flood water entered these schools which resulted in shifting the examination dates by the gap of almost three months and hence impacted the future of the students.²³

3.0.3 Impact on Tourism: Large number of roads and various bridges connecting to various tourist places were washed away by the flood. After the bridges got washed away by the flood, the roads leading to the famous tourist destination Gulmarg in North Kashmir was closed for the vehicular movement. The other tourist places have also been closed in J&K after the flood washed away the roads at many places. Iqbal Khandey Chief Secretary of CSE said that, tourism infrastructure and govt residential colonies have losses to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore. As this is the main economical source of the state, almost all the people whose families were living on the earnings from the same industry got badly impacted.²⁴

4.0.0 Causes:

4.0.1 Heavy Rainfall: The basic facts of floods in Jammu and Kashmir during Sep, 2014 could be a manifestation of extreme weather events induced by climate change. The CSE deputy general director Chandra Bhushan analysis about the Jammu and Kashmir floods was “unseasonal and extreme rainfall” and at many places as it rained more than 200-mm in 24 hours – 400% more than the monthly average. He further stated that, “The Kashmir floods are grim reminder that climate change is now hitting India harder in the last 10 years, several extreme rainfall events have rocked the country and this is the latest calamity in that series.”²⁵

4.0.2 Mismanagement of Water Resources: It is a combination of an intense and unprecedented rainfall event combined with mismanagement (of natural drainage) and unplanned urbanization and lack of preparedness reminding of impact of climate change. In the last 100 years, more than 50% of lakes, ponds, and wetlands in J&K have been encroached upon for constructing multi-story buildings and small crafts factories have been set up on illegal landfills created by the land mafia. Jhelum is the largest and most western of the five rivers of Punjab, the river flows in India and Pakistan and passes through Valley of Kashmir. The banks of the Jhelum River have been taken over in a similar manner, vastly reducing the drainage capacity. Its narrow gorges are the main cause of floods in J&K. The Wular in the valley of Kashmir is one of the largest fresh water Lake. The lake's size has shrunk by 87.58 sq km in the last century from 217.58 sq km in 1911, the lake area reduced to 130 sq km in 2011-12 during a demarcation by the revenue department. Hence, the lake's ability to naturally drain out the flood waters has greatly suffered. This was main reason for sudden flooding in the valley, most of which lies lower than the riverbed of the Jhelum.²⁶ CM Omar Abdullah wrote to Indian Prime Minister Nerender Modi a few days ago seeking an in-depth study on whether an alternative channels for Jhelum could be created to carry extra water during a flood. The proposal to divert the Jhelum is not new, official sources said. It has been talked about in the state as a permanent solution to the flooding and water logging that is regularly witnessed during the rainy season. It is estimated that Rs 8,500 crore would be required to create this channel. The state and the central government were also discussing 2000 crore plan to strength the embankments of the Jhelum, the narrowness of which resulted floods 2014 in J&K. The state government have launched 100 crore for repair the embankments, but it turned out to be a case of too little and too late.²⁷

4.0.3 Deforestation: Forests are said to be the green gold and gift to a particular region. It is the source that acts as the refinery of the climate. In J&K, Most of the land is occupied by forests and due to carelessness of the government and unawareness of the people, these forests are reducing. As the forests are being cut to increase the land for economy, cultivation and residential purpose, it impacted the

wildlife which also helps in maintaining the ecological balance. Also the armed conflict is responsible for the deforestation. So it is clear that this natural refinery and associated with it the wild life is disturbed and hence climate has changed which is main reason for the unnecessary and unseasonal raining that causes floods.²⁸

5.0.0 Research Methodology of the Study: In the present paper, data has been collected from secondary sources especially books, journals, web links and research papers etc.

6.0.0 Conclusion:

The present study diverts the attention of common native of the state, state and central government towards the preparedness for the coming times and water management. Also it tries to highlight the factors responsible for such disasters and contribution from the residents of the land in the happening of such disasters and stresses people and government to look how to control factors responsible. Also it can be concluded from the study that rehabilitation of the effected people is yet incomplete and delay in the process has made the life of such people like hell. Stress has been gives on the issue of difficulties that flood effected people are still suffering and an appeal has been made to a common man to contribute to maintain the balance in state so as to control the abruptly changing the climate.

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