

Date: 20/11/25

Day: M. AWAIS

TEST SERIES - 1
ENGLISH ESSAY

THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS
ON COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

OUTLINE

- (I) Introduction
- (II) Types of natural disasters and their link with various communities
- (III) The devastating impacts of natural disasters on community health and wellbeing
 - (A) Damage and loss of infrastructure
 - (B) Indefinite halt to vocational and business activities
 - (C) Stagnation and loss of collective productivity
 - (D) Decline in tourism related ventures

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- (E) Large-scale environmental destruction
impeding routine affairs
- (F) Social fragmentation and breakdown
- (G) Exacerbated rate of crime
- (H) Intensified violence and in-fighting
- (I) Widespread psychological distress
- (J) Rise of political polarization and
consensus breakdown
- (K) Breakdown of public services
- (L) Health and sanitation crises

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What does the destruction of the dinosaurs, the Fall of thriving ancient civilizations—like Mehrgarh and Indus Valley—and an instantaneous devastation of even the most advanced societies have in common? The answer; natural disasters. Ranging in different types and capacities, natural disasters have a historical track-record of wiping out entire communities—either directly or through the onslaught of its secondary effects. Their impact on the health and wellbeing of communities can be quite devastating, inter alia, damage or complete loss of human or natural infrastructure, an indefinite halt of commercial and vocational activity, a severe blow to productivity, a halt of tourism and its associated ventures, massive destruction of the environment, social collapse or fragmentation, an intensification in crime, violence, and in-fighting, widespread

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psychological distress, polarization and breakdown of politics and public services, and a perpetual health and sanitation crisis. These impacts can broadly be categorised ^{domains} within the ~~catag~~ ^{series} of economical, social, psychological, political and governance ^{aspects}. Consequently, it would be correct to say that the impact of natural disasters on community wellbeing and health are quite diverse but nonetheless destructive.

In order to highlight the impacts of natural disasters it is imperative to first identify ^{its} the various types and their intrinsic link to various communities. As the name suggests, natural disasters are due to natural process and as a result have little to do with anthropogenic activity. Notable examples include: volcanic eruption, earthquake, land slide, tsunami, hurricane, and floods. Although natural disasters are

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a common phenomenon throughout the world, the link between what type of disaster hits which community is important to highlight. Fishing communities would most likely be hit by disasters relating to water, while land-based agricultural communities are likely to be hit by volcanic or earthquake related disasters. Hence, depending on what type of community it is, the natural disaster can significantly differ.

With this nuance in mind, a holistic picture of the impact of natural disasters can be drawn. Damage and loss of infrastructure is among the most devastating impacts of natural disasters. This is a common & consequence of all natural disasters and is not or just limited to man-made structures. Infrastructure losses can relegate communities back to the stone age, and without

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the availability of tools—housed in these infrastructural units—squanders any hope of development. The 2023 earth quake in Turkey underscored this very issue. With most of its immediate infrastructure subject to loss, many preventable losses were incurred. Hence, infrastructural loss prevents both rescue and development.

Loss of infrastructure also results in an indefinite halt to vocational and business activities. This halt directly results in an escalation of the crisis. Without jobs and commerce, people are forced to survive hand-to-mouth, thus making them poorer. The United Nations Development Programme in its 2024 report, titled 'The Long-term Impacts of Disasters' highlighted that areas hit with natural disasters can face an increase ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ abject poverty of around 7-10%.

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Hence, the halt of commerce in an area hit with natural disaster will cause a devastating impact on its community.

A break ⁱⁿ of commercial ventures in a disaster hit zone can result in a stagnation and loss of productivity. Defined by objective measures like GDP, industrial output, and working employment rate, productivity also entails a human component. Without the necessary manpower, access to resources, and an effective use of infrastructure, communities can face an imminent threat to their very existence. The 2022 Floods that hit Pakistan resulted in a cumulative loss of \$35 billion according to the Government of Pakistan. The loss in productivity can be quantified by the fact that this amounts to more than half of Pakistan's annual earnings. Hence, a loss of productivity

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is devastating to the entire community.

Stagnation and loss of productivity also extends into the fold of tourism.

Many communities are wholly dependent on the commercial activity generated by tourism. After a natural disaster

, however, a rapid decline in this sector is always observed, subsequently creating further difficulties for communities. Owing to the ~~2029~~ 2023

earth quakes Turkey's tourism industry reported a 16% loss in ~~the its~~ its

tourism earning. Hence, a decline in tourism has severe repercussions on the community in question.

Along with tourism decline, natural disasters also cause great environmental destruction which impedes

many routine affairs. Even when the primary aftereffects of the disaster

have subsided, normalcy does not return. Destruction to the environment bring about other snowball affects

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like recurrent landsliding, loss of plants and animals and high tides. The 2011 Flooding of Japan and its resultant Fukushima nuclear power plant incident prevented many fishing communities from pursuing their routine affairs. Consequently, natural disasters, through environmental destruction, continues to impede the lives of communities.

This impediment of routine also results in tensions within the social sphere of the affected community. Natural disasters put all members of the community on edge, consequently escalating tensions. This tension can result in social dis cohesion. Natural disaster affected communities often face the loss of social institutions — like community centers, schools, and in severe cases the family unit. This loss can cause fragmentation and social breakdown within

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communities.

Communities which face social fragmentation and breakdown as a result of natural disasters, also experience an influx in crime. Crime, primarily a socially influenced phenomenon, thrive in the absence of social order. Without social institutions to keep deviants in-check, their impulses and circumstances get the better of them. In a list of several documented case studies, from the 2022 Floods in Pakistan to the various hurricanes like Katrina in the US, crime has often reached peak numbers after natural disasters. Hence, natural disasters exacerbate crime and as a result create more disruption in affected communities.

Owing to the exacerbated crime rate, an intensification of violence and in-fighting is also witnessed. Violence, whether gender, race, class

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as ethnicity based thrives in a cacophony. Violence erodes the harmony of any community. Subsequently, it allows for the militarisation of a society making law and order all the more difficult to maintain. In the wake of a tsunami in

Angola in 2018, a series of violent events - like the creation of private militias, hostile takeovers by violent gangs, and the erasure of entire communities - were witnessed. Consequently, natural disasters tear the social fabric and intensify violence in communities.

① This ^{intensification} ~~exacerbation~~ of crime and violence compounds to the psychological distress experienced by the affected community. Natural disasters exact a massive toll on mental health. People affected must suffer from the loss of life, property, and livelihood. The

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psychological stress of the community is quite massive. The World Mental Health Organisation - an international organisation operating in about 130 countries - have repeatedly advised a significant jump in mental diseases in areas affected by natural disasters. Subsequently, highlighting the it underscores the massive toll on the community.

Psychological distress also results in political polarization and a breakdown of consensus within a community. Politics is essentially a social activity. The breakdown of both psychological and social order after a disaster impedes politics. Natural disasters brings out the worst in people, diminishing them to their base instincts, consequently creating a free for all. In such an environment community building takes a back-seat to self-serving rhetoric,

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making politics difficult.

Political breakdown subsequently results in the breakdown of public services as well. With no politics to oversee services, the latter falls victim to corruption, mismanagement, and logistical limitations. Breakdown of public service intensifies the plight of the affected communities. Countries which have been hit by natural disasters often relegate in measurable indices which measure public services, like HDI, CPI, GCI, and GGI. As a result, communities face the double pressure of natural disasters even harder.

To sum up the discussion made so far, the impact of natural disasters on a community's health and wellbeing cannot be understated. Natural disasters off always have a devastating impact

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, no matter the type of or the advancement of the community.

Natural disasters have a range of maladaptive effects, which particularly hit the economical, social, political and organisational structures of a community. Directly targeting these critical areas of any community effectively means crippling it. Even if the initial wave of the disaster is not severe, its secondary impacts can linger for decades. Many thriving communities bear witness to this claim as their progression was halted by such an event; never to return to what it once was. As such, it is vital that these repercussions are kept in mind, the next time such a natural disaster fall upon a community, so that its effects can be mitigated.