

Causes of disasters

Poverty.

Poverty increases the vulnerability of people to disasters. An impoverished people who lack education, usually lack economic and political clout to cope with the hazards of their surroundings.

Ungoverned population growth

Ungoverned population growth can lead to settlements in hazardous areas susceptible to disease, competition for scarce resources and civil strife

Rapid urbanization and migration

Many landslides or flooding disasters are Closely linked to rapid and unchecked urbanization forcing low-income families to settle on the slopes of steep hillsides or ravine, or along the banks of flood-prone rivers.

Transitions in cultural practices

Transitions are extremely disruptive and Uneven, leaving gaps in social coping mechanism and technology e.g. moving from traditional housing to modern –materials may be used which cannot stand earthquake.

Environmental degradation

Deforestation leads to rapid rain runoff Which contributes to flooding. Poor cropping patterns, overgrazing stripping of topsoil, poor conservation techniques, unchecked urbanization etc.

Lack of awareness and information

People may be unaware of safe evacuation. Disasters can occur when people who are vulnerable, when they have not been educated on how to get out of harms way or take protective measures at the inset of a disaster event.

War and Civil strife

Wars and civil strife often cause the displacement of the population. The causal factors include competition for scarce resources, religious or ethnic intolerance and ideological differences.

Classification of Disasters

Disasters can broadly be classified into four, based on the cause:

- Natural Disasters
- Human- Made Disasters
- Slow- Onset Disasters
- Sudden- Onset Disasters

Natural Disasters

The term "*natural disasters*" refers to those disasters that are triggered by natural phenomena. These phenomena such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, etc. are known technically as natural hazards.

Human- induced Disasters

The term "man-made disasters" usually refers to disasters resulting from man-made hazards such as major accidents, or deliberate action of individuals, groups or governments e.g. armed conflict and technological disasters.

Fast or Rapid and Slow- Onset Disasters

Rapid-onset: These are disasters which strike with very little or no warning at all therefore the damage caused by these disasters is more. They include earthquakes, cyclones, floods, tsunamis ("tidal waves") and industrial accidents.

Slow-onset: Here there is adequate warning time e.g. civil wars, droughts and famines, and epidemics, where the ability of people to sustain their livelihood declines to a point where it is completely devastated The new classification distinguishes two generic disaster groups: natural and technological disasters. The natural disaster category being divided into six disaster groups: Biological, Geophysical, Meteorological, Hydrological, Climatological and Extra-Terrestrial. Each group covers different disaster main types,

each having different disaster sub-types.

1.4.4 Classification

Table1: Classification of Natural disasters

Disaster Generic Group	Disaster Group	Disaster Main-Type
Natural Disaster	Geophysical	Earthquake Volcano Mass movement(dry)
Natural Disaster	Meteorological	Storm

Natural Disaster	Hydrological	Flood Mass movement (wet)
Natural Disaster	Climatological	Extreme temperature Drought Wild fire
	Biological	Epidemic Insect infestation Animal stampede

Personal reflection

Define any five disaster concepts.

Using relevant examples classify disasters that commonly occur worldwide.