

## **1. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE (WORLD)**

### **1.7 DISASTERS**

A disaster is the tragedy of a natural or human-made hazard (a hazard is a situation which poses a level of threat to life, health, property, or environment) that negatively affects society or environment.

In contemporary academia, disasters are seen as the consequence of inappropriately managed risk. These risks are the product of hazards and vulnerability. Hazards that strike in areas with low vulnerability are not considered a disaster, as is the case in uninhabited regions.

Developing countries suffer the greatest costs when a disaster hits – more than 95 percent of all deaths caused by disasters occur in developing countries, and losses due to natural disasters are 20 times greater (as a percentage of GDP) in developing countries than in industrialized countries.

Large areas are subject to extreme weather such as tropical cyclones, hurricanes, or typhoons that dominate life in those areas. Many places are subject to earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, sinkholes, blizzards, floods, droughts, and other calamities and disasters.

Many localized areas are subject to human-made pollution of the air and water, acid rain and toxic substances, loss of vegetation (overgrazing, deforestation and desertification), loss of wildlife, species extinction, soil degradation, soil depletion, erosion, and introduction of invasive species.

A scientific consensus exists linking human activities to global warming due to industrial carbon dioxide emissions. This is predicted to produce changes such as the melting of glaciers and ice sheets, more extreme temperature ranges, significant changes in weather and a global rise in average sea levels.

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