

Topic: Washed Away: Nature's FURY

The last time Kalyan Singh Jadaun saw his wife was at dawn on Monday. She was screaming, flailing her arms, as the muddy, rocky torrent tossed her around in the shadow of the Kedarnath shrine 12,000 feet up in the Himalayas. He saw her for less than a minute, during which time she went farther and farther, until he could no longer see her. Jadaun had gone on pilgrimage to Kedarnath with his wife and 28 others from Kota Mohali village in Karauli district of Rajasthan. Jadaun and the others stayed on the third floor of the building for a full 24 hours until the water receded. He then searched the entire devastated vicinity of the temple for his wife but could not find her. Initially two members of the group, including Jadaun, were flown to Dehradun. There were many bodies strewn around, Jadaun said. "Laashein badi sankhya mein padi huin thi" These and many untold stories describe the plight of those who survived the mayhem Uttarakhand .

The Cause:

The upper Himalayan territories of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are full of forests, ranges of hills and snow-covered mountains and thus remain relatively inaccessible. Yet, they are home to several major and historic Hindu pilgrimage sites and at least one such Sikh pilgrimage site besides several tourist spots and trekking venues. From 14 to 17 June 2013 Uttarakhand received heavy rainfall, which was about 375 percent more than the benchmark rainfall during a normal monsoon. This caused heavy floods in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Western Nepal, and acute rainfall in other nearby regions of Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh and some parts of Tibet. In the city of Dehra Dun, capital of Uttarakhand, this was the wettest June day for over five decades. Heavy rainfall for four consecutive days as well as melting snow aggravated the floods. Warnings by the India Meteorological Department predicting heavy rains were not given wide publicity beforehand, causing thousands of people to be caught unaware, resulting in huge loss of life and property.

Natural calamity or Human Greed

While the administration insists that it was a natural calamity, environmentalists hold that this was a man-made disaster waiting to happen. Basically the environmentalists, experts and activists say unplanned development and rampant felling of forests responsible for the scale of disaster. Extreme rains have wreaked havoc at Kedarnath. If we'll look closely then the main reason is the stream of unexpected water by rain. Now till this point we'll peep into the depth more detail. According to the position of Kedarnath, it's situated in the middle of the peaks (here Google map can be helpful). In this position, in case of any heavy rain fall, water supposes to come down to the surroundings of Kedarnath main temple. Then the question arises if it's so, then why didn't water pass through the surroundings?

The age of Kedarnath is unknown. Hindu mythology relates the existence since the period of Mahabharata. By that time, the temple was standing almost alone waiting only for the devotees and nature had dug two lines for water to flow down whenever water comes from the peaks surrounded by Kedarnath itself. But for us it's not wise to think about the unknown past. Let's go back to few years. Might be 30-40 years is enough. Before the disaster, Kedarnath was not surrounded by huge crowd including many infrastructures. Due to the unplanned development, the two river beds besides Kedarnath have been filled gradually every year including the low lands.

Topic
Introduction

Water has its own nature. Whenever it'll be placed anywhere, will go down and down, no matter whoever or whatever come in the way. So when it rained on the peak, water had to come down, but could not follow the paths which were meant for it. Because the depth of the rivers was not enough to, pass the water though. Then there was no option left for the water. So according to its own nature water flooded the area found on its downstream.

This issue is not with Kedarnath only. Going forward this kind of but small disasters will be seen in all cities. People, basically builders fill the places for water like low lands, ponds, rivers, lakes etc. Unplanned infrastructure is going on and on, just like anything. So these days also, after half an hour rain or an hour rain, it happens that water floods the streets of the cities. Just imagine, in the same situation, if the rain continues for another 1 or 2 hours, then the flood will span into more areas and cover the houses, streets, bus stops, airports and all causing lots of damage. It can be easily observed in all most all cities in India during heavy rain.

The Men of Honor

Kudos to Indian armed force personnel for working round the clock against hostile conditions to rescue the pilgrims & residents of the ravaged state of Uttarakhand. The Defence Ministry deployed more than 45 Army and IAF choppers along with more than 10,000 troops in the state. IAF deployed 20 Mi-17s and 16 Advanced Light Helicopters in the state. The Army has heli-dropped troops skilled in mountain rescue operations, including 30 paratroopers with specialized equipment, to rescue those stranded near Kedarnath and Badrinath. This is the largest rescue and relief operation launched by the Indian armed forces. It is the IAF's biggest ever helicopter-based operation.

The Challenge

Uttarakhand authorities are trying to arrange for as much as 50 tonnes of wood and as much volume of 'desi ghee' to conduct last rites of those who perished in the deluge at Kedarnath. Officials of the Garhwal administration have sounded authorities in the state 'Van Nigam' (Forest Corporation) and other agencies to gather as much fire wood and logs and pick cans of 'ghee' from the open market. While close to thousands have been evacuated from the temple town, worst hit by rains and flash floods, there is no exact estimate as to how many people would have perished in this area. And how many would be saved in time?

Read further:

<http://www.speakingtree.in/spiritual-blogs/seekers/pilgrimage/kedarnath-the-natural-disaster-was-planned-by-the-human>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_North_India_floods