

Natural Disasters

Natural Disaster, a very profound phenomenon that affects any individual, any place or country over the years where it becomes a social problem affecting the economy, environment, people, animals, tourism. Some people refer to Natural Disaster as “acts of God”.

Surviving a Natural Disaster at the age of 10, the earthquake in Mexico in 1985, seeing the economical devastation, emotional suffering and the loss of almost 8,000 lives have remained in my memory deeply. Witnessing the struggles, the suffering, the cries, the loss of relatives and friends, the necessity of essential survival elements in my community and country, left me a deep sense that preparedness not only as an individual but as a family and community is extremely necessary to survive and to recover in the aftermath.

The insecurity that any Natural Disaster leaves among the people, losing their homes, family members and losing their jobs, it brings uncertainty in trying to get back on track, also while waiting for external help to arrive, either with supplies, food, water, and any type of help becomes essential to start the recovery for the place being affected by the natural disaster. Any type of natural disaster, such as: earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, tornados, avalanches, hurricanes, floods, leave behind emotional distress not to mention slow social recovery. Every Natural Disaster injures people and damages property. Its effects, more than anything can, be devastating to the society in different ways: emotionally, psychologically and physically were in some cases the effects are extremely hard to over come, taking years of effort to recover and millions of dollars to restore the losses after the disaster.

Getting help from many countries is a major factor in situations where a crisis is evident. In most cases local volunteers are an essential key in speedy recovery for the disaster as far as man-power help.

Consequently donations are necessary playing an important role for the recovery in the aftermath. Clothing, food, water, medical supplies often alleviate the devastating effects from a Natural Disaster.

Another important factor and extremely sorrowful situation comes when identifying bodies. While suffering emotionally the loss of relatives, usually trying to identify does not go successfully. In most cases the bodies are decomposed in where extreme measures have to be taken forcing the unidentified bodies to be buried in common graves, for extreme measures to avoid causing epidemics to the survivors.

Furthermore, water becomes an essential element to survive; drinking water is a high demand among the communities affected. Having in consideration a high risk for water diseases due to the improper hygiene usually becomes a problem to the people.

On the other hand, we have a big debate when we ask ourselves some of the questions. As far as if preventions could have been taken to avoid many disasters. Pointing a perfect example was the Hurricane Katrina Disaster in where we all had a wake up call for crisis and disaster prevention.

Some of these catastrophes events might have been avoided if early warning systems and precautionary measures might have been taken place.

Another important issue arises, knowing that communication is imperative, especially at the time of crisis; in most cases many of the effects can be prevented with a

good line of communication reaching organizations or the government in a matter of time, who are usually trying to help without having a successful conduct with the area being affected.

Other sources of communication tend to fail as well, keeping the people out of reach and creating frustration and stress instead of calmness.

I strongly support and believe that preparedness comes first. Understanding the importance of being prepared for any type of emergency is crucial for survival and the key to a several days without food or water. Whether help is provided or not, being prepared somehow alleviates the already distress caused by the disaster especially when several services are not restored due to the aftermath from the catastrophe.

Also let's not forget the so-called "disaster cycle". Surprise, helplessness, panic, anger, consternation, placing blame to external and internal factors usually involve emotion more than anything and becomes a cycle every day while trying to recover from the crisis.

Waiting for help to arrive, the cry for immediate precautionary measures, the searching for answers privately and officially to start rebuilding play an important issue for the local people. The promised monetary help that sometimes does not arrive where it is needed, creates more tension to the region that has been affected. Quick response to a disaster is significantly important to reduce total loss and to help people in need.

After all, considering the magnitude of a Natural Disaster and its effects, we must understand that it becomes a social problem and most of all, remember to be prepared to survive under any condition for the well-being of each individual.

Conclusion:

Social Problem class helped me understand the different perspectives in how the society sees and deals with many issues now days.

The different points of view and theories from the three sociological traditions made my understanding be more clear about different subjects discussed in class.

The films watched for the class assignments opened a new window in my visualization of *social problems*, one in particular catching my attention for the “missing women” in India, having a critical viewing of the subject affecting the society as well as the other subjects discussed during class, learning and enjoying at the same time all the knowledge gained during the semester.