



## Science Reporter

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## TRAGEDY IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

*A story is told of five blind men who when they encountered an elephant gave their own versions based on their own narrow perspective. Each of them failed to perceive the bigger picture. If you look at it from today's perspective, 'Climate Change' is the new rampaging elephant and consciously turning their faces away from the approaching danger are blindfolded authorities, policy makers, development agencies and law makers.*

*Uttarakhand, Malin and now Jammu & Kashmir... During the past one year there have been three weather-related tragedies compounded by mismanagement, wrong planning, misdirected development projects, heavy building activity on river flood plains, and of course, a complete blind eye to the possible unfolding pattern of extreme climatic events.*

*A study at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology has shown that between 1950 and 2000, the incidence of heavy rainfall events (more than 100 mm in a day) and very heavy events (more than 150 mm in a day) have increased while moderate events (5-100 mm in a day) have decreased. The Working Group II of the IPCC Assessment Report also predicted that floods and droughts are likely to increase in India. India will get more rainfall but in lesser number of rainy days and increase in extreme precipitation during monsoons is also predicted.*

*And this is pretty much the picture the world over. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said that the first six weeks of 2014 witnessed an unusual number of extremes of heat, cold and rain. There were heat waves in Slovenia and Australia, snow in Vietnam, wettest winter in 250 years in Britain, and the southern hemisphere started off the year with the highest temperatures ever recorded. Last year the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had also reported that the number, frequency and intensity of hot days and heat waves was increasing, along with an increase in the intensity and number of heavy rainfall events.*

*The Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences has finally woken up to the impending challenge and decided to further study the reasons behind extreme climatic events and find out whether it has any link with the changing climatic conditions of the South Asian region. It is a good beginning indeed.*

*Meanwhile, the tragedy in Jammu & Kashmir needs to be looked at as a serious failure of mechanisms put together to aid the citizens. It has been known for quite some time that the extremely fragile mountainous regions of the country are the most vulnerable to the effects of global warming and climate change.*

*Rather than burying their heads in the sand Ostrich-like, authorities and governments in such areas need to work on countering the effects of climate-induced changes whether it involves development planning, preserving forests, river management, disaster management and relief or making citizens aware of the impending calamitous effects of climate change.*

Hasan Jawaid Khan



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