



## Socio-Cultural Life in Terms of Physical Health and Post Disaster Society

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### Abstract

*On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2013, the state of Uttarakhand suffered with major cloudburst that resulted into a huge destruction of whole area near Kedar Valley. Having affected with socially, economically and physically the people of Uttarakhand cannot forget that day. Data have been collected from Chamoli, Rudraparyag and Utrakashi Districts. The study is divided into two parts in first part respondents present health condition has been assessed and in second part impact has been analyzed between pre and post disaster society. Significance of culture in post disaster society in association with health-related practices are interrelated concepts. We cannot resolve the health-related issues from outside the cultural practices of society. Like WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) it is practice that cannot be imprint overnight in anybody's mind. These must be unconsciously practiced by an individual and the only source through that it can be embedded in individual's mind is via cultural practices in family and society.*

**Keywords:** Social Vulnerability, Post Disaster Society, Physical Health and hygiene

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2013, the state of Uttarakhand suffered with major cloudburst that resulted into a huge destruction of whole area near Kedar Valley. Collision of westerlies with monsoon rain brought about a deadly combination of precipitation, fast melting of snow and overflowing of glacial lake, Chorabari Tal brought a dangerous hydrological disaster. Flood water along with slit and mud came out of Chorabari Tal was even more destructive as it was dense and more impactful. Disasters like flood and landslide are so common in Uttarakhand that it has become the part and parcel of their life. Having affected with socially, economically and physically the people of Uttarakhand cannot forget that day. The entire Garhwal division of Uttarakhand is divided into seven districts and among these three districts had received the severe destruction due to flood in 2013. Social vulnerability is related to characteristics that influence an individual or group's ability or inability to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from or adapt to any external stress such as the impact of flooding placed on their livelihoods and well-being (Blaikie, 1994; Dawod, Mirza, & Al-Ghamdi, 2012; Kelly & Adger, 2000). Data have been collected from Chamoli, Rudraparyag and Utrakashi Districts. The study is divided into two parts in first part respondents present health condition has been assessed and in second part impact has been analyzed between pre and post disaster society. Study has been done within the of socio-cultural realm and health status of the respondents has been ascertained

### 1. Socio-cultural life in terms of Physical Health and Post Disaster Society

In a post disaster society disruption caused by flood all over the area various water related diseases also spread. Health related practices like WaSH (water, sanitation and hygiene) has been helpful and result oriented in many studies. Socio-cultural life of any disaster



affected society is majorly affected. Health issues cannot be seen beyond the complex whole of cultural aspect. According to E. Goffman society views illness as a stigma and other members of society also views them in the same manner and shows apathy towards them. This stigmatization of illness often effects the patient in negative manner. This shows that how our culture stigmatized the illness and the solution lies within the culture. Cultural significance of health has to be look after in post disaster society to counter the negative impact on the affected individual.

### 1. Loss of Physical Health

Pre-Disaster and post disaster society must be seen through two different angles. Physical health status of any affected family is completely different in pre and post disaster society. Therefore, it is very much necessary to take into account the loss of physical health.

**Table-1: Loss of Physical Health**

| Loss of Health | Frequency  | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| Yes            | 216        | 72         |
| No             | 45         | 25         |
| Can't say      | 39         | 13         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> |

The given table tries to show that 72% of the people who have lost their physical health at the time of tragedy. 25% of the people have also given negative answer under this. Whereas there were 13% people who have refused to say anything on this issue.

Thus, table data shows that maximum person were disturbed with the physical loss due to disaster. It was very hard to cope with the health-related problems in post disaster society.

### 2. Open Defecation and Awareness

Open defecation is not the problem related to hilly areas only it is the pan India problem across the whole country. Post disaster scenario is completely different and people usually forced for open defecation. That further led towards mass illness. This question will bring about the health-related practices by the respondents.

**Table-2: Open Defecation and Awareness**

| Open Defecation and Awareness | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes                           | 300       | 100        |
| No                            | 00        | 00         |
| Total                         | 300       | 100        |

This table shows that all the respondents are aware about the open defecation.

Thus, data shows that population are fully aware about the open defecation and its repercussion. But in post disaster society open defecation is a major problem.

### 3. Toilets in Houses



Having toilets in house have been a protective measure for society in terms of security and health. This also represents the societal development and thinking level of family and its members. Women community needs this more than male for security and health purpose. Hence this is also a symbol of empowerment.

**Table- 3: Toilets in Houses**

| Toilets      | Frequency  | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Yes          | 243        | 81         |
| No           | 57         | 19         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table shows that 81% of the respondents have toilets whereas only 19% don't have toilet. Thus, in post disaster society after normalization in terms of settlement people focused on issues related to sanitation and hygiene. Having being affected with the health-related issues post disaster society have put their attention towards the health aspect of the family.

#### **i. Clean India Mission and Awareness**

Clean India mission is for sanitation and hygiene. A mission mode programme of Government of India. need public participation to get success. Endorsement by government and NGOs aware the common man about the advantages to clean India mission. Hence these questions in interview schedule will tell about the public mindset towards hygiene and sanitation.

**Table-4: Clean India Mission and Awareness**

| Awareness    | Frequency  | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Yes          | 255        | 85         |
| No           | 45         | 15         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table shows that 85% of the population is aware about the clean India mission program whereas only 15% is unknown about this.

Data suggests that clean India Mission have enlightened the common man across the whole region. Everyone is concern about the hygiene and sanitation.

#### **ii. Hand Wash Culture**

Washing hands before and after food is the health related practice that has to be inculcate during socialization process. It is a kind of social practice to promote hygiene and sanitation. All these are the part of Socio-cultural life of common man.

**Table-5: Culture of Hand wash**

| Hand Wash Culture | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes               | 188       | 62.66      |
| No                | 112       | 37.33      |



|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> |
|--------------|------------|------------|

Table shows that 62.66% respondents usually wash their hands before eating whereas 37.33% respondents don't using do this practice.

Thus data, suggests that culture of hand wash is prevalent in society but it need to promote among each and every household.

### iii. Knowledge About Hygiene Related Practices:

Sanitation and hygiene both goes hand in hand. In this study sanitation and hygiene are included in health-related practices that is necessary to quell illness in post disaster society.

**Table-6: Knowledge about Hygiene Related Practices**

| <b>Knowledge</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes              | 267              | 89                |
| No               | 33               | 11                |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>300</b>       | <b>100</b>        |

Table shows that 89% of respondents are aware about sanitation and hygiene whereas 11 % of respondents are unaware about this.

Thus, data suggests that sanitation and hygiene is very much the part of our culture that has to push forward.

### iv. Illness due to disaster:

Health is an issue that will directly affect the socio-economic status. Post disaster societies are prone to various water borne diseases and related epidemics. Water logging causes multiple health related problems and so economic loss. This question included with the objective to know about the loss in terms of economic caused by health-related issues.

**Table- 7: Illness due to disaster**

| <b>Illness</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes            | 256              | 85.33             |
| No             | 44               | 14.66             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>300</b>       | <b>100</b>        |

This tables clearly shows that 85.66% respondents had health related issues after disaster whereas 14.66 % respondents faced no problem in post disaster society.

Thus, tables suggests that population at large has been affected with the health problems directly related to lack of sanitation practices in post disaster society.

### v. Doctors Attention after Illness in Post Disaster Society

Satisfaction of any service is the base of delivery. Any kind of facility needs the satisfaction of consumer. Here the affected population is the consumer and their satisfaction is necessary for any help by authorities.

**Table-8: Doctors Attention after Illness in Post Disaster Society**

| Response     | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Satisfied    | 53        | 17.66      |
| Dissatisfied | 192       | 64         |
| Not attended | 45        | 15         |
| Cannot say   | 10        | 3.33       |
| Total        | 300       | 100        |

Table data shows that only 17.66% of the respondents are satisfied with the services, 64% is unsatisfied, 15% of the respondents not attended, where as 3.33% not in position to say anything.

Thus, data suggests that authorities and doctors haven't served their duties effectively in post disaster society. Because of that disease spreads more rapidly.

#### vi. Behavioural Changes After disaster in terms of Hygiene:

Every society after any upheaval opted for some changes. Behavioural changes in terms of sanitation and hygiene are must to reduce the health-related problems. Habits of individuals and family members pass on to the next generation. Such changes are must to reduce the economic burden of family.

**Table-9: Behavioural Changes after Disaster in terms of Hygiene**

| Behavioural Changes  | Frequency  | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Washing hands        | 53         | 17.66      |
| Using Toilets only   | 47         | 15.66      |
| Stop water wastage   | 32         | 10.66      |
| Less use of plastics | 33         | 11         |
| All of them          | 135        | 45         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> |

Above data shows that 45% of the respondents opted for the changes in all the categories, whereas 17.66% opted for washing hands, 15.66% opted for toilet use, 10.66% opted for water saving, 11% committed to reduce the use of plastics.

Thus, data shows that maximum population have opted for behavioural changes in order to reduce their burden on hospitals and doctors.

## 2. Impact on Socio-Cultural Life in terms of Physical Health

Impact on socio-cultural life in post disaster society includes various variables. Among all these health is very much the part of cultural setting in post disaster society. Stigmatization of illness and health can only be understood through the study of culture. Therefore, in post disaster society health related issues must be understood from the cultural point of view only then the real picture will come up.



Here in this section impact on socio-cultural life from the physical health point of view has been analyzed.

**i. Impact on Hygiene Related Practice in Pre and Post Disaster Society**

Hygiene practices and health are inseparably related to each other. Sanitation practices have been the part of our society. Maintaining hygiene in post disaster society is critically demanding.

**Table-10: Impact on Hygiene Related Practice in Pre and Post Disaster Society**

| Impact / Hygiene Practice | Yes | No  | A little Bit | Total      |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|------------|
| <b>Before</b>             | 69  | 106 | 125          | <b>300</b> |
| <b>After</b>              | 153 | 52  | 95           | <b>300</b> |

Data shows that it pre disaster society was not very much concerned about the hygiene practice in houses. But after the impact of disaster hygiene practice has become the part of their culture. One this is notable here is that there are some households who practices the hygiene related behavior in their day today life even before disaster because hygiene is the part of their culture and they learnt this through their parents and family members.

**ii. Impact on Hand Washing Cultures in Post Disaster Society**

Hand washing is not only an action of cleaning it is a health practice that is the part of our culture. Washing hands before eating, after eating, or any other activities that might infect the health of anyone are the habits that have to be developed through cultural practices. A comparative analysis has been made between pre and post disaster scenario.

**Table-11: Hand washing Practices**

| Impact / Hand Washing Culture | Yes | No  | A little Bit | Total      |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|------------|
| <b>Before</b>                 | 133 | 141 | 26           | <b>300</b> |
| <b>After</b>                  | 209 | 57  | 34           | <b>300</b> |

Table shows that 133 respondents were washing hand before and after eating in pre disaster set up but after disaster this number goes up to 209 and only 57 respondents are now not washing hand in post disaster society.

A drastic change in hand washing culture has been noticed in post disaster society. Majority of the population (69.66%) are now adopted the hand washing culture. Washing hand is a very normal action but it also related to huge health benefits. Even in the time of corona pandemic we all knew the benefits of hand washing. In post disaster society washing hands brings about many changes in human life style. This directly impacted the health condition of an individual so as economic factor also affected. Hence practices like hand washing and sanitation has now become cultural practices of every individual in post disaster society.

**iii. Impact on Awareness of Open Defecation in Pre and Post Disaster Society:**

Data on impact on awareness related to open defecation and sanitation is as follows:

**Table-12: Impact on Awareness of Open Defecation**

| <b>Impact / Hygiene Practice</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>A little Bit</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>Before</b>                    | 173        | 36        | 91                  | <b>300</b>   |
| <b>After</b>                     | 300        | 00        | 00                  | <b>300</b>   |

After disaster all the respondents were aware about the issue of open defecation whereas before disaster only 173 respondents were aware about the negative outcome of the open defecation.

Thus, data shows that after disaster everyone knows about the negative effects of open defecation.

### **Conclusion:**

Cleanliness is the main task of a person. Where man lives, he wants to live cleanly. The reason for this is that if he does not keep cleanliness, then he will suffer from many diseases and there is every possibility of getting that disease to his family members too. But if we look here, there are many such places where people are unable to keep cleanliness even if they want. What is the reason that people do not cooperate with each other in the matter of cleanliness and start throwing garbage at their arbitrarily fixed place. Because of which dirt and disease start spreading. But if we see the same, then many problems arise due to these diseases, such as their health problems and financial crisis. To get rid of diseases, it is necessary to spend money. If we look at this, then it comes to know that the government is also very much concerned on this subject and tries to provide all possible help so that wherever there is a place in its area, the life of the people there is healthy and they live a happy life. This is the reason that many people have also started awareness programs on this and people go ahead in terms of cooperation and awareness with each other. Let's also follow the situation of each other city in order to become like them. If we see, it can be seen that in the matter of cleanliness, many efforts have been made not only by the government but at the national and international level. WHO and UNESSCO have described and implemented one measure on the global level on the matter of health and have warned the government there in other cities and states for discussion and awareness on this subject, because health life is the key to a happy life. It is a symbol and is an indicator of prosperity.

When people were talked to on the issue of WASH and other practices, it was tried to know how concerned they are about health? How careful are you? He was asked whether there was a loss in physical health, during this disaster, at the time of this flood, there were 72% people who gave a positive answer which is the maximum. The lowest we see is that there were 13% people who refused to say anything. But there were 25% people who said that no such physical damage has happened, but their economic damage and mental damage have definitely happened. But in the case of bodily harm, he has survived and it is thank God that no harm has been done to him. In this way, if we look at the positive response, it is found in the representative that yes his physical health has also suffered significant damage which he describes.





They were asked whether they have any awareness or facility regarding open defecation. On this subject people said that yes they defecate in the open, they are compelled to do so because they do not have good facilities. The facilities provided by the government are beyond their reach. He is compelled to do so. For this they have to face a lot of difficulties. Even the women of the house have to do this, which is like a very sad incident, but still forced to do so. He appealed to the government many times for this but to no avail. Due to being a hilly area, no good facilities like this are available, they are not successful in getting the construction done because providing such facilities is also a challenging task in itself. But it is a compulsion for them to do such open defecation with the family and they do so.

A maximum of 81% people gave positive answer while 19 percent people gave negative answer on having toilet in the house. Now if we compare it with the statistics related to open defecation, then we find that both of them clash a lot, that is, those who go out in the open are those who are compelled by the habit and do not improve it. Because it is found here that 81 percent of the people who have the maximum number of toilets in their house, that is, even if they are going to open defecation, then their habit has become bad.

On asking the above information about Clean India Mission and Awareness, it is found that 85% of the people are fully aware of it while 15% of the people do not have enough information about it. Whereas such a mission is a very big mission, which is a very big campaign run by the current government. In which the whole of India is included, that is, emphasis is being laid on cleanliness. Now a very long period of illness passed, whose name was Karona. Due to this a sense of awareness was created among the people for cleanliness. Awareness was also imposed on the people by the government. Even though the law was made right but people were warned to follow it, because this disease can be overcome by cleanliness.

Programs like hand washing were also implemented at the government level. Advertisements were made for it everywhere to make people aware. A mission was also run for the awareness of the people. From print media to electronic media, they worked very hard on this, worked a lot, warned people. When asked on this topic whether people are following a culture like washing hands, 56.33% people were those who said that yes they still follow. He keeps washing his hands every necessary time so that the disease can be controlled. It turns out that most people have a complete sense of awareness, as hand washing keeps diseases away and more happiness can be seen among people. 43.66 percent of the people have also given a negative answer to this i.e. they isolate themselves from the process of socialization which can prove to be dangerous for them, their family and the society in which they live.

Due to the devastation caused by the floods and disasters, many diseases also spread. On this subject, when people were asked whether they came under its grip, 85.33% of the people said that yes they came under its grip. Whereas 14.67% people got away with it because they followed the rules completely. The rule issued by the doctor or authority to get rid of diseases, but the lowest 3.33 percent people refused to say anything. Whereas maximum 64% people were not happy or





not satisfied with it. But there were 15% people who did not attend the rule or program issued by them. But if we see, there are 17.66% of the people who are completely satisfied as well as they participated enthusiastically in this program and completely assimilated this rule.

When a problem becomes very serious and the problem is solved later. But man is such a creature that someone learns from that problem and changes his behavior, because he does not want to repeat that mistake again. On this topic if we see how much has changed in your behavior in this matter? Maximum 45% of the people were such that all kinds of people take measures like do not waste water, use toilet, wash hands, and reduce the use of plastic. There are 10.66% people who do not waste water. There we see that 17.66 people wash their hands continuously. The good thing is that 15.66 percent of the respondent uses the toilet. Because those who follow all these things, they feel that diseases will be away and they will be able to live happily with their family. Otherwise, they will have to face difficulties to get rid of the problem which will prove to be dangerous for them.

Have they suffered any physical damage due to the damage during the disaster? Or has there been any change in their physical health? Or has it harmed them? When asked on this topic, a maximum of 71% people have pointed themselves in the positive direction, while there were 29% people who have pointed themselves in negative aspects.

Significance of culture in post disaster society in association with health-related practices are interrelated concepts. We cannot resolve the health-related issues from outside the cultural practices of society. Like WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) it is practice that cannot be imprint overnight in anybody's mind. These must be unconsciously practiced by an individual and the only source through that it can be embedded in individual's mind is via cultural practices in family and society. Culture is deeply involved in matters like sanitation and hygiene.

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