

Geological Hazards and Natural Disasters: India

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By virtue of its geographical situation in the Northern hemisphere between N8-~~N~~37 and E70-97 degrees, India presents a domain in which a variety of climatic conditions rule, the tropical monsoon being the dominant feature. Seasonal and unseasonal floods, cyclones and droughts and landslides are caused by these climatic variations. While volcanic activity is rare but for the recent eruptions of Barren Island in the Bay of Bengal, earthquakes have been fairly frequent, both in the peninsular and extra-peninsular regions, with more in the latter because of the highly seismic nature nature. The 1991 Uttar Kashi quake, the 1993 Latur quake and the 1998 quake of Jabalpur are grim reminders of this phenomenon. India is a third world country and spends millions of rupees on relief and resettlement measures after floods, cyclones and droughts. Establishment of a Natural Disaster Management Institute and a natural disaster advisory council to assist it, construction of cyclone shelters, initiation of desert development programmes, establishment of a close seismic monitoring network in earthquake prone areas, soil conservation, flood-bank construction and catchment area development are some of the steps taken to face these geological and natural hazards. Use of space technology is encouraged to provide timely and synoptic information