
Influence Of Earthquake On Human Life

Natural hazards have always fascinated me and therefore I made a decision to write this article on the subject. Earthquakes just like other hazards of nature are unpredictable and remain one of the most devastating among all natural disasters. A disturbing yet an inevitable fact for humans is that none of the measurement scales, science, or equipments is able to predict the exact way and time of this great disaster. They are the most expensive natural hazards faced by humans. A strong earthquake at the wrong time in the wrong place can result to the loss of millions of human lives and a great financial damage. Over the years, a lot of earthquakes had happened all over the world and led to a devastating effect in the cities where it occurred. Below is a picture of an earthquake that occurred in 2011 at Tohoku. It claimed the lives of over 17900 people and rendered over 50,000 people homeless.

But what is an earthquake? An earthquake can be referred to as the immense shaking of the surface of the Earth, coming from the release of energy in the Earth's lithosphere suddenly that generates seismic waves. It can be either weak (not really felt) or very strong (this destroys cities and toss people around). Generally, earthquake can be described as any seismic event (whether natural or caused by humans) that creates seismic waves. Earthquakes occur naturally on the surface of the earth when the plates located below the earth's crust start moving. The movement produces vibrations which arise at the epicenter of the earth and thereby causes maximum destruction and even ruin entire cities.

Also, events such as rupture of geological faults (major cause of earthquakes), volcanic activity, nuclear tests, mine blasts, and landslides are also causes. When this hazard occurs, tsunamis are produced and they destroy everything in their path at the sea such as buildings, structures at the beach, and so on. Check out this video of an earthquake that occurred in Earthquakes are the most unpredictable and unexpected natural disasters and they have damaging impact on buildings and the lives of people because when they occur, people have the time to save their lives talk less of properties. So, how do Earthquake affect human lives Earthquakes have devastating effects on humans and its environment and can affect our lives in many ways:• Loss of LivesLoss of human lives remains the major consequences of earthquakes.

The seismic waves generated from earthquake cause the ground to shake, this then result to the shaking of buildings and homes. In turn, items begin to fall, roofs and walls follow, and then the whole structure collapses. The collapse of these structures which are built from weak and heavy materials causes a great number of deaths. Likewise, soil liquefaction might occur and thereby causing the buildings to sink into the ground. Liquefaction is the mixing of the water underground (groundwater) and sand or soil during the shaking of an earthquake. The ground

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becomes very soft (just like quicksand) when the water and soil are mixed. When this occurs under a building, it starts to lean, then tip over, and sink several feet in the ground. Immediately after the earth quake, people living in such buildings suffer a lot of injuries to various parts of the body and this happens due to falling of the buildings' rubble, concrete, cement, e. t. c. on the trapped men. Later, death occurs due to internal and external bleeding, grievous injuries, and choking.

Earthquakes, together with severe storms, coastal wave attack, wildfires, and volcanic activity can creates slope instability which leads to landslides, This occurs mainly in areas with steep slopes, these landslides therefore flatten and destroy houses resulting to added loss of life from the earthquake. In Japan, the Great Kanto earthquake erupted a fire that killed more than 92,000 people. In 2004 the tsunamis unleashed by the Indian Ocean earthquake killed a total of 227,300 people in Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Sri Lanka. Again In 2011, the Tohoku earthquake created a run of great tsunami waves, which destroyed the coastal communities and over 17,900 people were killed. Thousands and thousands of people are been killed yearly because of this devastating disaster. Even, it is believed that since 1900, 2. 3 million people have died in 2,233 earthquakes. Below is the chart that shows the earthquakes with the highest death toll since then.

Furthermore, earthquakes can also cause fires by destroying the gas lines or electrical power. When this occurs, it is difficult to stop the spread of a fire and this in turn leads to a huge number of deaths. For instance, a lot of deaths from San Francisco earthquake in 1906 were caused by the fire. • Social impactsThe social impact on humans is one of the main effects of earthquakes. A strong earthquake destroys factories, buildings, shops, bridges, schools, and roads, these render thousands of people homeless and a lot of children became orphans. The Haiti earthquake in 2010 which claimed more than 200,000 people lives and a lot of people injured, made over 1. 5 million people homeless. Even after 6 years, there were still about 60,000 people homeless. In Italy recently, where close to 300 lost their lives, more than 60,000 were left homeless. In Japan in 2011, over 500. 000 people were left homeless after the disaster. Homelessness therefore creates divisions within the society as an “us vs. them” mentality develops and people affected often suffer from stigma, shame, and isolation. Also, conflicts over the use of community and public spaces increase when there are a lot of people without access to their own “private” space. These conflicts can also bring about deeply rooted issues connected to negative opinions about people of society who are vulnerable, poor, or marginalized. Moreover, those who survive the attack are forced to live in crowded shelter places with minimal or no sanitary facilities, these then cause a break out of communicable water borne diseases like dysentery, cholera, protozoa infections, e. t. c Furthermore, according to a study about homeless people as a result of earthquake:- 77 percent chance that they may be sleeping rough. - 53 percent chance that they would be involved in street drinking - 32 percent chance that they may become a beggar - 10 percent chance that they might be involved

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- Injuries

In addition to loss of life, earthquakes cause a great deal of traumatic injuries to humans which result from flying glass, falling objects and collapsing walls caused from ground shaking, or people running during the shaking. Some of these earthquake-related injuries are always complex and of different patterns. And if not managed correctly, they are brutal enough to lead to long term disability and functional impairment (due to irreparable damage to the, eyes, limbs ears, e. t. c) Examples of such injuries include fractures that develop complications such as alignment problems or infection, spinal cord injuries, and crush injuries of extremities needing amputation. Damage to buildings, elevators, structural elements, fire protection systems, and stairs, caused by the shaking from a strong earthquake can play a vital part in the spread of fire and hinder the ability of residents to evacuate. This is a serious problem that can result to injuries such as burns.

- Mental effect/Psychological effect

Earthquakes can also affect humans mentally or psychologically. What must it be like to see your family or friends trapped inside a collapsed building or missing, assumed dead or your home getting destroyed. I have met people who have not been able to restore balance in their everyday lives; because anytime the Earth twitches, they panic. Any little noise, they run for cover. Some are so traumatized that a well-meaning, but unexpected touch from a friend can cause them to scream out in fright. Their body is always on high alert for another threat to their safety, and may make them feel jumpy and on edge. After life has been threatened by an earthquake, it is common for survivors to show signs of depression and/or anxiety. Also, some of them who are directly involved in the incident will show lots of psychological symptoms that look like PTSD such as intense fear, nightmares, and flashbacks or they constantly experience the event in their head. In addition, think of the mental effect on the Search and Rescue teams who look at for survivors in the collapsed buildings. Yes, they are trained for their job, but it must be terrible to find dead body after another, when in search for survivors.

- Economics Impacts

Apart from social and mental effects, earthquakes can affect humans economically. Governments have to take care of the damage caused by this great disaster. As we all know that earthquakes cause infrastructures to collapse, shops, reservoirs dams, and hospitals are destroyed after the incident. Governments will have to spend a huge amount of money to rebuild the places destroyed. Moreover, this natural disaster causes spending of the funds to distribute medicine and food to victims. Particularly, Markets may be disrupted and this causes

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buyers and sellers being nervous. Furthermore, those who have investment in that particular area may decide to leave. And if this happens, it will result in unemployment and a cause loss of job opportunities as well as reduction in the country's income and an unstable economy.

- Environmental effects

Earthquake also affects the human environment. Damage to the environment during an earthquake causes destruction of properties and lives beyond that caused during the incident. Landslides which occur during an earthquake can cause huge clouds of dust that can lead to infection with fungus's spores "Coccidioides immitis", a very deadly disease known as coccidioidomycosis or Valley Fever. Broken water pipes caused by this natural disaster can rupture gas, flood lands, break fuel and electrical lines which lead to fire.

Also, the hazardous material spilled introduces radioactive, medical, sewage, and poisonous material into the water, air, and earth. Aftershocks of earthquake can cause new tsunamis to form and hit the land before communities have a time to pull through from the original damage. And when a lot of tsunamis hit the seaside area, it can cause great erosion, thereby demolishing buildings in its way.

Due to this hazard, electricity, sanitation systems, and water of any place are broken and the extent of the damage makes early renovation of these amenities very hard because rescuing of people trapped in the rubble is the main concern of the government and rescue teams. Therefore the affected people face difficulty of sanitation, hygiene and power. Potable and clean drinking water becomes a problem. Earthquakes do not only leave permanent marks in the environment, but also affect human lives. In conclusion, the world has experienced numerous earthquakes in years. Chile, Haiti, Japan, New Zealand, and others and they all have resulted to a massive devastating effect on humans whose effects can be felt physically, economically, environmentally, and socially. Humans in such affected places are in the greatest shock of lives and they require outside support. Therefore, help in the form of temporary shelter, ready to eat food, safe drinking water, and different types of medicines including blood, glucose, e. t. c. have to be rushed in. At the same time, the psychological handling of survivors and disposal of dead bodies becomes the society responsibility. Also, the community needs to look after the survivors that have no one to care for them.

On long term basis, helping of the affected community and rehabilitation becomes difficult as the incident leaves permanent imprint on thousands of the victims in the society. Their social growth, acceptance, and education become a problem that has to be handled by the whole country. In addition, not only those who are direct victims are affected, the whole world is affected and several of them come to help; assist in search operations and help in other jobs. Taking into account the effect of earthquakes on humans (both immediate and later), one can

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understand the huge task involved in taking care of humans after this disaster. Many national and international agencies also assist during this period but even we can contribute towards relief in kind or cash. Prayers for the peace for lost souls and welfare of survivors is something we can also do sincerely.

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