

Climate Revolution Initiative

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Leh and Uttarakhand Flood Damage Could Have Been Averted

Gurgaon, Sep 20, 2010 -- Damage caused by flash floods in Leh and Uttarakhand regions could have been minimised or averted had their respective state governments put in place warning systems to alert citizens of impending disasters which were predicted under climate change report.

The IPCC fourth assessment report released in early 2007 warned of precisely such climate impacts, say Climate Revolution Initiative.

The group, which runs an awareness campaign on climate change using Right to Information (RTI) act, released today RTI replies filed by environment ministry which show they never issued any advisory or note of warning to state governments or the public regarding extreme weather events or climate anomalies.

“The government has acted irresponsibly to scientific warnings on climate change,” says Manu Sharma, founder of the group. “Rather than working to prevent such disasters, the government chose to attack the science behind the predictions.”

Last month DRDO’s lab in Leh, the Defence Institute for High Altitude Research (DIHAR) found that the flash floods in Leh were linked with climate change. DIHAR was tasked to look into the causes of Leh floods as the region is a cold desert with only around 100 mm of annual rainfall.

The scientists at DIHAR led by director Sashi Bala analysed weather data and found multiple climate anomalies such as increased snowfall, prolonged winters and phenomenon of bright sunshine in June and July months.

But isn’t it conventional thinking in scientific circles that no single climate event can be attributed to manmade climate change?

“Yes, but that notion is fast changing”, says Sharma. At a recent conference on climate change attribution organised by US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), scientists proposed that the opposite should be true. They argued that all climate disaster events should be assumed to have link with climate change until evidence surfaces to the contrary.

The sheer growing incidence of climate disasters worldwide overwhelmingly supports this claim. The number of disasters occurring in the last 30 years is four times the number in previous 75. The increase in number of climate disasters worldwide from 1950 is around ten-fold today.

This year itself, world has seen a string of unprecedented climate disasters from heat waves and forest fires in Russia; to floods and landslides in China; to floods in Pakistan; and, breaking up of a massive glacier in Greenland.

Then we have India’s own cloudbursts at Leh and Uttarakhand as well as droughts in Bihar and subsequent flooding in Gandak river. All of this is in line with what the IPCC reports have predicted.

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About Climate Revolution

Climate Revolution Initiative is a public awareness campaign that can potentially transform the social and political climate on climate change in India and be replicated in any part of the world. The ambitious initiative aims to educate and mobilise the public to force the governments to change. Climate Revolution Initiative is led by Manu Sharma, an activist and renewable energy expert. Full details about its RTI Initiative, including scanned replies from various govt. authorities, are available on [**www.climaterevolution.net/rti**](http://www.climaterevolution.net/rti)