



Disaster and Its Mitigation an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Disaster-related issues are everywhere on a global scale; whether natural or man-made. They have been the common problems that threaten the welfare of human beings now. Despite the social, economic, cultural and technological advancements of the world today, disasters are still hunting for man's welfare. As of today, the world is suffering from COVID-19, a biological disaster. The root causes of disasters have been a subject of debate whether they are natural or man-made, and people ask a tricky question: why can't the world stop or get rid of the disasters? To answer this mind-boggling question, the proper understanding of how the final revelation to mankind; the glorious Qur'an, exposes this matter is necessary.

The glorious Qur'an has a very special look to this matter. In its various verses such as Qur'an, 57:22, 64:11, 42:30, 7:96, 35:45, 30:41-42 and 3:137, it asserts that disasters; whether natural or man-made, result from what our hands have earned. Specifically, this study intends to enlighten the world on the correct perception of disasters; and their mitigation measures, facing the world today in the light of Islamic perspectives. It extensively uses documentary analysis methodology to discuss, explain and synthesize the maxims from this subject.

The key note of this study asserts that some disasters result from complex interactions of the human activities and natural sources of disasters; whether legally or illegally. These complex interactions are what generate risk and vulnerabilities to hazards and ultimately result in disasters. While some disasters; such as the outbreak of some infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, result from malpractices; like illegal sexual intercourses, of some societies. Tracing back from the narrations of the previous prophets up to the last prophet in the Qur'an, Islam has used *ijtihad* to respond to the contemporary problems in the form of disasters; such as disasters due to geological, environmental and non-environmental like sexual malpractice, which later becomes the normative foundation for the mitigation of disasters such as Covid-19 pandemic and others. Therefore, modern men have to learn how to mitigate the risk of some disasters like environmental disasters and avoiding some of the disasters such HIV/AIDS by adhering to correct teaching of Islam

Key Word; Disaster, Islam, Fasaad, Musiba, Fitna, Natural-disaster, Man-made disaster, Hazard and Risk.

Introduction

Since time immemorial, disasters have been seen as one of the most difficult issues facing the world globally. Citing back to the religious revealed books, disasters were taken as God's punishments sent down to destroy civilizations as an act of divine retribution (Torah and Qur'an). In recent decades, a striking world-wide trend towards rising fatalities and economic losses because of natural and man-made hazards can be seen all over the world. A World Bank report that assessed the main natural disaster hotspots in the world found that approximately 3.8 million km² and 790 million individuals are exposed to at least two natural hazards, while 0.5 million km² and 105 million individuals are exposed to three or more natural hazards.

An increase in the magnitude, frequency and geographic distribution of natural disasters has been recently demonstrated, particularly for those related to climate change. Records show that between 1994 and 2013, floods were the most frequent event (43% of all events registered), affecting approximately 2.5 billion people and caused the greatest material costs and losses. In the same period, earthquakes and tsunamis caused the highest number of fatalities, estimated at around 750,000, with tsunamis being twenty times more lethal than earthquakes. These statistics demonstrate the critical multi-hazard environment to which the global population is exposed. The combination of human and economic losses, together with reconstruction costs, makes natural disasters both a humanitarian and an economic problem. Between 1994 and 2013, natural disasters produced economic losses of more than USD 2.6 trillion. More recently, in 2017, USD 314 billion were spent globally on damage related to natural disasters.

There is currently an unresolved debate regarding whether natural disasters hinder a country's economic growth, given that the empirical evidence is somewhat heterogeneous. However, high expenditure associated with natural disasters may reduce investment in other priority areas for a country, such as education, health, transport and security. There are no countries or communities that are currently immune to the impact of natural disasters. It is, however, possible to reduce the effects of these events through management strategies focused on risk reduction. Citizen preparedness strategies play a key role in reducing the effects of hazards that cannot be mitigated, as such strategies seek to improve the ability of individuals and communities to respond in the event of a natural disaster.

In 24 January 2019: The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) highlighted findings from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) concluding that extreme weather events accounted for the majority of the 61.7 million people affected by disasters in 2018 (IISD, 2019). Disaster's approach in Religious perspective differs from normal understanding. Islam like any other religion perceives disasters from different dimensions. In Islam, disasters are either perceived as calamities and punishments, or Gods love and mercy to His creatures especially human beings. In whichever way, disasters have physical, psychological, economical, social and political impact in the society. This impact is the area that needs mitigation so as to reduce and minimize the damage which is always felt after its occurrence.

The study intends to enlighten the world on the Islamic perception of the disasters and their mitigation measures. The study will deal with both geographical and non geographical disasters. It will extensively use documentary analysis methodology to discuss, explain and synthesize the maxims from this subject. The objectives of Islamic Law (maqasid shariah) will be taken as a guiding tool in solving disasters in contemporary society. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of disaster risk reduction strategies and programs in multi-hazard environments Islamically.

Statement of the Problem

Disaster related issues have been common since time immemorial. Recently, the situation: whether natural or man-made, has increased and worsened immensely, alarming the world at large. Many researches have been conducted with little effort exerted on spiritual aspects in dealing with disaster issues. This has prompted the negligence of incorporating religious institutions in the disaster mitigation process. In fact the act has denied the researchers an opportunity of incorporating religious values which might be helpful in healing souls of the victims after disasters since most of them succumb to trauma due to the losses they incur after the incident. To fill this gap, the researcher is going to research about the Islamic perception of disaster and its mitigation.

Objectives of the Research

The objective of this study is to enlighten the world about the Islamic perception of disaster mitigation in the shed of objectives of Islamic shari'ah highlight the historical back ground of disaster management in Islam.

Research methodology

This is qualitative research that uses documentary analysis to discuss, explain and synthesize the maxims from this subject. Documentary analysis methodology was used to review the data collected from published articles, books; including the glorious Qur'an and hadith books.

Findings and Discussion

Disaster management in Islam can at least be explored from stories narrated from both the Qur'an and Hadith. Allah explains different appearances of disasters that befall the wrong doors as a punishment to them while pious people are taken as trials and means of purification of their souls as narrated in different verses of the Qur'an and Hadith. In surat al-ankabut. Allah categorically illustrates five types of disasters used in destruction of non believers and transgressors as an act of divine retribution (Qur'an, 29:40). The first disaster came in a form of flood during the time of the prophet Noah. It lasted for 40 days and 40 nights and killed all living things except those on board the ship of Noah (Qur'an, 42:117–119 & 11: 25–26). The second one came in the form of the catastrophic rain of stones in the time of prophet Luth in the city of Sodom (currently known as the border of Israel Jordan) (Quran, 11: 82). This occurred as a punishment from Allah to the people of prophet Luth who had indulged themselves in homosexuality. The third disaster was about the famine. It lasted for seven consecutive years as illustrated in the Qur'an (Qur'an, 12:47–49). The fourth occurred in the time of prophet Musa as punishment of king Pharaoh and his people due to the injustice they inflicted on the Israelite people. The fifth one was the flood sent to the people of Saba in Yemen as a punishment in response to their transgression (Qur'an, 32: 16).

The sixth one occurred in the form of health disasters such as an outbreak of infectious diseases (Tha'un) that occurred in the land of Sham in the years 638-639 AD (17-18 H). This disaster killed more than 30% of the population of Sham including the Governor and the Companions of the Prophet (Muadz bin Jabal and Suhail bin Amr) whose piety was beyond doubt.

The concept of disasters in Islam appears in different forms of meanings as related in both the Qur'an and Hadith. Some of those appearances are; Musibah (events that befall humans), Balaa' (good or bad tests or trials), Fitnah (misery due to social events), 'Adhaab (torment), Fasaad (ugly, bad and dispute), Halaak (death, perishing, and annihilation), Tadmiir (destruction), Tamziq (destruction for mankind), 'Iqaab (reprisal or punishment) (repeated 80 times), Nazilah (bringing down punishment). On the other hand, disaster can cause serious disruption to human life, (musibah), and it also results in a loss, damage, destruction (tadmiir and tamziq), or the paralysis of social functions of society (halaak and fasaad), as well as conflict and chaos (fitnah) Disasters not only befall those who are guilty or sinful, but also those who are good and righteous and have faith. If a sinful human is hit by a disaster, then it can be seen as iqaab, naazilah, or even a' dhaab for his actions. On the other hand, when pious and righteous people are affected by disasters, the act is perceived to be balaa or tests to improve the quality of their faith As for those who died as a result of a disaster but were innocent, they died as a martyr (glorious in the sight of God). Disaster management in Islam is very much determined by the perspective to interpret disaster. In the Qur'an surah Al-Baqarah (2: 155), it is stated that a disaster is a form of love from Allah and a medium of introspection.

Therefore, disasters must be treated as a test, which opens up opportunities for people to improve the quality of their faith and devotion. Thus, disasters in Islam must be overcome with the spirit of a better life, not fatalistic and pessimistic. In Tarjih's perspective, disaster management is carried out in three stages, namely preventive measures, emergency measures, and recovery. In preventive measures, namely analyzing the causes of disasters and understanding the role of humans as caliphs (representatives of God) on earth. This step was inspired by the story of the Prophet Yusuf in the Qur'an surah Yusuf verses 47-49. God commanded the people of Prophet Yusuf to do farming for seven years in a row and the harvest should be stored except for a little to be consumed because there will be a famine which will last for 7 years. Second, disaster emergency response, which is a series of activities carried out immediately at the time of a disaster to deal with the adverse effects, which include activities to rescue and evacuate victims, property, the fulfilment of basic needs, protection of vulnerable groups, management of refugees, and emergency recovery. This step is inspired by the Qur'an surah al-Maidah (5: 32) which states that whoever takes care of the life of a human being, it is as if saving the lives of all humans. Third, recovery is the rehabilitation of public services and the reconstruction of post-disaster infrastructure. This step is extracted from the Qur'an surah Ar-Ra'du which states that God does not change the fate of people until they change their own destiny. al-Ra'du (13: 11].

Islamic Approach to Disaster Management

Before discussing Islamic approach/model for disaster mitigation and management, there is need to have a glimpse on general approaches as discussed by different researchers with the aim of understanding its significance. Kelly (1998), states that, there are four main reasons why a disaster model can be useful as follows:

1. A model can simplify complex events by helping to distinguish between critical elements. Its usefulness is more significant when responding to disasters with severe time constraints.
2. Comparing actual conditions with a theoretical model can lead to a better understanding of the current situation and can thus facilitate the planning process and the comprehensive completion of disaster management plans.
3. The availability of a disaster management model is an essential element in quantifying disaster events.
4. A documented disaster management model helps establish a common base of understanding for all involved. It also allows for better integration of the relief and recovery efforts.

Therefore, it was inferred from the above points that a well defined and clear model is highly beneficial in the management of disasters because it facilitates the securing of support for disaster management efforts. Hence, disaster management needs a formal system, or a model, to manage with the possibility of reducing negative consequences of a disaster. Based on a survey of relevant literature, different disaster management models were separated into the following main categories: logical, integrated, causes and others. Logical models provide a simple definition of disaster stages and emphasize the basic events and actions which constitute a disaster. Integrated models characterize the phases of a disaster by the evolution of functions such as strategic planning and monitoring. In these models, modules are linked as events and actions. The cause category, which is not based on the idea of defining stages in a disaster, suggests some underlying causes of disasters. The last category, describes miscellaneous models.

Integrated disaster management model which is somehow related to Islamic model's first task is hazard assessment which provides the information necessary for the next phase, risk management. These results in decisions about the balance of mitigation and preparedness actions needed to address the risks (Manitoba-Health-Disaster-Management, 2002). This model has altogether six independent elements such as a strategic plan, hazard assessment, risk management, mitigation, preparedness and monitoring and evaluation. Each element observes its own boundaries and involves its own set of activities and processes. These elements are dependent on each other in terms of providing support and can be further broken down into layers of sub-components. The advantage of this model is that it provides a balance between preparedness and flexibility in order to respond fluidly to the specific needs of disasters. Since this model provides the link between actions and events in disasters such links can be tight or loose. For example, it strongly links hazard and risk management activities but fails to provide a tight linkage between the four stages of disaster management which are important elements in a disaster management process (Asghar, Alahakoon and Churilov, 2006). Therefore, they proposed a comprehensive model which is built upon linking the following: (1) hazard assessment and risk management activities; (2) risk management activities and disaster management actions. The distinctive feature that it takes into account is the arrangement of activities in a logical sequence. It is applicable and based on a series of easy-to-determine factors which are combined in a simple way. The result of this combination and linkage of steps is a comprehensive disaster management model.

An illustration of the proposed comprehensive model for disaster management

Generally Islamic disasters management traces its origin back to the prophets preceding Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him as previously discussed in the introductory part of this article. The Qur'an has illustrated several examples of disaster mitigations implored by previous Prophets in different dimensions. Some of the examples are as follow:

1. Narration of the Qur'an in relation to the story of Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him)

In the history of Prophet Nuh, Allah the Al-might narrates in several verses of the Qur'an how he physically and psychologically prepared prophet Nuh on how he was going to tackle the expected disaster which came in a form of flood. In the first stage He commanded him to build an ark which is taken as hazard assessment and preparedness, and then risk assessment which was due to the torrents causing floods. Those who refused to board the ark were risking themselves, hence subject to drowning. Lastly, the destruction caused by floods due to torrents resulted in disaster. So the work of Prophet Nuh

as instructed by the al-mighty Allah was to mitigate the disaster specifically for believers and animals while on the other hand, it was God's punishments sent down to destroy transgressor as an act of divine retribution.

2. Narration of the Qur'an in relation to the story of Prophet Luth (Peace be upon him)

Like Prophet Nuh, the narration of Prophet Luth came in two dimensions too. The first dimension came in the form of punishment to his people as an act of divine retribution too. This was a result of their disobedient which was observed in the recurring of their malpractice of homosexuality. Hence Allah sent angel Jibril to punish them.

3. Narrations of the Qur'an in relation to the story of Prophet Yusuf (Peace be upon him)

The story of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) is another vivid example used in the Qur'an to manifest measures used in dealing with disasters. The verses illustrate the model used by Prophet Yusuf to mitigate hunger disaster saving people's lives. The story easily explains steps and measures implored by the Prophet in curbing hunger and the economy of Egypt from collapse by then. There are plenty of disaster narrations in the Qur'an unfortunately we cannot illustrate them all. The few aforementioned above will suffice.

The biography of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him is also rich of disaster mitigations. The few selected examples to manifest and affirm this concept are as provided below:

a) In battles against non Muslims.

Like his predecessors, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was as keen as possible in mitigation of disasters. As much as he was loved and adored by his companions, he too was very keen in solving their problems so as to lift hardness and aggression from them. He was very remorseful and merciful to them in the sense that several verses were revealed to prove these good benevolent attributes as seen in the Qur'an (Qur'an, 21:107, 9:128, 3:159). Hence the Prophet was always cautious and ready to mitigate any disaster deemed to occur during his time; in the battle of Badr, he went along with his companion Abu Bakr to conduct a scouting operation during which they managed to locate the camp of the Quraish and get the information of their enemies before they could be inflicted any danger by them. The Prophet also consulted his companions on how to go about with the whole issue. Lastly he gave a very long supplication of Dua to Allah seeking His intercession (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2015). All these were done at the expense of mitigation of the disaster that was about to take place.

In the battle of the trench, consultation was extensively conducted on how to go about with the battle. The companions gave out their opinions and amongst the famous opinions provided was the digging of the trench. This was a new war strategy that had never been applied by the Arabs. Even though the idea was common in the Persian Empire hence it was provided by Salman alfaaris. While in the battle of Tabuk after gathering and ascertaining the information about the invasion of the Muslims by the Byzantine, the Prophet requested Muslims to donate all that they could so as to get prepared for the battle in the Byzantine territories before they ambush Madinah despite of the hard situation Muslims were facing (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2015). The above mentioned measures were taken by the prophet in consideration for the mitigation of the expected incident that could lead to catastrophe in the society.

b) Epidemics and plagues

Historically Islam has experienced succession of epidemics at different stages of their leadership. During the medieval period, both Middle East and Europe suffered recurring major outbreaks of epidemic disease, the most devastating of which appeared to be the plague (Ibn Qutayba 2012, p. 553). Al-Asqalan (d. 852/1449), identified and ascertained Thaur Shirwiyh plague that occurred in Madain during the time of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him as the first epidemic in Islamic history by quoting the statement of historian al- (d. 225/839), identified the plague of Shirwiyh (Thaur Shirwiyh) as the first epidemic plague during the period of Prophet Muhammad (571–632 AD). This plague occurred at Madain (al-Asqalan, 2001, p. 361). Ibn "Asakir (d. 571/1176) recorded the plague of Yezdigird (Thaur Yezdigird), which must refer to a later appearance of plague during the reign of the last Sassanian king, Yezdigird III (13–22/634–642) (Suyuty 1997, p. 181). Then there was the plague of "Amwas" (Thaur Amwas) in Syria, when Caliph "Umar (13–23/634–44) journeyed to Syria in 18/639 because of the famous outbreak of plague at "Amwas. The plague in Syria was known as the plague of "Amwas because it severely struck the Arab army at "Amwas, ancient Emmaus, in 18/639 (al-Tabary 1998, p. 655). The historical accounts of the plague of "Amwas state that about 25,000 Muslim soldiers died (Suyuty. 1997). Mu 'adh ibn Jabal (d. 18/639), his two wives and his son, Abu "Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah (d. 18/639), and Yazid ibn Sufyan (d. 18/639), the brother of Muawiyah ibn Sufyan (d. 61/680) (al-Asqalany 2001, p. 29), Sharj'il bin Hasnah (d. 18/639), Haris bin Hash "am (d. 18/639), Abu Jandal (d. 18/639), and his father Suhail bin "Amr (d. 18/639), (Suyuty 1997, p. 182) along with many senior companions of the Prophet Muhammad also died in the plague of "Amwas (Conrad 1981, pp. 167–246). It spread to the rest of Syria as well as to Iraq and Egypt. The plague epidemic was preceded by a severe famine in Syria-Palestine, which may have predisposed the population to the disease (Suyuty 1997, p. 182). The plague of "Amwas persisted for months until it became the talk of the people (al-Tabary 1998, p. 741).

In summary, the aforementioned epidemics/plagues are an example of many epidemics that occurred in the Islamic history. Indeed Islamic history like other European histories is full of epidemics, pandemics and disease narrations. These vices caused a lot of harm to the Muslim society. Many people lost life and properties resulting in disasters in the community.

DISCUSSION

Islamic values responsive to disaster mitigation

Islamic religion is replete with teachings from both the Qur'an and the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad (p.u.b.h). These teachings aim at protecting individuals and communities, including in the event of an outbreak of natural and manmade disasters.

Natural and manmade disasters' perception is not the same in Islam. The degree of each of them also differs before the Almighty Allah including measures implored in their mitigation too. Man Made disasters are mostly taken as a punishment to the society or nation that spear headed its occurrence. While natural disaster appear as a punishment or mercy to human beings especially pious people. Mitigation of all the aforementioned disasters has to undergo several stages for its management to be effective. As stated in the previous section, the three stages are in a sequential manner starting with hazard stage, and then followed by risk stage and lastly management stage of the disaster in an ascending order. Each stage has supporting activities aimed at synthesising important and viable information that is relevant and reliable for the implementation in the latter stage..

i. Hazard stage.

A hazard is a natural process or phenomenon that may pose negative impacts on the economy, society, and ecology, including both natural factors and human factors that are associated with the natural ones. Hazards are the origins of disasters according to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (Peijun Shi, 2019) . At this stage, activities in progress are mainly concerned with the analytical scrutiny of the extent to which the hazard can be dangerous in causing disaster.

ii. Risk stage –

Risk is the probability of disaster loss in a future period of time in a region, or the future disaster. (UNISDR, 2004) defines risk as the probability of harmful consequences resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions. Two aspects that need special attention are the influence of social factors on risk and the estimation of hazard intensity and distribution. In this stage, mitigation takes place.

iii. Disaster stage.

Disasters are direct or indirect results of hazards. Disaster impacts include human losses, property losses, resources and environmental destruction, ecological damages, disruption of social order, and threats to the normal functioning of lifelines and production lines (Peijun.2019). At this stage main activities entail communication, coordination and consultation even though disaster management comprises of mitigation, preparedness, response and lastly discovery.

The idea revolving around disaster mitigation is in response to the objectives of Shari'ah. The scholars of Islamic Shari'ah established the objectives to be five. These objectives were elucidated through scholarly analysis of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Generally the Shari'ah is predicated on the benefits of the individual and that of the community, and its laws are designed so as to protect these benefits and facilitate improvement and perfection of the conditions of human life on earth which is contrary to the disasters. The Qur'an is expressive of this when it singles out the most important purpose of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) in such terms as: "We have not sent you but a mercy to the world" (21: 107). This can also be seen perhaps in the Qur'an's characterisation of itself in that it is "a healing to the (spiritual) ailment of the hearts, guidance and mercy for the believers (and mankind)" (10: 57). The two uppermost objectives of compassion (rahmah) and guidance (huda) in the foregoing verses are then substantiated by other provisions in the Qur'an and the Sunnah that seek to establish justice, eliminate prejudice, and alleviate hardship. The laws of the Qur'an and the Sunnah also seek to promote cooperation and mutual support within the family and the society at large. Justice itself is a manifestation of God's mercy as well as an objective of the Shari'ah in its own right. Compassion (rahmah) is manifested in the realisation of benefit (maslahah) which the 'ulama' have generally considered to be the all-pervasive value and objective of the Shari'ah and is to all intents and purposes synonymous with rahmah .

More fundamentally, understanding the objectives of the Shariah (Islamic law) in the form of maslah which is benefit will always induce the urge of mitigating disasters since these objectives tend to highlight the necessity of preservation of religion, life, progeny, intellect and wealth to attain Allah's pleasure. Hence any kind of mitigation activity of the disaster however big and wide it maybe, the formulae has to focus on the preservation of the five mentioned objectives in a priority manner.

Islamic natural disasters mitigation can easily be elucidated from Qur'an narrations and hadith. The best example can be cited from the story of Yusuf (peace be upon him) as elaborate in the previous sections.

Mitigation of malpractice

Allah says," Evil has appeared in Al-Barr and Al-Bahr because of what the hands of men have earned, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return".(Qur'an, 30:41) Its inferred from the aforementioned verse that corruption and doing evils are the main causes of punishments by the Almighty Allah. The statement "with their hands" in the verse connotes indulging oneself in any kind of forbidden acts stated in the Shari'ah. The Prophet prohibited people from committing sins because they hinder one from getting daily provision on earth making him leave miserable life as the hellfire awaits him on the judgment day. On the authority of Thawban, the prophet (p.b.u.h) said: "Nothing increases in life but righteousness, and nothing turns back fate except supplication, and a man is deprived of sustenance by the sin that afflicts him".

The more justice is established, the more the blessings and good things will increase. It was reported in the Sahih: "When the evildoer dies, it is a relief for the people, the land, the trees and the animals". Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal recorded that Abu Qahdham said: "At the time of Ziyad or Ibn Ziyad, a man

found a cloth in which were wrapped grains of wheat which were as big as date stones; on it was written: 'This grew at a time when justice prevailed.'" (Ibn Katheer, 49)

Another example of malpractice that leads to disaster resulting to social disorder is adultery and fornication. Allah says, "And come not near to unlawful sex. Verily, it is Fahishah (immoral sin) and an evil way. (Qur'an, 17:32). On the same issue, the Prophet warned the immigrants from engaging themselves in acts of unlawful sex since such acts provokes and annoys the Almighty Allah who in return send calamities such as plagues and hunger as a punishment .

In response to mitigation of the malpractice activities likely to cause calamities in the society, Islam has laid down continuous strategies in a form of objectives of Islamic Shari'ah on how to go about with them. The objectives are flexible in a sense that they always consider priorities of benefitting the society and lifting any hardship from the entire Ummah. They balance and prioritize competing values with the aim of solving problems affecting the society. In this respect, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah states that the higher purpose of Objectives of Shari'ah is to alleviate hardship from people .

In the past Islamic generations of the predecessors, several ways were used in mitigation of disasters in Islam as examples cited in the previous sections. The first step which was seen as an initial and vital stage as deduced from the Qur'an was to take precaution. Allah says, "O you who believe! Take your precautions,..." (Qur'an, 4:71) This is supposed to take place at the initial stage of the disaster which is known as hazard stage. At this stage, concentration is mainly concerned with exposure analysis, hazard forecasting, vulnerability analysis, and resource assessment with the aim of determining the extent to which that hazard can lead to disaster in the society. All this activities were strategically executed by the Prophet in almost all battles he fought against non Muslims. Similarly the second stage, the risk management phase consists of five activities: establish risk context, identifying risk, risk analysis, risk evaluation and treat risk. Example of this stage can be observed too in the history (Seerah) of the prophet when he prayed to Allah requesting him to direct rain to the valleys, mountains, trees and gardens instead of residential areas (Albukhar and Muslim).

In the last stage; which is disaster management action, activities performed include mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. These are modern techniques which were similarly implored by the Prophet in almost all stages of disaster management. All these stages were manifested in the battle of Uhud and in the battle of confederation.

Islamic perception of Disasters

Generally all disasters are perceived as calamities in the society due to the destruction they inflict to the vulnerable people. Disaster creates psychological and physical damages to the victims apart from economical constraints. Hence most people treat it as a pandemic that has got no any positive impact to the society. This perception usually makes people lose hope in life making them leave miserable. For example, in the first days and weeks after the occurrence of the disaster, people often experience strong feelings of fear, sadness, guilt, anger, or grief. As they begin to make sense of what has happened to them, these feelings usually begin to subside. Most people will recover quite quickly with the support of family and friends. For some people though, a traumatic event can lead to mental health issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug use, as well as impacting on their relationships with family, friends, and at work. Fortunately Islam's perception is completely different and contrary to this perspective. It views disasters as Allah's injunction and hence one is supposed to reciprocate it positively as either Allah's mercy on human beings or trials to raise the status of their piety. Allah says, "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return." They are those on whom are the Salawat (i.e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones. " (Qur'an, 2: 155-157). In the Hadith, Imam Ahmad reported that Umm Salamah narrated: Once, Abu Salamah came back after he was with Allah's Messenger and said: I heard Allah's Messenger recite a statement that made me delighted. He said: No Muslim is struck with an affliction and then says *Istirja`* when the affliction strikes, and then says: 'O Allah! Reward me for my loss and give me what is better than it,' but Allah will do just that. Umm Salamah said: So I memorized these words.

The above verse categorically talks about the tests and trials for a faithful person and how he is supposed to respond in order to get rewards from Allah. In fact the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said that a faithful person will be tested as per his faith. The most tested people are the ones with high ranks of piety . This understanding usually induces positivity in people's mind and whenever they are faced with disasters they remain steadfast and hardly get traumatized.

Aisha reported: She asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, about plagues and he said, "It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whoever he wills, but Allah has made it a mercy for the believers. Any servant who resides in a land afflicted by plague, remaining patient and hoping for reward from Allah, knowing that nothing will befall him but what Allah has decreed, he will be given the reward of a martyr." (Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5402)

It is inferred from the above hadith that disasters are punishment to non Muslim transgressors but love and mercy for Muslims. In case the disaster is sent down to Muslims due to transgression then it is taken as a warning , cleansing and purification so that he should repent and go back to Allah and if the same happens to a pious person, then it is taken as tests and trials to raise his rank of piousness. Allah says, "Evil has appeared in Al-Barr and Al-Bahr because of what the hands of men have earned, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return". (Qur'an, 30:41). The last part of the verse which states that in order they may return manifests the reason for their punishment which is not for destruction but rather for reformation. This is the manifestation of the highest degree of Allah's love and mercy to His servants.

In summary, disasters in Islam comes as means of cleansing, purification and later reformation for Muslim transgressor while for pious Muslims, its Allah's a means of raising ones rank of piouness. On the other hand, it's a punishment taken as an act of divine retribution for non Muslim transgressors.

Prophet Nuh took precaution by building the ark while Prophet Yusuf took precaution by harvesting and constructing silos for the storage of the grains to overcome hunger and economic constraints.

In the time of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) at an initial stage which is at the hard stage, he consulted his companions, sent emissaries, dug trenches etc in relation to battles.

While in mitigation of malpractices like unlawful sexual intercourse that could result into catastrophe, Allah categorically forbids people from coming near it rather than indulging in the actual act that could lead to sexual transmitted diseases like HIV and so on.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Islamic attitude towards disasters traced back to the early reign of the emergence of Islam. This was based on rationale and reason being inspired by both the Qur'an the Hadith. For the faith ones, disasters were considered as a decree of Allah and not the punishment for sins committed by His servants. Besides that, it was seen to be Allah's love and mercy to His servants as it was for cleansing and purification of their deeds .In fact despondency during savages of disasters was perceived to be against Islam. Whoever embraced such situations bravely with all precautions and died was considered a martyr. This perception is the right perception islamically till the last hour.

Lastly, the research has come up with several recommendations as follows

1. Islamic history is rich of written literature work on disasters especially epidemics, plagues, diseases.
2. Disaster mitigation traces its roots back to old civilization that is related to both religious societies and non religious societies.
3. To adopt the modern ways disaster mitigation, Islam has to use objectives of Islamic Shari'ah as a guiding tool to manage disasters in the society.
4. Different models of Disaster management have been designed by different scholars for disaster management but still there is room for improvement hence these models are supposed to be flexible so as to suit all years of ages.
5. In mitigation of disasters, people are supposed to be prepared spiritually and psychologically especially for the faith ones by letting them digest the concept of it being a source of repentance and returning to the Almighty Allah.
6. Citizens are supposed to be educated continuously on how to go about with disasters.
7. Disasters are perceived in two dimensions; as a punishment for non believers while to believers, it is love and mercy from Allah since they are sent down by the Almighty Allah for cleansing and purification of both spiritual and physical beings.
8. Models for mitigation should comprise of spiritual aspects as well as social aspects too.
9. If a faithful pious Muslim dies due to disaster is termed a martyr. On the other hand, if a non-believer dies due to disaster is not termed as a martyr.
10. Disasters are sometimes taken as a means of checks and balances for Muslim's faith Iman or piety.

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