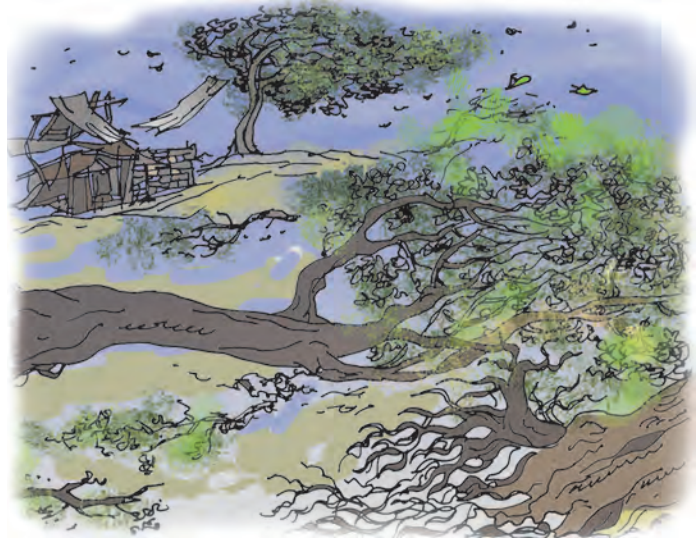
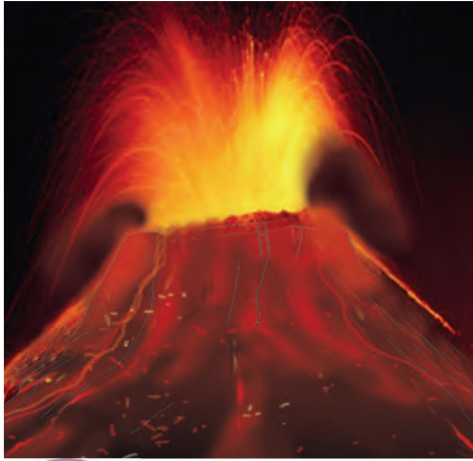


23. Natural Disasters



Can you tell ?

Which frightening natural events can be seen in the pictures below?



Can you tell ?

- Sometimes during the rainy season, suddenly there is a downpour which lasts for two or three days. The river flows in full spate. It may even overflow its banks and enter nearby settlements. What is the name given to such a rise in the level of river water?
- Name two places in Maharashtra where earthquakes have occurred.
- An earthquake under the sea gives rise to very high waves. What are these gigantic waves called?

Natural Disasters

Many a time, we hear of serious mishaps. An earthquake happens here, a flood occurs somewhere else. A storm occurs in one place, another place is struck by lightning. There can be a landslide or a hailstorm.

In these incidents, several people are injured. Some even lose their lives. Houses collapse. Animals die. Standing crops get destroyed. There is great damage to property. Day to day life is disturbed. It takes several days for life to get back to normal.

A new term !

disaster : a very serious mishap. One in which people or animals can get injured or die. Crops and other property is destroyed. Houses collapse.

These and some other mishaps have natural causes. They are called natural disasters. We do not have enough knowledge about when and where they might happen. And it is impossible for us to prevent them. We must not get frightened by such disasters. Instead, it is more useful to find out how to face such a disaster if it happens.

Untimely rains

In our country, we get rains only in a certain period of the year. In Maharashtra, it rains in the months of June, July, August and September. This period is called the monsoon or the rainy season.

In Maharashtra, on some day before the start of the rainy season, the sky suddenly gets overcast. There is lightning and thunder. It rains heavily for a short while. These are called pre-monsoon showers.

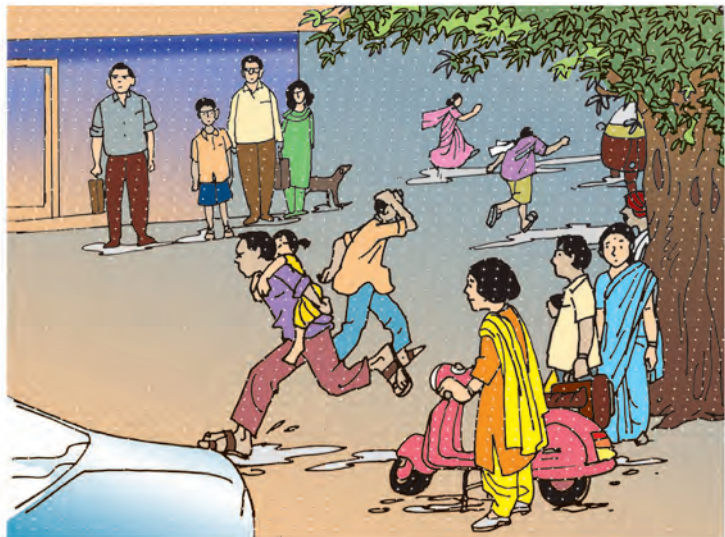
However, when it rains at other times besides the monsoon or pre-monsoon period, such rain is said to be untimely rain.

Untimely rain comes without warning, when we least expect it. People who have left their houses without umbrellas and raincoats have to run helter-skelter for shelter. Or, they have to get soaked in the rain.

But, untimely rains can also cause serious damage. People grow winter crops. Occasional, light showers are good for this crop. But if it rains too much, fields get water-logged. And the crop may rot causing much loss.



Pre-monsoon rains



People caught in untimely rain

Often, a hailstorm accompanies with untimely rains. Severe hail causes injuries to people and animals. It shatters roof tiles. It can damage crops in fields and fruits in orchards.

If mango trees are in blossom at that time, the blossoms may rot or fall off. This leads to a fall in mango production.

Floods

Sometimes during the monsoons, it rains heavily and continuously for three or four days. This causes the level of water in a river to rise. That is, the river gets flooded. If it does not stop raining, settlements on its banks can also get flooded.

Mud houses on the riversides collapse during a flood. People and animals may die due to drowning. Flooding of settlements causes problems in everyday life.

At such times, we should go to a safe place at a height and come back only when the flood waters recede.

The current of flood waters is very strong. It is dangerous to swim in flood waters.



Earthquakes

Sometimes, the rocks in the bowels of the earth move. As a result, waves are produced in the layers of rock.

If a stone is thrown into a pool of still water, we see circular ripples around it. They move to the edges of the pool. After some time, the waves settle and the water becomes still as before.

Exactly the same kind of waves are produced inside the earth. For a few seconds, the ground shakes. That is the earthquake. Then everything quietens down again. Where the earthquake occurs, buildings are



shaken. Things inside the house all fall from their places. Houses that are not strong enough, simply collapse into heaps. People get trapped under the heaps and get injured or even lose their life. The most damage occurs near the centre of the earthquake. An earthquake also causes injuries or death of animals we keep.

When an earthquake occurs, one should not panic. It lasts only a few seconds. During that time, heavy things around us can fall on us. This can cause harm. So, as soon as we feel the earthquake, we should go under a strong bed or table, or stand under a doorframe. This can prevent injuries from falling objects.



Do you know ?

If an earthquake occurs while you are at school, sit under your desk or bench. Once the quake stops, come out in single file and gather together in the open school ground. Crowding, chaos and stampede can cause more damage than the quake itself.



Tsunami

If the origin of the earthquake is in the sea, it produces gigantic sea waves. Each wave is the height of a three- or four-storey building. These waves come with tremendous force towards the coast and crash into the land. These waves are called tsunamis.

If there are people living on the coast where a tsunami occurs, it causes much devastation. People or animals who come in the way of these waves are completely helpless. They drown and die. A tsunami comes with so much force that vehicles on the coast along with the people in them get thrown away to quite a distance. Vehicles are crushed. People inside get injured or die. The tsunami can also shatter houses and shops on the coast.



Do you know ?

In every city and district headquarters, there is a fixed drill to be followed in case of a natural disaster. There are specially trained volunteers for that purpose. If necessary, soldiers of the army are also called to help.



What we have learnt –

- Rain that falls at times other than in the rainy season is called untimely rain. Fields become waterlogged and crops rot. Hailstorms may also occur with untimely rains. Hailstorms can injure people as well as animals. It damages crops and orchards.
- If it rains heavily during the rains, the level of water in the river rises. This is called a flood. Sometimes flood waters enter areas where people are living. Houses collapse. People and animals drown and die. Everyday life becomes difficult. One should go to a place at a height till floods recede.
- Some movements in the bowels of the earth give rise to waves. This is called an earthquake. It causes houses to shake, things to fall down. Houses collapse into heaps. People and animals get trapped in them and die. During an earthquake one should sit under a table or bed or stand under a doorframe.
- When an earthquake has its starting point in the sea it gives rise to gigantic waves. They are called tsunamis. If they reach the human settlements on the shores they cause great devastation.



Always remember –

We must obtain information about natural disasters to learn how we can prevent the loss that they can cause.



Exercises

(A) What's the solution ?

Your village is uphill. There is a flood in a neighbouring village.

(B) Use your brain power !

1. A table for natural disasters and man-made disasters is given below. Complete the table with the help of the list that follows.

No.	Natural disaster	No.	Man-made disaster
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	

- (1) Cyclone
 - (2) Collapse of an old ramshackle house
 - (3) Death due to lightning
 - (4) Collision of two railway trains
 - (5) Children on a playground getting injured when a termite ridden tree falls
 - (6) Normal life getting disturbed due to heavy snowfall
 - (7) A fire caused by the explosion of a cooking gas cylinder
 - (8) An air crash due to a mechanical fault.
2. What is the difference between a hailstorm and snowfall ?
 3. If there are animals with fur coats living in places where it snows, would the coat be thick or thin? What could be the reason for that ?

(C) Find out.

There are fire brigades in cities. Obtain information about them. Find out the different kinds of accidents where firemen come to the rescue. Share the information with your class.

(D) Answer the following questions.

1. What kind of rain in winter is good for the crops?
2. What are the ill effects of a hailstorm?
3. Should one go for a swim in flood waters?
4. How does a tsunami affect vehicles on the coast?

(E) Fill in the blanks.

1. just like the ones we see in water, are produced in the bowels of the earth.
2. If it does not stop raining, the rainwater enters the
3. People and animals are against the force of a tsunami.
4. People get trapped under the and die.



Activity



- Practice how, after an earthquake, you would leave your class in single file and gather in an open space near your school.

