

## Reflections and Suggestions on the Dharali Tragedy

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### Reflections on the Dharali Tragedy

The recent tragedy that struck Dharali is a grim reminder of the fragile relationship between human activity and nature in the Himalayan region. Once a tranquil village known for its natural beauty and serenity, Dharali now stands as a silent witness to the cost of unsustainable development. The mudslides and flooding that devastated the area were not mere accidents—they were the result of years of environmental neglect, unregulated construction, deforestation, and ignorance of ecological red flags.



Locals recount the horror of waking up to the sound of collapsing land, the sight of gushing water devouring homes, and the heartbreaking loss of loved ones and livelihoods. The silence of the mountains, once comforting, now feels heavy with unspoken grief. This disaster is not just a local incident; it is a wake-up call for all of us who continue to exploit nature's patience.

While the tears of the people are visible, the cries of the mountains remain unheard. As a society, we must acknowledge the pain of the land and the warnings it continues to send. The Dharali tragedy must be remembered not just for what was lost, but for what it can teach us.

### Expert Voices

1. "This wasn't a natural disaster alone. It was a disaster of our ignorance, our greed, and our inability to listen to nature's signs." — *Dr. Kavita Rawat, Environmental Scientist*
2. "The community of Dharali has shown remarkable resilience. But resilience should not be mistaken for acceptance of suffering. They need support, not just sympathy." — *Ramesh Negi, Disaster Response Coordinator, Uttarakhand*
3. "The Himalayas are young and vulnerable. Every careless step we take—be it blasting for roads or cutting forests—pushes them closer to collapse." — *Prof. A.K. Joshi, Geologist*

According to a post by an X (formerly Twitter) user *Vimlendu Jha*, "No news channel will tell you that the devastation video from Uttarakhand is of cloudburst-induced silt flow in the river. 20 million tonnes of excavated soil has been dumped in rivers of Uttarakhand, 56,000 trees chopped, blasts all around, all for a 12-meter highway of 889 kms." This statement underscores the scale of ecological disruption being overlooked in mainstream discourse.



Source: X (Formerly Twitter)

### Suggestions for the Way Forward

### 1. Enforce Strict Regulations in Eco-sensitive Zones

- Halt all new construction projects in high-risk areas.
- Implement and enforce environmental impact assessments before any development.

### 2. Promote Sustainable and Indigenous Practices

- Reintroduce traditional building techniques that are earthquake-and landslide-resilient.
- Involve local communities in planning and development using their ecological knowledge.

### 3. Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Response

- Equip villages with early warning systems, rescue kits, and emergency training.
- Create regional disaster response units that can mobilize rapidly in remote areas.

### 4. Ecological Restoration of Affected Areas

- Launch afforestation drives with native species.
- Stabilize slopes with bioengineering techniques.

### 5. Transparent Governance and Public Accountability

- Ensure that relief funds are allocated and disbursed fairly and transparently.
- Set up an independent monitoring body for mountain development projects.

### 6. Incorporate Climate Change Education

- Integrate climate science and sustainability into school curriculums in mountain regions.
- Raise public awareness through workshops, e-magazines, and social media.

### 7. Support Mental Health and Community Healing

- Provide counseling services for survivors dealing with trauma and loss.
- Organize community events focused on remembrance, resilience, and rebuilding.

## Conclusion

The Dharali tragedy should not fade into the background like so many before it. Let it be the moment when we listen—truly listen—to the voice of the mountains. May this reflection inspire not only mourning, but also meaningful change.

*Let us act while there is still time.*