



History

Explore—Journal of Research for UG and PG Students

ISSN 2278 – 0297 (Print)

ISSN 2278 – 6414 (Online)

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<http://www.patnawomenscollege.in/journal>

Floods in Bihar : The devastating effects on Humanity and Prosperity (2000-2008)

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Received : November 2011
Accepted : March 2012
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Abstract : *India is a land of various natural and cultural diversities where natural calamities like floods, storms, earth quakes, landslides are very natural occurrences. The problem of inundation (floods) that has destroyed thousands of human lives occurs when a gently flowing river suddenly overflows its edges during monsoon. The demonic flow of the huge stream has devastated the entire northern Bihar which has always been its victim over the years.*

The Kosi river in north Bihar plains, eastern India presents a challenge in terms of long and recurring floodhazard.

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Despite a long history of flood control management in the basin for more than 5 decades, the river conditions bring a lot of misery through extensive flooding. This paper revisits the flood problem in the Kosi river basin and presents an in-depth analysis of flood hydrology. Typical hydrological characteristics of the kosi river include very high discharge variability, and high sediment flux from an uplifting hinterland. The low-lying tracts of the alluvium plains are extensively inundated year after year. Our flood risk analysis follows a multi-parametric approach using Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and integrates geomorphological, land cover, topographic and social (population density) parameters to propose a flood Risk index (FRI). The flood risk map is validated with long-term inundation maps and offers a cost-effective solution for planning mitigation measures in flood-prone areas. This paper is a micro, yet analytical scrutiny of the northern Bihar in particular touching it with historical perspective.

Key words : *Bihar, floods, inundation, disaster, monsoon, Flood Risk Analysis, AHP, flood management, river basin.*