

Caribbean studies essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

First of all, I would like to thank God for without Him, nothing is possible.

Secondly I would like to thank my parents for supporting me and encouraging me while I was conducting my research. Thirdly, I would like to thank my teacher for his offered time in assisting me with any help I needed pertaining to this I. A. Also, I would like to thank all those who participated in taking my questionnaire for without them, I would not have been able to gather required information and this task would not have been a successful one.

TOPIC.

Flooding in Trinidad between the period 2006-2012.

INTRODUCTION.

Flooding is the unusual presence of water on land to a depth which affects normal activities. Flooding can arise from: overflowing rivers (river flooding), heavy rainfall over a short duration (flash floods), or an unusual inflow of sea water onto land (ocean flooding). Ocean flooding can be caused by storms such as hurricanes (storm surge), high tides (tidal flooding), seismic events (tsunami) or large landslides (sometime also called tsunami). Port-Of-Spain (POS) is a coastal city located on the north-western peninsula of Trinidad. Most of the city is situated on land which slopes gently towards the sea. Due to its topography and drainage patterns within the city, POS is easily flooded. The media has provided sufficient data reports that led to the conclusion that flooding in POS is very frequent. Therefore, this area was chosen for the case study for this topic. The problem being investigated is the negative effects of flooding in Trinidad between the period 2006-2012. These are the ways in

which the problem of flooding has negatively impacted Trinidad in different sectors.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH.

Some members of my family are situated in Port-of-Spain and flooding within the city has affected them for the last 7 years. The educational value of this research is to highlight short term and long term causes of flooding and its effect. In addition, it will show what can be done and what is being done to help alleviate the severity of this issue.

PROBLEM STATEMENT.

The negative impact of flooding on Port-of-Spain, Trinidad between the period 2006-2012.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM.

Over the last couple of years, this problem has become more severe as we can see an increased number of articles on this topic in the local newspapers as well as on various websites. Some of the major problems with this topic are the long term effects that it may have on the country in question and the fact that it seems to be escalating quite rapidly.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

- 1)What are the impacts of flooding?
- 2)What is the major impact of flooding?
- 3)What are the long term effects of flooding?
- 4)What measures can you, as an individual take to help reduce these

effects? 5)How can your Government help to eradicate the negative impacts of flooding in your country?

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS.

1)Flooding- An overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry. (The Free Dictionary) 2)Research- Scholarly or scientific investigation or inquiry; close/careful study. (The Free Dictionary) 3)Methodology- This is a set of system of methods, principles and rules for regulating a given discipline. (Dictionary. com)

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The Guardian Newspapers, a local newspaper, quoted the words of the Chairman of the Diego Martin Regional Corporation, Anthony Sammy, “ the cost of damage and infrastructural loss in the Diego Martin area and surrounding communities to be over \$100 million”, in the article ‘ BREAKING NEWS: More flooding hits Diego Martin’ (August 23rd, 2012). It was also stated in the article that “ the north-west peninsula was declared to be a disaster area” after landslides claimed the lives of two Diego Martin men, leaving roads impassable in many areas and knocking out basic utilities in others. The article also included other examples of the destructive forces of flooding and its inconveniences within the Diego Martin and closely surrounding areas such as land slippage, severe traffic congestion and the cancellation of the Port-of-Spain to San Fernando fast ferry service that morning, as sea conditions were deemed too rough to travel as a result of the weather activity. The impacts of flooding that were obtained from the online questionnaire that was carried out on my part were very similar to

those obtained from this article. “ Flooding is a hydrological hazard, which occurs when there is an excess gathering or distribution of water, which outweighs the capability of the local environment to manage or control its regular movement.

Flooding has multiple origins; however the main causes within Trinidad and Tobago are rainfall, and river flooding. In the major city of Port of Spain, the main causes of flooding are the presence of reclaimed lands and increased infrastructure on hill slopes along with poor drainage maintenance. Other human factors such as littering or the clogging of drains with foreign debris, deforestation, poor construction of drains or canals and improper location and construction of homes/businesses, and the cutting down of hill sides also contribute in to increased risk of flooding. There are also the possibilities of storm surges along coastal areas causing flooding along the shore lines and coastal areas, including immediate residential or commercial areas”, summarizes most of the local online article ‘ Flooding’ by Josanne Goolcharan. Her article listed effects of flooding, solutions to flooding, a definition of flooding and factors that contributed to flooding, most of which were entailed in the online questionnaire which I conducted. Her work greatly helped in evaluating the research questions.

In the international online research article, ‘ The Effects of Flooding on Mental Health: Outcomes and Recommendations from a Review of the Literature by Stanke, Murray, Amlôt, Nurse and Williams’ (May 30th, 2012), it was concluded that “ flooding affects people of all ages, can exacerbate or provoke mental health problems, and highlights the importance of secondary stressors in prolonging the psychosocial impacts of flooding. “ It was also

said that “ further research is needed on the longitudinal effects of flooding on people’s mental health, the effects of successive flooding on populations, and the effects of flooding on the mental health of children, young people and older people and people who respond to the needs of other persons in the aftermath of disasters.”

From this article written by brilliant scientists such as Stanke and Amlôt and scientific leaders such as Murray, Nurse and Willaims, it was pointed out that psychological effects on flooding victims is one of the major effects of flooding. Data collected from my online questionnaire also proved to have the same point. From the articles mentioned above as well as other articles such as “ Nigeria floods kill dozens, wash hippos and crocodiles into homes” Karimi (October 5th, 2012) and “ Sediment-Water Floods in the Caribbean” Ahmad, Baban (December 8th, 2006) all of which were sourced online, I was able to locate the major impacts of flooding on communities and a country. “ Nigeria floods kill dozens, wash hippos and crocodiles into homes” was written by Faith Karmini from CNN. In this article, she stated the impacts of flooding as being the displacement of people from their homes, the loss of human and animal lives and the displacement of animals from their respective habitats. “ Sediment-Water floods in the Caribbean” is a pdf file which was written by Rafi Ahmad and Serwan M. J. Baban during a Geohazards workshop in U. W. I, St. Augustine. A pdf file (Portable Document Format) is a file format that has captured all the elements of a printed document as an electronic image that you can view, navigate, print, or forward to someone else. (techtarget. com).

I was not able to source any regional articles as any information on flooding in the Caribbean region was either obtained from local or international articles. I therefore used this article as my regional data source. This article expanded my knowledge as it listed the different types of flood that are prominent regionally and the impacts of flooding in this article were the same as those sourced from my online questionnaire. Some examples of these impacts are: traffic congestion, damage to infrastructure and contamination of pure water. These articles as well as smaller online articles helped me locate and contrast the problem solving techniques of the researchers with the problem solving techniques from the data that I have acquired.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS.

A methodology is a set of methods, principles and rules for regulating a given discipline (Dictionary. com). My methodology as follows, is the analysis of all my data collection sources and instruments which I used to aid me in conducting my research on The Negative Effects of Flooding in Trinidad. In terms of qualitative methods of research, I chose the internet as my main source of information. The pros of the internet are it is a very quick and efficient way by which I was able to attain information and it provided me with a variety of articles related to the topic, hence I used it, while the cons of using the internet are that some work may not be very credible and it may be unavailable at times due to network malfunctions, which happened sometimes during the period of my research. Through the internet, I was able to locate local and international articles to satisfy my choice of topic. I also used the internet to carry out a

questionnaire. The internet was my main source of information regarding to quantitative and qualitative data as it provided me with all articles, surveys, researches and documents that previous researchers had made on the current topic. I used the information generated to construct my diagrams. The sampling technique which I used was in the form of an online questionnaire which was carried out on the social networking site, Facebook. I chose this site as all 50 participants (both male and female, between the ages of 18-30) used the internet regularly and all had access to a Facebook profile.

The pros of this sampling technique are that I was able to extend it to a relatively large amount of people and it is very convenient to use. It is also quite cost effective, hence I chose this sampling technique. The cons of this sampling technique are that some recipients may not respond, which was the case (only 40 participants responded) and some may give false answers or respond too slowly. The Data Collection Instrument which I chose was in the form of an online questionnaire. The questions that I chose to include in my questionnaire were closely related to my research questions. I carefully chose these questions with the objective of fully satisfying the points of my research questions. A primary source and secondary sources were a part of my data collection method. My primary source was in the form of my online questionnaire which I conducted over a two week time frame. This source was cost efficient and a lot of information was generated. For my secondary sources, I used many articles which were sourced online, one of which being an article titled “ Flooding” which was authored by Josanne Goolcharan, who holds a degree in Geology with a minor in Geography. This article was

sourced on greentnt. org. A great deal of information was extracted from the document which assisted me in comparing my research done to previous research done by others before.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the percentage of adults who believe that flooding affects residential homeowners more than business owners.

Figure 2: Column chart showing the major negative impacts of flooding.

Figure 3: Column chart showing the long-term effects of flooding.

Figure 4: Donut chart showing how the individual can help to soften the negative impacts of flooding.

Figure 5: Bar graph showing the percentage of people who have been affected by flooding.

Figure 6: Line chart showing the percentage of people who think that the Government is/is not doing a proper job of addressing the problem of flooding. Figure 7: Pie chart showing the ways in which the Government can help to eradicate the problem of flooding.

Figure 8: XY (Scatter) chart showing the percentage of people who think that the problem of flooding will continue to worsen over time.

Figure 9: Column chart showing the percentage of people who know someone in another area who is affected by flooding.

Figure 10: Bubble chart showing the percentage of people who think that soil erosion is a major contributor to flooding. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.

From Figure 1, 70% of adults who answered my online questionnaire said that flooding affects residential homeowners more than business owners while a lesser 30% said that business owners are more affected. From Figure 2, there were many fluctuations in trends. The majority, 50% of adults who answered my questionnaire believe that damage to infrastructure is the major negative impact of flooding while a lesser 5% each voted for damage to the agricultural sector, financial losses and debris pollution. The minority, 2. 50% each voted for psychological effects and landslides. There was a significant increase as 22. 50% said it was loss of life and finally, 7. 50% said it was obstruction of roadways. From Figure 3, we see that from the results of my online questionnaire, the majority, 45% of those who answered said that infrastructural damage was the major long-term effect of flooding, 25% said it was health problems, 17. 50% said that it was the economic effects on businesses and the minority, 12. 50% said that it was the biodiversity changes in the area affected by the flooding. By looking at figure 4, we see that the majority, 62. 5% of those who participated in my questionnaire said that they, as an individual, can plant more trees to help reduce the negative impacts of flooding, 17. 50% said that they can take proactive measures at home before the rainy season commences. The percentages decreased steadily as 12. 50% said that they can advise friends and family to take proactive measures and lastly, 7. 50% said that they can organize community cleanups of the waterways. By referring to figure 6, we

see that 25% of those who participated in my questionnaire said that the Government is doing a good job of addressing the problem at hand.

The majority, 75% of them said otherwise. From Figure 7, we see that 40% of those who answered my questionnaire said that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago can have more educational seminars on flooding open to the public to help eradicate the problem at hand while a slightly lesser percentage, 30% said that waterways should be dredged more often.

Percentages continued to steadily decrease as 16. 70% said that more shelters should be built to house those who don't have homes and 13. 30% said that more financial and medical assistance should be provided to those who need. By looking to figure 8, it can be concluded that the majority, 95% of the adults who took my questionnaire thinks that the problem will worsen over time whereas a meagre 5% think otherwise. From Figure 9, we see that 55% of people who undertook my questionnaire know someone in another area who is affected by flooding while a slightly lesser 45% of them do not. It can be deduced from figure 10, that 95% of people who participated in my questionnaire said that soil erosion is a major contributor to flooding while a significantly smaller percentage, 5% said that it is not. All results found were similar to those that were sourced online.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

From data collected from the online articles as listed in the literature review, some of the impacts of flooding were damage to infrastructure, loss of life, financial losses, psychological effects, obstruction of roadways, landslides and agricultural damage. From data I collected, the same impacts were obtained. This answered my first research question. To answer my second

research question, some of the major impacts of flooding that were found from the online articles as stated in the literature review were damage to infrastructure, loss of life, debris pollution, obstruction of roadways and the displacement of people and animals from their respective places of living. These same impacts were found from data that I collected via my online questionnaire. My third research question dealt with the negative long-term effects of flooding. The data that was gathered online was the same as that which was gathered via the questionnaire. These effects were: infrastructural damage, health problems, economic effects on businesses and biodiversity changes. The fourth research question dealt with how the individual himself/herself can help to soften the negative impact of flooding. Participants in the questionnaire said that they can prepare for a flood before the rainy season begins and to advise friends and family to do the same. They also said that community cleanups of waterways can be organized and they can plant more trees.

I attained these answers from my online sources, especially from the article “flooding” Goolcharan. A few other suggestions such as raising the yard above road level and using sandbags by doorways were found in other online articles. To answer the fifth research question, the results from my questionnaire stated that the Government can build more shelters for those in need of it after a flood, they can host more educational seminars open to the public, they can dredge waterways more often and provide more financial and medical assistance to those in need of it to help eradicate the negative impact of flooding in the country and the area in question, Port-of-Spain. Answers sourced online from the articles stated in the literature

review were similar. All research questions were adequately answered and my general knowledge on the topic was increased. From articles ranging from 2006-2012, the percentage of adults who were affected negatively by flooding have been very high and has kept increasing. Death tolls by flooding and financial losses due to infrastructural damage, agricultural damage, loss of livestock have also

been steadily increasing. The answers obtained from my own findings are similar to the data stated in the literature review. Some data which was collected from online was new knowledge and not mentioned in the questionnaire, thus broadening the amount of data. This new knowledge consisted of the fact that flooding has multiple origins and that flooding has serious psychological effects on victims.

CONCLUSION.

The negative effects of flooding in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad were found to be mainly damage to infrastructure, financial losses and landslides, with some loss of life occurring. The major negative effect of flooding was found to be damage to infrastructure. The negative long term effects of flooding were found to be damage to infrastructure, health problems and economic effects on businesses within the city of Port-of-Spain. Individuals themselves can help reduce these negative effects by preparing for floods before the rainy season begins and advising friends and family to do the same. They can also re-plant the greenery which has been cut down and clean the waterways in their area. The Government can help to alleviate this situation by promoting education seminars which are open to the public so they can become more educated on flooding, they can dredge waterways more often, build more

shelters and provide more financial and medical assistance for those affected. The negative effect of flooding in port-of-Spain, Trinidad between 2004-2012 has been very prominent and represented in many ways as stated above and this problem needs to be dealt with not only in this area, but throughout the whole of the country and globally, according to the information which was gathered online.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH.

A small sample size of 50 was used in the methodology with only 40 respondents, therefore statistics may have not been accurate. Time taken for respondents to return the questionnaire was slightly long which hindered progress of my research. The questionnaire respondents may not have been truthful in answering the questions therefore data may have been incorrect. The Internet was not available at all times due to network malfunctions. All information was obtained online. This information may have contained bias on the author's part.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

From the research which I've conducted, I've come to realise that this social problem is very serious as it continues to increase in severity with the passing of years. Some ways by which you can help to improve society and lighten the negative impacts are: Encourage friends and family to prepare for floods before the rainy season even begins. You, yourself can prepare beforehand.

Support groups for severely affected victims can be organised within your community. Cleanup groups within your community can be organised to clear waterways in your area so that water can pass freely. The Government can host public seminars on flooding by which to further educate them on what to do and what not to do in case of flooding occurring. An increased number of road side bins can be placed to prevent littering which clogs up waterways. Afforestation can be encouraged more.