## 15.3 Drought

## 15.4 Disaster Studies

**Dar, H.N.:** Disaster Management in Assam. *Dialogue Quarterly* 8, 3 (2007): 116-29.

This article addresses the nature and consequences of flood damage in the state of Assam, one of the worst flood-affected areas in India, and suggests some strategies for flood control, rescue, relief and rehabilitation. Following the disaster of the great earthquake of 1950, which lifted the river bed of the Brahmaputra, and the further damage consequent on bank encroachment, deforestation, and shifting cultivation, etc., the government undertook a number of structural flood control measures, like the construction of embankments and dykes and river training, the establishment of a sensitive warning system and, from 1959, the formulation of procedures for rescue, relief and rehabilitation.

However, according to the author, the prevention or at least minimization of flood damage in Assam is not possible through traditional methods. The Brahmaputra is a huge river, and effective flood control requires both enormous capital investment as well as international co-operation between China, India and Bangladesh. Apart from the proposal to construct a series of dams in Arunachal Pradesh, other possible measures could be the adoption of appropriate cropping strategies, the shifting of villages to higher areas, avoidance of road construction interfering with the traditional water courses, the construction of pucca houses, soil conservation, forestation, watershed management, etc. The quantum and quality of relief also require review.

The author concludes that ad hoc measures for disaster / flood management and relief in Assam have been unsuccessful, and that it is necessary to develop an integrated, systematic and long-term plan for disaster / flood management.

*See also* Priya (16.1)