

HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF TYPHOON YAGI AND ITS LESSONS IN PREPAREDNESS

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In the annals of tropical storms, Typhoon Yagi stands as a significant reminder of the power and unpredictability of nature. Formed in the warm waters of the Pacific, Yagi, named after the Japanese word for "goat," made headlines for its relentless progression across the region, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Though not the strongest typhoon to hit East Asia, Yagi's course and impact were a lesson in the importance of preparedness, resilience, and international cooperation in the face of natural disasters.

Typhoon Yagi began as a tropical depression in early August, gaining strength as it traveled westward. Meteorological agencies across Asia closely monitored its progress as it approached the coastlines of China, Japan, and the Philippines. The storm, at its peak, reached typhoon status with winds surpassing 120 kilometers per hour, accompanied by torrential rain and significant storm surges. Yagi's impact was felt most acutely in China, where it made landfall in Zhejiang province, causing widespread flooding and displacement of

thousands of people. In Japan, the typhoon brought heavy rains and strong winds, particularly affecting areas already vulnerable to landslides and flooding due to the geography of the region.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Typhoon Yagi was the sheer volume of rain it brought. As it moved across the East China Sea and approached the coasts, its slow movement allowed for heavy rainfall to accumulate over a prolonged period. In some areas, this resulted in up to 200 millimeters of rain in just 24 hours, causing rivers to swell and overwhelm flood defenses. Low-lying areas were particularly hard hit, with flash floods damaging homes, infrastructure, and agricultural lands. In Zhejiang, emergency services were deployed to rescue those trapped by rising waters, while entire communities were evacuated as a precautionary measure.

While the immediate impact of Yagi was devastating, it was the aftermath that underscored the long-term challenges posed by such natural events. Floodwaters remained for

days, hampering recovery efforts and making the affected areas vulnerable to disease outbreaks and water contamination. Local governments and humanitarian organizations quickly mobilized to provide aid, including food, clean water, and medical supplies. However, the scale of the disaster stretched resources thin, revealing vulnerabilities in the region's disaster response capabilities.

China, in particular, faced significant economic losses due to Typhoon Yagi. The region hit by the storm is home to key agricultural and industrial hubs, and the damage to crops and factories was extensive. Rice paddies and vegetable farms, already strained by unpredictable weather patterns linked to climate change, were inundated by floodwaters, wiping out months of labor. Manufacturing plants, vital to the regional economy, were forced to halt operations, further disrupting supply chains. The financial toll of Yagi was a stark reminder of the economic fragility of regions prone to natural disasters, especially in an era where climate change is intensifying the frequency and severity of such events.

Japan, although spared the worst of Yagi's impact, still faced significant challenges. Landslides triggered by the heavy rains added to the difficulties, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure was less developed. The storm also disrupted transportation networks, with flights canceled, trains delayed, and roads closed due to flooding and debris. The Japanese government, known for its rigorous disaster preparedness measures, was quick to respond, but Yagi highlighted the limits of even the most advanced planning in the face of extreme weather.

The story of Typhoon Yagi is not just one of destruction, however. It also showcased the resilience and adaptability of the affected populations. In China, local communities came together to rebuild and recover. Volunteer groups played a crucial role in helping those displaced by the storm, providing temporary shelters, organizing relief efforts, and assisting with the cleanup. The Chinese government, too, responded swiftly, mobilizing the military to aid

in rescue and recovery operations. Early warning systems, although imperfect, helped mitigate what could have been an even higher death toll, as millions were evacuated ahead of the storm's landfall.

Japan's response, while different in scale, was similarly impressive. Authorities, familiar with the regular occurrence of typhoons, relied on established emergency protocols to minimize casualties and economic losses. Citizens heeded evacuation orders, and local governments efficiently coordinated disaster response efforts. Despite the disruption, the swift return to normalcy in many areas highlighted the importance of strong infrastructure and disaster preparedness in minimizing the long-term effects of such storms.

Typhoon Yagi, like many tropical storms before it, raises important questions about the future of disaster management in a world increasingly affected by climate change. While the storm itself was not unprecedented in its intensity, its impact was magnified by factors such as urbanization, population density, and environmental degradation. Coastal regions, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to typhoons as rising sea levels, coupled with higher temperatures, make storms more powerful and destructive.

As Yagi recedes into history, it leaves behind a sobering reminder of the need for greater resilience in the face of natural disasters. Governments, local communities, and international organizations must continue to work together to improve early warning systems, strengthen infrastructure, and ensure that vulnerable populations are adequately protected. Typhoon Yagi may not have been the deadliest or most powerful storm to hit East Asia, but its impact underscores the reality that even "average" typhoons can wreak havoc on societies that are unprepared.

Typhoon Yagi serves as both a warning and a call to action, urging us to apply the lessons learned to strengthen disaster preparedness as extreme weather events become more frequent.