WATER IN OUR LIFE

FLOODS AND DROUGHTS:

- What will happen if rainfall is less this year than the last year?
- What would happen if there is no rainfall for five years?

In our region, if there is no rain for a long period (4 to 5 years), it may cause droughts. During this period, it is very difficult to get food and fodder, drinking water is scarce. People need to travel long distances to collect water. Soil becomes dry for agriculture and cultivation is difficult. Many people who depend on farming for their livelihood, migrate to other places in search of jobs.

Increasing temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns are expected to increase the frequency and intensity of drought in many regions. When rainfall is less than normal for several weeks, months, or years, the flow of streams and rivers

declines, water levels in lakes and reservoirs fall and the depth to water in wells increases. If dry weather persists and water-supply problems develop, the dry period can become a drought.

Wherever there is a shortage of rain over a long period of time, there is drought. Drought affects plants, animals and people. It is a serious problem for farmers and for the people who depend on the crops they produce.

Drought may occur almost anywhere in the world. Deserts receive very little rain all year. They are sometimes said to be in a permanent drought. Places that have a rainy season and a dry season have seasonal drought during the dry season. Other places can experience drought at any time.

Severe droughts can last for months or years. When this happens no crops will grow. As a result, many people and animals may die of famine, or lack of food. Severe droughts often force people and animals to move to find water. Some farmers go to places where they think conditions will be better for their crops and animals. Some people give up farming altogether. They move to cities to find other types of work.

Drought has many causes. It can be caused by not receiving rain or snow over a period of time. People can also play a big role in drought. If we use too much water during times of normal rainfall, we might not have enough water when a drought happens.

FLOODS:

Rain is pouring hard and fast—more than eight inches in just an hour, turning river water brown with mud. Earthworms wiggle up to the ground as the soil becomes too wet for them. A flood might be coming.

Just about any place on Earth can experience flooding. When so much rain falls that the ground can't absorb it or waterways can't hold it, the overflowing water becomes a destructive force. Flooding causes more death and damage than tornadoes, hurricanes, or lightning.

How floods develop?

During a rainstorm, precipitation—or the water that comes from rain or snow—goes to different places. Some of it flows

into streams, lakes or city water systems. Other precipitation evaporates and returns to the atmosphere.

But much of the rainwater is absorbed by soil. It flows through the top layer of the ground, to plant roots below the surface. This helps provides plants with the water and nutrients they need to grow. The excess water moves deeper into the ground through layers of dirt and rocks until it becomes part of natural underground wells called groundwater.

A habitat can naturally absorb a healthy amount of rainfall it needs to thrive. But too much rain can cause lake and river levels to rise and overflow their banks or the soil to become too wet to absorb more water. Although you might think extremely dry habitats would welcome too much rain, it turns out that the parched dirt can't absorb the rain fast enough to capture it all.

Severe coastal storms, quickly melting ice and snow and collapsed barriers (like concrete dams) can also cause floods. Even damaged beaver dams can lead to an overflow of water that the surrounding earth can't absorb.

But too much water can destroy crops and damage homes. Rushing water can disrupt ecosystems by moving aquatic plants and animals to other habitats. If flooding is so severe that it flows into local water treatment facilities, experts must monitor the incoming water to make sure the water is safe.

When experts are sure a flood is on the way, they issue a warning so people can evacuate immediately. Here's how to keep you and your family safe.

Don't waste even a single drop of water. We must preserve water not only for us but also for future generations.