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STUDY NOTES

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CLASS- VII (All Section)

DATE: 09-07-2020

**SCIENCE**

**LESSON-07**

**CHAPTER: 8 Winds, Storms and Cyclones**

**Today's Topic: Tornadoes**

**Tornadoes:**

A tornado is yet another violent weather phenomenon that often strikes suddenly and leaves behind a trace of destruction.

Tornadoes are one of nature's most destructive storms; they can destroy large buildings, uproot trees and hurl vehicles hundreds of metres. The word tornado comes from the Spanish word "tronada", meaning thunderstorm.

A tornado is a violent rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. It may reach wind speeds of 160 km/h to over 480 km/h. Most tornadoes take on the appearance of a narrow funnel, a few hundred metres across, with a small cloud of debris near the ground. However, tornadoes can appear in many shapes and size.

The entire tornado moves across the ground at a speed 30-65 km/h. Most tornadoes last less than 30 minutes, but can cause colossal destruction. The width of a tornado is usually not much larger than the size of a football field, but in some rare cases, it can be more

than a kilometre wide. The funnel of a tornado sucks dust, debris and everything near its base, just like a vacuum cleaner, and throws them out near the top. Tornadoes may strike at any time of the day, but are much more frequent in the afternoon and evening. In the United States, which witnesses the most intense and devastating tornadoes, they are most common in what has come to be known as the 'Tornado Alley' that lies between the Rocky Mountains on the west and the Gulf of Mexico on the south.

In India, the states of Orissa and West Bengal are occasionally hit by tornadoes. In 1978, about 150 people were killed by a tornado in Orissa and again in 1998 more than 160 people were killed and more than 2,000 injured when a tornado passed through 20 coastal villages in West Bengal and Orissa. The tornado flattened 15,000 homes and left more than 10,000 people homeless. A tornado that hit the northern suburbs of New Delhi, near the Delhi University in 1978, killed people and injured 700. It had cut a path 5 km long and 50 m wide.

The safest protection from a tornado is a tornado shelter—a room situated underground with no windows. If there is no underground shelter available, it is better to shut the doors and windows and take shelter under a table or a bed.

Tornado: localised and violently destructive windstorm occurring over land characterised by a funnel-shaped cloud extending towards the ground.

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