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ADDRESSING HFA2

Building Community Resilience



INTRODUCTION

- 2 Towards a Post 2015 Framework for DRR (HFA2)

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- 3 Disaster Risk Management in India: Who are most Vulnerable yet Excluded? The Proposed Panacea
5 Disaster Risk and Handicap India
6 Addressing Vulnerabilities of the Elderly: A Snapshot of Sri Lanka

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DRR INTEGRATION

- 7 Addressing Urban Disaster Risk in South Asia
9 Disaster Risks in Himalayas

LOCAL LEVEL ACTION

- 8 Himalayan Tsunami – Challenges and Roadblocks in Relief Actions

WOMEN AS A FORCE IN RESILIENCE BUILDING, GENDER EQUITY IN DRR

- 11 DRR: Advantages and Challenges of Gender in Kerala

REDUCING EXPOSURE/ UNDERLYING RISK FACTORS

- 12 The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and Amnesia in Gujarat, India

STRENGTHENING RISK GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 13 West Bengal's Disaster Risk Reduction Challenges: A View from Communities
14 Capacity Building Gaps within Humanitarian Agencies: Key Areas of Actions

INCENTIVIZING DRR IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- 15 Extending Business Engagement from Disaster Relief to Community Resilience

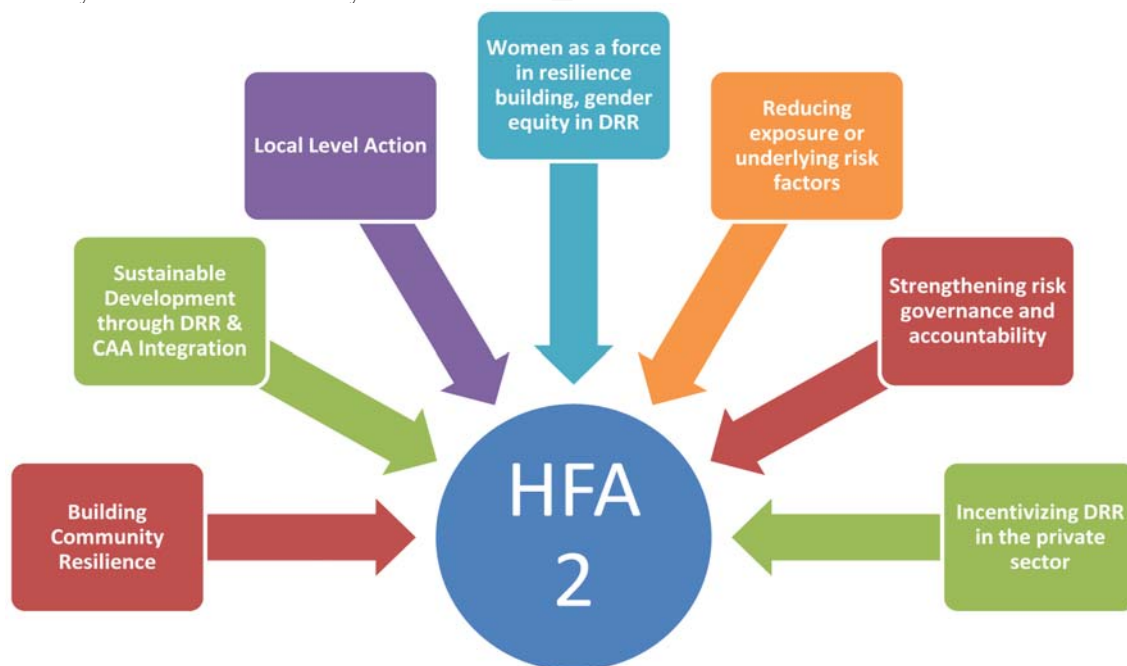
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INTRODUCTION

Towards a Post 2015 Framework for DRR (HFA2)

Key Areas of HFA 2

As the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) enters its final phase, the consultations for a post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction are being finalised and synthesised to form a new framework. The result of these consultations has been the identification of certain key areas or themes that need to be focused at and addressed by this framework (or HFA 2). The following key areas have been identified for HFA 2 particularly for the Asia-Pacific region. The present issue of Southasiadisasters.net contains articles and information that directly or indirectly relate to these seven key areas of HFA 2. ■



Nansen Refugee Award

The UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award is conferred annually by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to an individual, group, or organization in recognition of outstanding service to the cause of refugees, displaced or stateless people. The strongest candidates are those who have gone beyond the call of duty, who have demonstrated perseverance and courage, and who have personally, directly and significantly helped forcibly displaced people. Sister Angélique Namaika was the 2013 winner of UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Award. Nominations are open at <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/nansen> ■



Sister Angélique teaches women to make clothes in the remote town of Dungu, which is in the area of north-east Democratic Republic of the Congo most affected by LRA (Lord's Resident Army) activities and displacement (<http://www.euronews.com/2014/01/30/unhcr-calls-for-nominations-for-its-nansen-refugee-award-2014-/>)

Disaster Risk Management in India: Who are Most Vulnerable Yet Excluded? The Proposed Panacea

India is one of the few countries in the world which is prone to all forms of disasters and is it also the country which has experienced maximum number of disasters in South Asia during the last forty years. Some of the major disasters that has shook the country in the last ten to twelve years are the Gujarat Earthquake (2001), The Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), The Uttarakhand Flood (2013) and the Orissa Cyclone (2013). Various disasters also setbacks the development process and programme where in 2% of the GDP is lost to disasters annually and the loss to central revenue is as high as 12%.



The community discussing the social map to identify the excluded section of the community in West Bengal.

There are certain segments of the population which are more vulnerable to the disasters as compared to the others across the world in general and in India in Particular. Under this category are women, persons with disabilities, children and elderly people. There are various factors which lead to the vulnerability of these groups. The level of the vulnerability of these sections of community is dependent on several factors which leads to their exclusion from disaster risk reduction process. The focus on most of the disaster risk reduction plan till date has been on the infrastructure vulnerability this undermining the social vulnerability of the community.

The social vulnerability index are based on four criteria viz. (i) the socio-economic status (ii) the household composition and disability (iii) minority status & language and (iv) housing and transportation. A brief discourse of the four criteria are discussed below:

(i) The Socio-Economic Status: This domain comprises of the

income, poverty, employment and education variables. It is based on the premise that poor are the disadvantaged populations and are disproportionately affected by disasters. They also have less income or assets to prepare for or recover from the impact of a disaster. For a poor person, the monetary value of their assets may be less but for them replacing lost property might be difficult as compared to the well to do people as their risk are mitigated by several financial instruments like insurance policies, savings and financial investments. The employed person as compared to the unemployed person may have several employment benefits that takes care of their income and health cost assistance. There is no direct proven correlation between vulnerability and education status, but the authors argues that education is related

with income and employability. Higher level of education is also closely linked to access to various information like on hazard and preparation for recovery.

(ii) The Household Composition and Disability: This domain includes age, single parenting and disability variables. Under this category are the community which is dependent on some external source like children below 18 years of age, persons above 65 years, single-parent households and persons with disabilities. The factors which leads to the vulnerability of this group is the need for and dependence on external support and resources. Children are not able to take care of themselves during a disaster because of the lack of necessary resources, knowledge and life experience to effectively defend themselves against such a scenario. Many elderly people and persons with disabilities have special needs

that requires assistance and support. Family members or other support systems which are active during normal times are destroyed or disrupted during disaster or are also overwhelmed by the intensity and severity of the disaster.

(iii) Minority Status and Language:

This comprises of race, ethnicity and language proficiency variables. There are certain ethnic groups or races which are normally discriminated against and the severity of the discrimination are more pronounced during the disaster.

(iv) Housing and Transportation:

Comprises of housing structure, crowding and vehicle access variables. Housing quality and the location of the houses are key determinants in assessing the disaster vulnerability of the community. Poor people live on marginalised lands and poorly constructed and mobile houses that are vulnerable to different types of disaster. The quality of housing is a factor leading to its vulnerability to storms and earthquakes whereas houses constructed on marginal lands makes it more vulnerable to cyclones, floods and avalanches. Since the houses of the poor are cluttered together, they are prone to domino effect and thus more vulnerable to disasters. The access and affordability to transportation services also makes the life of the poor complicated as they need these resources to evacuate and move to safer locations in the event of a disaster.

There are certain sections of the community which are exposed to multiple level of vulnerability like an elderly women who is also a person with disability or a pregnant

women who is single with no bread winner, elderly person who is living alone or a child who belongs to the lower caste and is parentless. These categories of people will be more exposed to natural hazards and will face higher degree of challenge in recovering from disaster. Due to continued disaster they further get into the vicious cycle of vulnerability making it almost impossible to come out of it. Poverty is one of the crucial factors leading to the vulnerability.

It is also argued that we need to think beyond the box in order to work with the excluded community. There are several examples wherein it was found that the excluded community in a particular socio-cultural context might not be same as in other context. While conducting an exercise with the community in one of the villages in West Bengal which was bordering Bangladesh, we came across some very startling revelations. People can be vulnerable and left out of the mainstream of the disaster risk management programs or any development interventions based on the superstitions prevalent in the society. There was a group of women in some of the villages across the region who were excluded from the mainstream interventions as they were perceived to be witches and thus in many cases lynched to death.

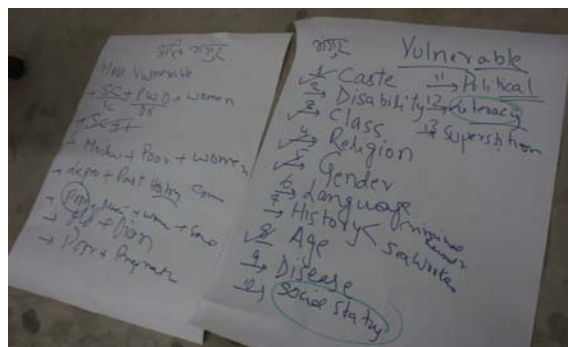
In order to make the disaster risk reduction plans inclusive and which

has the most vulnerable and the marginalised community at the center of different processes associated with it, certain concrete steps needs to be taken which are explained below:

1. Conscious and rigorous mapping of the excluded community with the help of the local community.
2. Develop an in-depth understanding on the underlying causes of their vulnerability and design the interventions accordingly.
3. The manner in which disaster may affect the population at large is vital but understanding where and how the socially vulnerable communities are places can help allocate resources more effectively during the entire disaster cycle viz. mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
4. There are various national and international policy instruments like the Disaster Management Act, India; The Hyogo Framework for Action which does not talk explicitly about the inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalised in the DRR process. There are not even set indicators to measure the progress on the same.

Finally the author would like to conclude by saying that incorporating the most vulnerable and the marginalised community into DRR process is not about working with the most excluded groups, it is "everybody's business". ■

– **Shakeb Nabi**, Regional Project Coordinator for an action research project on Inclusive Disaster Risk Management implemented across six countries in South Asia jointly implemented by Handicap International, ActionAid International and Oxfam GB.



An orientation program with the community workers in West Bengal to orient them on the excluded and the vulnerable community.

Disaster Risk and Handicap India: An Overview of Key Issues



Photo: AIDMI

Cyclone Phailing.

Disasters can leave behind a huge legacy of impairment and injuries. Such impairments and injuries get converted into permanent disability if adequate and timely rehabilitation measures are not ensured. According to the World Health Organization, there are over 600 million Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) worldwide which equals to 7 and 10 per cent of the global population of which 80 percent live in developing countries. PwDs are doubly vulnerable to disasters than person without disability due to impairments and poverty and yet they are often ignored or excluded at all levels of disaster preparedness, mitigation and intervention. Along with obvious direct correlation between disability and disasters through injuries or accidents, PwDs are particularly at risk of marginalisation and discrimination in such situations.

Following are key issues resulting into exclusion of PwDs in disaster risk reduction:

PwDs are invisible in assessment:

Inevitably, there are difficulties to obtain data immediately during needs assessments in the aftermath of a disaster about PwDs due to specific skills required for it. For e.g. following an initial assessment of the post-conflict situation in southern Sudan, Handicap International and its partners in the field estimated that over 11 per cent of the population was disabled. Thus it is essential that PwDs district disaster management plan should provide for capacity building of assessors.

PwDs are overlooked in planning:

PwDs encounter many problems before, during and after disasters, which are not necessarily due solely to their impairment, but also due to the inadequacy of disaster risk reduction and response systems to meet their specific needs. Thus, district disaster plan should have provision for specific need of PwDs.

District disaster plan should have provision for constructing accessible

structures for PwDs, as evidence suggests that it adds minimal extra cost initially than alteration at later stage. To avert biggest challenge of disability inclusive humanitarian responses district disaster management plan specifically need to focus on collection and proper analysis of data related to PwDs. Also district disaster planners need to give equal priority to PwDs and their needs not only in planning but in all stages from preparedness to recovery.

Article 11 of UNCRPD¹: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies; categorically envisages that States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of PwDs in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters". However, technical, financial and administrative capacity of disaster risk reduction planners as well as political will, is needed to enforce compliance with such laws and regulations to make disability inclusive disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Thus, the key issues for disability inclusive disaster management plan at district level facilitative policy environment, commitment of implementers and considering PwDs as equal partner in all stages is must. ■

– **Arvind Patel**, Managing Director, SoCH Development Support Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad

¹ United Nations Convention for Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Addressing Vulnerabilities of the Elderly: A Snapshot of Sri Lanka

Vulnerability, defined as 'the characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard'¹ has several facets in countries situated in geographical and climatic conditions characterised by regularly hazardous conditions. Vulnerability is intertwined with social, economic and political factors that demarcate agency and power of social groups such as the elderly, children and persons with disability. The gendered nature of vulnerabilities demonstrates the critical importance of recognising and responding to the different socially defined needs and capacities of women and men, of girls and boys to survive disasters and to work to reduce disaster risks.



Photo: ADMi.

In South Asia, Sri Lanka has the fastest growing elderly population; in 2010, out of a population of 20 million, an estimated 2 million persons or 9.6% of Sri Lankans were over the age of 65. This population is expected to double within the next decade.² Sri Lanka is not a country that has seen frequent large scale natural disasters. The Tsunami of 2004 was the most devastating natural disaster that the country has faced in the last century and the impact is still resonating especially among those who continue to live along the coastal areas of the country. The plight and vulnerability of the elderly was clearly evident in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami as well as through the long drawn out ethnic conflict/war which ended in 2009.

The importance of directing Disaster Risk Reduction focus to include the elderly can be linked to two primary factors that exacerbate the situation of the elderly in the context of

disasters. These are: (i) increasing debilitation of body and mind that hinder and prevent mobility to safer areas and, (ii) changing social, economic structures of the family, through economic migration of adults, government social welfare policies increasingly looking towards nuclear family units, that in turn leaves gaps in the care available to the elderly.³

Sri Lanka's national policies and programmes on the elderly can be traced to the setting up of the Social

Services Commission by the government in 1944 to look into the problems of destitute elders.⁴ In 1996, the government introduced a Social Security and Pension Scheme for people employed in the informal sector.⁵ A comprehensive policy and ensuing programmes to look into mitigating the vulnerabilities of the elderly in situations of Disasters, that integrates a gender responsive framework needs to be urgently addressed. ■ **- Sepali Kottegoda,**
Women and Media Collective,
Sri Lanka

1 UNISRD (2009). UNISRD Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction. Bangkok.

2 Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Population Division, United Nations World Population Ageing 1950-2050, Population Division, DESA, United Nations

3 Searchlight South Asia (2011). Tracking Urban Poverty Trends in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Vol.3, Issue 2. November; State Planning Organisation (2007). The Situation of Elderly People in Turkey and the National Plan on Ageing. T.R. Prime Ministry. Turkey.

4 Statement by Sri Lanka at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. www.un.org/swaa2002/coverage/srilanka.htm

5 Statement by Sri Lanka at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. www.un.org/swaa2002/coverage/srilanka.htm

Addressing Urban Disaster Risk in South Asia

Over the last 30 years, natural disasters accounted for close to \$4 billion in economic losses. During this period such losses have increased threefold—from \$50 billion a year in the 1980s to just under US\$180 billion a year in the last decade. In South Asia the number of disasters has increased five-fold since the 1970s, with over 2 billion people affected, 800,000 deaths, and economic losses of US\$80 billion. The region's vulnerability to disasters signals the need to commit greater efforts to increase resilience to disaster and climate risk. It also requires governments to develop a strategy to both protect against events today and address the losses of the future.

As half billion people move from rural areas to cities over the next 25 years, the exposure of people and assets to urban disaster risk in South Asia will increase exponentially. However, geography need not be destiny: exposure to hazards does not have to imply vulnerability to such events.

How can vulnerability to disasters be managed in South Asia? The first step

is to understand and quantify disaster risk. Within governments, ministries of finance can be sensitised to the annual expected losses and the maximum probable loss they face. It is usually the case that this financial figure is grossly underestimated due to the reallocation of budgets at different levels of government from municipal to provincial to federal governments. Once these losses are aggregated, it becomes clear that disasters pose significant contingent liabilities that need to be managed and decreased. To manage losses, ministries of finance can put in place a variety of instruments to more rapidly engage reconstruction funds and to transfer a portion of the risk to groups more able to bear it.

To decrease disaster losses, a physical inventory of expected losses must be taken through risk assessments. A wide variety of both structural and non-structural investments are possible. To reduce existing risk, physical investments can be made to retrofit critical infrastructure and to build protective infrastructure. To manage future risk, governments can improve land use planning policy

and implementation as well as enforce safe construction stands for buildings and infrastructure. Protective infrastructure can also be put in place to increase the resilience of future developments.

Finally how can decision makers make the most informed choices to efficiently reduce disaster risk, given political constraints and resource availability? An approach providing a menu of options across various sectors, and the associated economic rates of return for each intervention, will help decision makers compare the economic efficiency and political cost of various approaches.

Addressing disaster risk is a complex problem that will only increase as time passes and development increases. However, by recognising the risks of the future, and putting in place systems to understand and mitigate risk, the countries of South Asia can increase their resilience to disaster and climate risk. ■

– Marc Forni,

Senior Disaster Risk Management
Specialist, South Asia



Photo: AIDMI.



Disaster Risks in Himalayas

The Uttarakhand disaster cannot be taken up as an isolated incident as it refers to a series of such events in future. This is simply because Global ecology has rapidly changed in last 4-5 decades. The human updated urge to gather facilitates and luxuries in past infact been the reason. We just ignored that for any development that we had in past, it was nature that had to pay a cost. One can't imagine of any development and peep into it's root cause one will suddenly find nature's loss against it.

In recent past, Himalayan disasters are sign of the same. The Himalayas are targeted by nature's fury. Here sensitivity of this mountain series is totally different from other climatic zones. Himalaya unique entity where various factors decide in function. Cosmic principle is the one which deliver maximum is highly sensitive also. This mountain system is unique in the world .It is governed by various inter and intra intricacies.

Disturbance in one factor leads to loss of the other and constant tinkering succumbs the whole system. This was happening in past and this system regularly begun to express it losses in variety of ways.

Himalayas bleeding are never considered seriously and it is almost ready to collapse and the recent unprecedented rains in Kedarnath have given this opportunity to present disaster. It was not flood, it were Himalayan tears that led to current disaster. As a matter of fact local factors only accelerated the catastrophe. The main cause of disaster is largely ignored in the whole chaos. Ecological disruption of



Uttarakhand and Himalaya have not only been the main reason to this calamity. It is mainly because of the disrupted climatic pattern of the globe.

June 15-17 constant and unprecedented rains were infact not the product of local Himalayan human activities but it was global and urban. Rise of global temperature is an accepted fact now. This is debated from local to global level. It is unanimously agreed internationally that aggressive development strategies in the past have been the main reason. Politically it is argued in different contexts. It is although debated development v/s environment that is more an eyewash than honest discussion. It ends up most of the time with allegations. It is in fact economic conflict in ecological disguise. I think the whole debate must be directed to different subject. It must focus on rural v/s urban, villages v/s cities, fragile v/s stable, poor v/s rich and ecological destroyer v/s saviours.

After all who causes change of climate? It is our constant greed to gain more and more from nature. The rapidly changing lifestyles, rise of hunger for luxuries in urban communities are the main causes of climate disturbances. Ecological donors of globe are in fact rural communities who are also inhabitants of mountain areas. Most of the rivers, forests, soil, are the product of nature belonging to rural domain. The communities' in spite of being the richest in resource are the poorest too. The one who does not nurture the nature and consume and destroy more are never fixed ecologically responsible too.

Himalayan communities who are Ecological Sepoy of the country and the one whose carbon footprints are minimum suffer for others mistakes. It is the irony that who contributes to national ecology becomes victims of ecological disaster caused by others. This is a serious issue and in fact discussion must be around this issue only. We are in fact involved in local

damage and factors and by that we never reach to the root cause of the whole catastrophe.

It is in fact widening gap between economy and ecology. Our total thrust in the past has been on industry and economy. We ignored the fact that the true capital of any state are its resources. We developed pseudo economical model of development which often staggered due to market behaviour. Ecology which is ultimate source of economy was overlooked. This resulted into striking imbalances and consequences are in front of us.

The current disaster may have opened national debate but till we are far off the crux of this issue. It is Uttarakhand who faced this cataclysm

this time, tomorrow some other region is likely to have a blow. The way we have behaved with nature, the act of God will have to be faced by us in future too.

The lesson of Uttarakhand is for all specially for those who for some reason find themselves safe. The nature is pervasive and its fury can swallow anyone. The example is with us today. Those who suffered in Kedarnath tragedy were not localities. The message of nature is clear; we will not be forgiven for our misbehaviour with nature. There is urgent need to review whole issue of developmental policy. Without ecology, a viable economy cannot be attained. Ecology and economy are the two sides of the same coin and should be studies simultaneously.

It is ridiculous that we measure nation's growth merely by gross domestic product (GDP) which represents urbanisation and industrialisation. We don't have any growth measures that reflect growth in ecology and status of environment. Therefore, one more growth measure is essential that can ensure ecological growth on the lines of economics, Gross Environment Product (GEP) can be one such measure. It must also reveal every year the growth that can reflect status of forest, soil and air and efforts that have been put in. There must be an ecological and economic growth to maintain the balance. Such an ecological initiative can only prevent imbalance, thus, a safe future can be insured. ■ - Dr. Anil P. Joshi

Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organization
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

LOCAL LEVEL ACTION: DISASTER RECOVERY

Himalayan Tsunami – Challenges and Roadblocks in Relief Actions

In response to the floods that devastated Uttarakhand, a plethora of organisations and individuals extended their support to help the victims of the disaster. Although the maximum loss to life and infrastructure occurred between 14th and 17th June 2013, incessant rainfall in the subsequent weeks worsened the situation. This, coupled with the collapse of the infrastructure and the difficult terrain of Uttarakhand, presented a number of challenges to everyone involved in relief work.

At the outset of the relief operations, loss of mobile connectivity and inaccessibility of several areas rendered it difficult to gauge the actual extent of damage. A number of sources of information were used to get updates and provide more



clarity on the situation on the ground. Several roads and bridges were washed away in the floods, and landslides blocked numerous other

motorable roads. Gaping sinkholes cut off many villages altogether, leaving the vehicles ferrying relief materials stranded and unable to

reach affected areas. Many flood-ravaged areas were isolated and could not be assisted by the relief providers due to this collapse of infrastructure. Stranded people in such areas had to be rescued via helicopters deployed by the Indian Air Force, the government of Uttarakhand and some private sector operators.

In order to effectively reach out to the victims of the disaster, Pragya followed a three stage approach: the areas that needed immediate attention were prioritised, and the distribution of relief materials was assigned accordingly, followed by planning the logistics and delivery of the relief materials. Wherever feasible, villagers were asked to aggregate at certain points to which vehicles carrying the relief material could reach, but in many other cases distribution of relief materials entailed trekking long distances at high altitudes using multiple means to transport the material. For example, to provide temporary shelter and teaching materials for a school in Kunjethi (Rudraprayag), vehicles transported the material till where roads permitted; this was followed by an hour-long trek, a river crossing by a trolley, and another



hour-long trek, the material being carried to the village using mules and horses.

Media focus on the disaster led to a multitude of relief camps and operations being initiated by organisations that were relatively new to the region. There were constant enquiries from MNC's and individuals wanting to support relief

operations. All of the above entailed constant coordination with the field staff and frequent recalibration of assessed needs to ensure that the right relief supplies kept coming in and were reaching those in need. Moreover, large amounts of relief material kept flowing in at our head office in Gurgaon, where it had to be sorted, packed and dispatched to the areas based on their need. All of the above were major challenges, given that both accessibility and mobile connectivity were severely constrained.



In conclusion, one feels that an efficient coordination mechanism needs to be established amongst NGOs, other relief organisations and government officials/ departments in order to ensure rapid and effective response to disasters. Time is of the essence when disasters strike and lives are hanging in balance. It is necessary to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, and guarantee that appropriate and adequate relief material reach the affected people. ■

- Rupesh Desai

Sr. Team Member, Research and Advocacy Team, Pragya India

DRR: Advantages and Challenges of Gender in Kerala

The historic change in the response and nature to succumb the situations, happened in disaster management by the lethal strike of tsunami 2004 in Kerala. When evaluating the DRR programmes in Kerala, it got highlighted the drawback of exclusion of geographical/disaster type, socio economic and gender centric approach to DRR in the Kerala context to achieve a stage of developing DRR. The current status of DRR, it can be depicted as a gender based effort, because of the revolution spirited movement was carried out by one of its component.

The projects met all its demands and goals, had taken almost seven and half years by NGO's based on short term project of government. In the introduction phase the DRR capacitated the community in emergency management the NGO's worked properly, in Kollam, Ernakulam and Alapuzha districts. The results and the challenges were depended on the varied socio economic specialties and gender.

The active participants were always women group, specified as from bottom level of the coastal communities. The reasons which attracted them to find out a subsidiary income because the home management is their responsibility and the men group carrying out the traditional livelihood. It projects the economic crisis they facing throughout the year. So that so many alternative options were introduced for women, the failure remarked in some places was the accessibility of their products to get market.

The issue which struggled the complete reachability of the



Alternation to a new livelihood: a flour mill run by women from fishermen community in Alappad Panchayath of Kollam district.

community was about the participation of men in the case of they do not have much better social gathering and activities. The Kudumbasree, and MNREGS helping women in their social gathering, a knowledge management system runs through it. While they are able to

In the DRR programmes the women are encouraged by the community itself to put forward the issues and to be in the leadership, as a result of it there are success stories in which the DR- community members became the ward level representatives of the PRI in Ernakulam district, empowered in decision making and advocacy for DRR.

convey this to home a track to converse between community and service providers opens through women. The information's and information (EWS) systems are functional; the problem is how to get involved the middle class people into it as they do not participating in such social activities.

In the DRR programmes the women are encouraged by the community itself to put forward the issues and to be in the leadership, as a result of it there are success stories in which the DR- community members became the ward level representatives of the PRI in Ernakulam district, empowered in decision making and advocacy for DRR. The potentials and sensibilities of both of them are extracted, the demand for support remains. ■

- Asha Kiran

Team Leader, Shreyas Social Service Society, S.Bathery, Kerala

The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and Amnesia in Gujarat, India*

The earthquake in Gujarat in 2001 was a terrible tragedy. Perhaps as many as 20,000 people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands of homes were severely damaged.

A new book by Edward Simpson, an anthropologist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, takes a long-term view on the disaster, placing it both within history and the contemporary political scene in Gujarat. He argues that for those so-minded, the earthquake presented an opportunities to intervene. Thus, in Gujarat, leaders were deposed, proletariats created, religious fundamentalism incubated, the state restructured, and industrial capitalism expanded exponentially.

Rather than gazing in at those struggling in the ruins, as is commonplace in the literature, Simpson's book looks out from the affected region at those who came to intervene. Based on extensive research amid the dust and noise of reconstruction, the author focuses on the survivors and their interactions with death, history, and with those who came to use the shock of disaster to change the order of things.

Simpson describes a society in mourning, further alienated by manufactured conditions of uncertainty and absurdity. He narrates arguments about the past. What was important? What should be preserved? Was modernisation the cause of the disaster or the antidote?

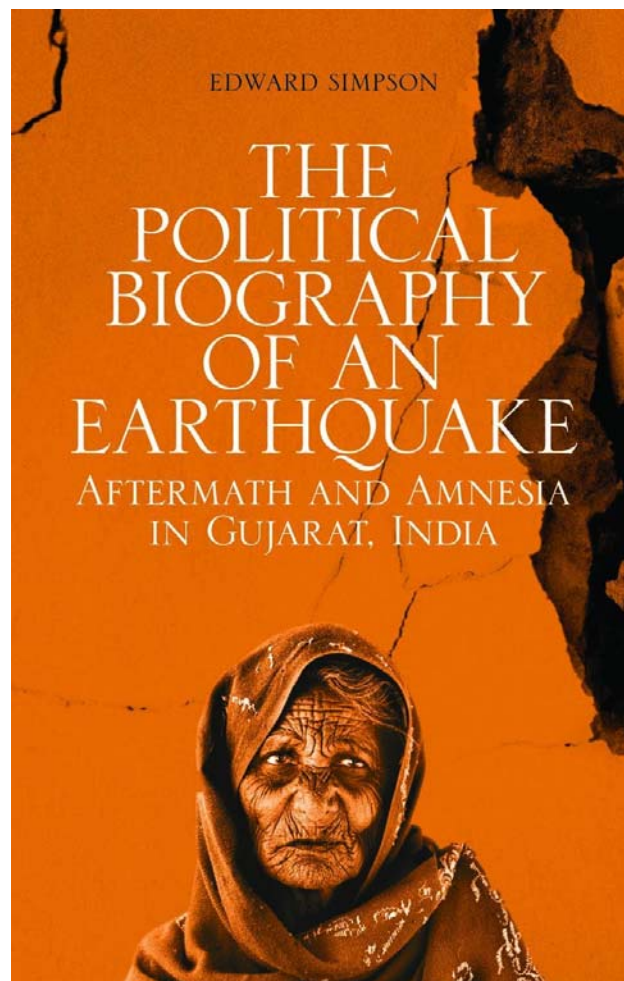
Within the reconstruction process he sees the spread of neo-liberal

capitalist policies, with social change, industrialisation and alienation at the heart of the story. The long-term nature of the study allows the author to draw some novel conclusions. Notable in this regard is the ultimate success of some 'contractor-driven' housing projects, usually decried in the literature as 'culturally insensitive'. Also worthy of further thought is the author's observation that earthquakes often have to be forgotten so that people can get on with their everyday lives.

As people were putting things back together in Gujarat, they also knew

that future earthquakes were inevitable. How did they learn to live with this terrible truth? How have people in other times and places come to terms with the promise of another earthquake, knowing that things will fall apart again?

Simpson ends his book with: "In future, when an earthquake strikes, think of those who are suffering — but also be mindful of those who may have been waiting for such an event, and of what they might do next. Such mindfulness might also form part of a manifesto for nicer aftermaths". ■



The book 'The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and Amnesia in Gujarat, India' is currently available in the UK. The OUP-India edition will be available in March 2014.

* 2013, London: Hurst

West Bengal's Disaster Risk Reduction Challenges: A View from Communities

West Bengal is the only state in the India which stretches from the Himalayan range in the north to the Sea (Bay of Bengal) in the south. This has made the state with diverse geophysical characteristics leading to a status of vulnerability to variety of natural hazards from earth quake to flood to cyclone. And indeed it has a long history of disasters: floods, cyclones, flash floods, earthquakes, droughts and famine, landslides, and forest fires.

In last decade West Bengal state has showed impressive involvement of the civil society (CS) in taking the message of DRR to the common people. The incidents like earthquake in Sikkim and West Bengal and incident in AMRI hospital have set the tone of more urgent and purposeful involvement of civil society organisation along with government institutions for more comprehensive effort to tackle the various disasters.

The effective disaster risk reduction depends upon a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration among all concerned stakeholders. This is one of the major challenges in West Bengal state. The different line departments starting from the State level to the Gram Panchayat level are totally indifferent to the urgent need of integrating in all their annual plans with a special focus on Disaster. The trend till now is of having isolated plans of each department, leaving the state highly vulnerable to any kind of natural disaster with the probability of responding late during the emergency.

The Disaster Management Act, 2005 on December 26, has made it

mandatory in setting up of a State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) under the chairmanship of the Chief Ministers and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) under the chairmanship of District Magistrates. In the state West Bengal, the process of making and strengthening SDMA and DDMA is affected severely by the low political will of the political parties. People of West Bengal are affected every year by small or big disaster, but the need and functionality of these institutions are not the political agenda of the political parties and neither of the civil society.

The severity and frequency of disasters and their impact on the society will intensify in near future. In this regard the intention of the government in taking persistent effort for sustained strategies to reduce disaster risk is totally callous. Simple schemes like Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) is implemented with the perspective of DRR strategy, much need of shelter issues during and after disaster could be addressed. Recent experience of shelter after Phailin in Orissa, where the state government

had been able to save lives of the people but not their shelter, has pointed out the correlation of fruitful implementation of housing schemes in the state and issue of shelter during disaster.

The need for disaster risk reduction (DRR) approach and mainstreaming disaster management in development as the cross cutting issues is not at all present in the mind set of the government departments. Here, I would like to share that the capacity of the officials of different government departments on DRR issues and linking DRR with development programmes in very poor. Till date the response to disaster is seen with "contingency" mentality.

The different IEC materials of the government on DRR issues are not up to the mark to attract the attention of the people like the polio campaign. The approach of the promotional material on DRR is very casual.

Having shared the above sharing, one of the major West Bengal's Disaster Risk Reduction Challenges remains in bringing together different organisations and individuals in diverse disciplines and sectors and in assembling, synthesising and further disseminating knowledge on disaster management in diverse sectors. The Inter Agency Group (IAG) on disaster in West Bengal is already playing the role through its many activities, but nothing as such is significantly materialising to make it a vibrant platform and pressurise the government to take proper action on DRR issues. ■

– Anthony Chettri,
Caritas India

The need for disaster risk reduction (DRR) approach and mainstreaming disaster management in development as the cross cutting issues is not at all present in the mind set of the government departments.

Capacity Building Gaps within Humanitarian Agencies: Key Areas of Actions

A community's satisfaction with, and acceptance of an organisation and its staff is often the difference between a successful, sustainable programme and a waste of money and time, impacting lives and livelihoods.

An INGO Country Director recently told me of a colleague who had worked in a community for over ten years. The community leader thanked the colleague for the help and support offered over the years, and assured him that the community had developed and benefited greatly from his experience. The leader went on to say that as he had not grown and been developed by the INGO he could no longer serve the community's needs!

An organisation has an accountability to the community of course, but can only fulfil that accountability, effectively and cost-efficiently, if it is also accountable to its staff and volunteers. What does the



'People In Aid workshop participants discuss recruitment, Bangkok, 2007.

organisation need to do? It needs to plan good management practice throughout its programmes. A €3m grant for a major water programme in Asia was returned to the donor because the INGO failed to plan the recruitment of suitable staff. A programme in Africa failed the community because the local NGOs had not given job descriptions to its staff and none knew their responsibilities and delivered no, or poor work. Communities affected by the 2011 East Africa drought told us about nepotism in NGO recruitment

(leading to their disengagement from the NGOs' work), about reference-checking not being carried out and about Codes of Conduct not being enforced. These are standard HR and people management practices which, if not applied by the organisation, affect the community.

Here are a few examples of practices leading to results which mitigate an organisation's risks and positively affect its accountability and service to the community. More information is available in the People In Aid Code of Good Practice www.peopleinaid.org/code (and elaborated on in hundreds of free resources on www.peopleinaid.org). Please challenge yourself or your organisation to fill in the last column. You can do this either by thinking of the positive impact the 'leads to' column will have on the community or the negative impact if the sample actions are not carried out. ■

Work area	Sample Actions	Leads to	Impact on Community
Recruitment and selection	Prioritise applicants' qualifications and experience; encourage diversity.	Greater transparency; a more effective workforce	
Management	Provide task descriptions, and base performance management on these; if you have the right staff then coach rather than direct; train managers to manage people as well as projects.	Higher-performing teams and individuals.	
Motivation	Praise individuals and teams; offer learning and development opportunities; be equitable in rewards (financial and non-financial).	Realisation of individuals' potential; enhanced value of individuals to the organisation.	
Staff wellbeing	Ask staff to help shape their workplace; cut excessive workloads;	Healthy colleagues, able to perform better.	
Organisational culture and values	Ensure the organisation and management act according to these values; appraise staff's commitment to these as well as to their work.	Pride in the organisation; well-functioning teams; retention.	

– Jonathan Potter, Executive Director, People In Aid, UK

Extending Business Engagement from Disaster Relief to Community Resilience

In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines, the private sector once again played a significant role in disaster response and relief. Multinational corporations as well as small businesses provided funds, goods, personnel, support services and innovative assistance.

The business sector has become an important player in disaster response and relief efforts and there are an increasing number of successful partnerships with humanitarian organisations. This includes for example DHL's long-standing partnership with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) that helped establish a global network of more than 400 well-trained employee volunteers. As part of DHL's Disaster Response Teams employee volunteers provide logistical support at disaster-site airports. Another example is Visa's support of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), an inter-agency initiative whose members include Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, the British Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Action Against Hunger/ACF. Through this partnership Visa helps deliver cash-based assistance after a disaster, rather than physical goods, when markets are still able to function and thereby contributing to the recovery of local markets.

The growing scale and complexity of today's disaster response and recovery operations are challenging the resources and capabilities of local governments and humanitarian organisations. Thus a larger, more diverse pool of actors is needed to help increase resources and capacities. At the same time, however, there is an urgent need to extend assistance from post-disaster relief efforts to building preparedness and resilience from the outset in order to save lives

and livelihoods and reduce the costs for relief and rebuilding efforts.

Disaster response and relief remain the dominant areas of business engagement in disaster-related work. As such there is a great opportunity to use these engagements as entry points into more long-term partnerships that help build resilience and preparedness of communities vulnerable to natural hazards. The sense of urgency, the great scale of losses and needs and the heightened media attention in the aftermath of large-scale disasters have often lead to spontaneous, altruistic and generous contributions from the private sector. Extending such contributions to more long-term partnerships addressing the underlying drivers of community vulnerability to disasters is a much more challenging task. Community resilience and preparedness programmes are more complex, long-term and their results not immediately visible and measurable.

Business engagements in such programmes would likely be more embraced if these programmes extended from existing relief and recovery efforts and already established partnerships. Humanitarian organisations need to take a lead in educating the private sector on long-term community development needs and how these relate to greater vulnerability towards disasters. Partnerships with businesses that contribute towards disaster relief and recovery need to link to long-term resilience programmes and demonstrate a strong business case for private sector involvement. There is an opportunity to highlight areas of great need where business can play an important role in helping to meet gaps through provision of funding or business expertise and resources. This

includes, for example, helping those most vulnerable to disasters such as female-headed households, children, elderly, people with disabilities or poor communities in remote areas. These groups in society are less able to access assistance and national authorities may not have the capacity to provide the targeted assistance needed.

Xylem, a global water technology provider, works with Mercy Corps under the "Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative – Water" in an effort to build community capacities for disaster preparedness and risk reduction with a particular focus on the protection of water sources vulnerable to the impacts of disasters. In Padang city, Indonesia, the partnership helped establish a local water committee, conduct a Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA) of the town's water springs and develop a contingency plan to safeguard water sources from earthquakes and floods. The partnership has worked on water-related disaster risk reduction in six countries and stresses the importance of community working groups with a diverse representation. In Indonesia, for example, this has helped identifying and addressing the specific needs of the elderly.

The effective engagement of business in longer-term partnerships for disaster resilience and preparedness programmes will rely on how well the link between community needs, business resources and expertise can be demonstrated. This will not only allow businesses to leverage their core services and products but possibly also co-create innovative solutions. Such engagements have the potential to help meet community needs as well as business objectives. ■

– Helen Roeth,

Associate, CSR Asia Hong Kong

Towards a Post-2015 Framework for DRR

On 4th January, 2014 the 3rd quarterly review of the AIDMI for 2013-2014 was held at the premises of FPI in Ahmedabad. At this quarterly review, the team members of AIDMI discussed and reviewed the work done under various projects and initiatives in 3rd quarter of April 2013 to March 2014. The chief guests were Dr. Shyam Sunder (Dean, School of Management, Yale University) and Dr. Shubha Desai (ex- HOD, Dept. Of Medicine, NHL Medical Hospital, Ahmedabad).

The overarching theme of all the discussions was the impact of AIDMI's work in the Asia Pacific region and its contribution to the Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. At this review meeting, the team of AIDMI realised the importance of integrating the agenda of disaster risk reduction (DRR) into development planning and discussed the modalities of achieving this integration. In this regard, the need for DRR integration with Climate Change Adaptation



(CAA) policies, programs and practices was acknowledged as paramount.

Other highlights of this quarterly review included an avid discussion on AIDMI's gender sensitive approach in implementing various DRR projects and programs, the need for building the resilience of businesses to disasters along with private sector

engagement and the advocacy of climate smart and gender sensitive district disaster management planning in India. The achievements of AIDMI's work in addressing the 5 priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA1) were also highlighted. The feat of publishing over 100 issues of AIDMI's newsletter, *Southasiadisasters.net* was also celebrated by the team members. ■

Do you wish to receive this publication regularly? Write to AIDMI (bestteam@aidmi.org). The publication will be sent by E-mail. Your comments help *southasiadisasters.net* remain an effective and informative resource for regional issues of disaster risk management. Please contribute comments, features, reports, discussion points, and essays about your work. Today!

Editorial Advisors:

Anshuman Saikia

Regional Programme Support Coordinator
ARO, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Thailand

Denis Nkala

Regional Coordinator, South-South Cooperation and Country Support (Asia-Pacific), United Nations Development Programme, New York

Ian Davis

Visiting Professor in Disaster Risk Management in Copenhagen, Lund, Kyoto and Oxford Brookes Universities, UK

Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu

International Strategy for Risk Reduction (ISDR) - South Asia, Sri Lanka

Mihir R. Bhatt

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, India

Dr. Satchit Balsari, MD, MPH

The University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell, New York, USA

T. Nanda Kumar

Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), India



ALL INDIA DISASTER MITIGATION INSTITUTE

411 Sakar Five, Near Natraj Cinema, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad-380 009 India. Tele/Fax: +91-79-2658 2962
E-mail: bestteam@aidmi.org, Website: <http://www.aidmi.org>, www.southasiadisasters.net