Building Resilient Cities
Engaging DRR to an Urban World
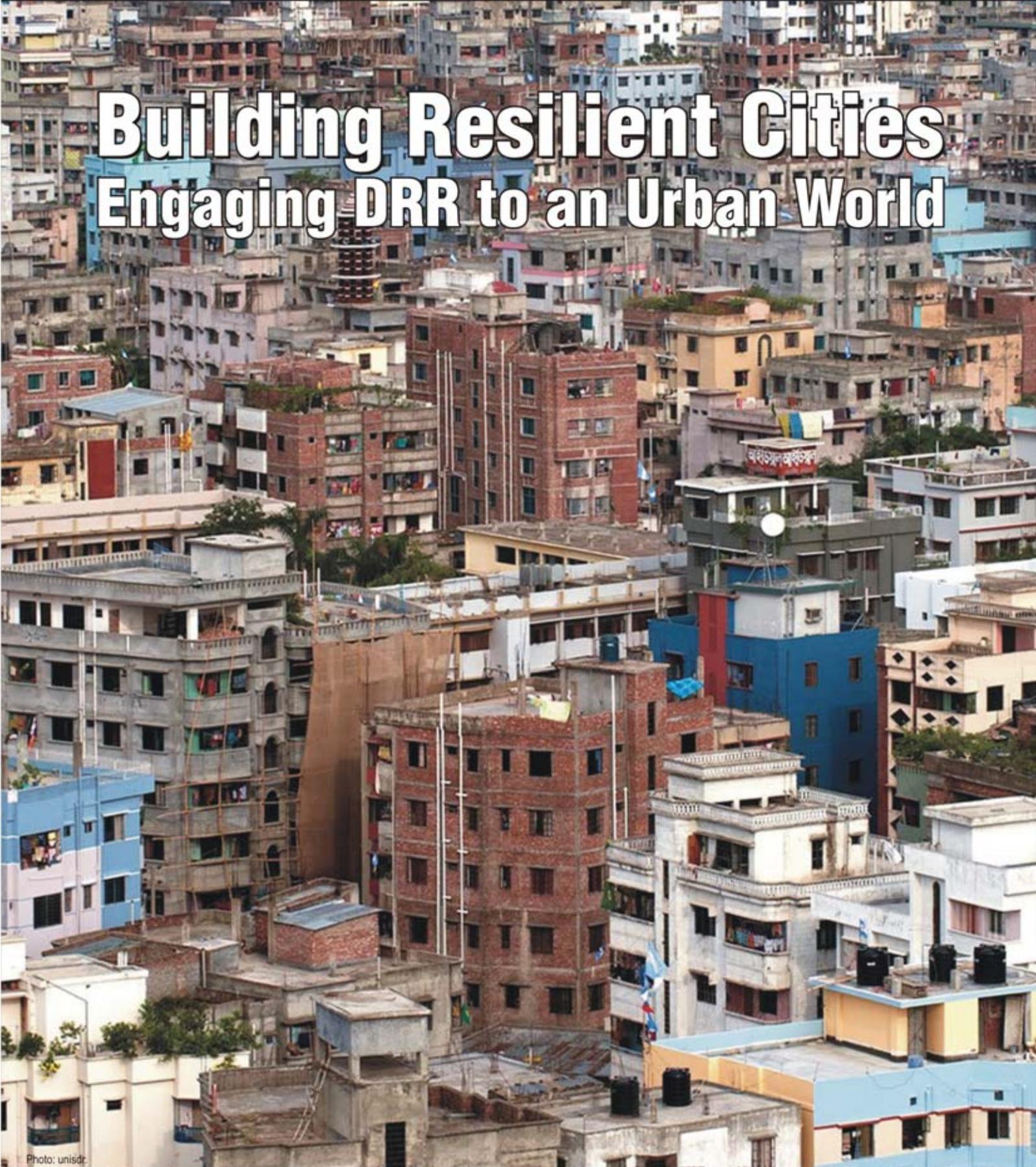
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IN THIS ISSUE

DISASTER AND MIGRATION

Disaster Displacement in Cities: Agenda for Initiatives

Of the 72 million displaced persons in the world, at least 13 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in urban areas.[1] This number is likely to grow over the next years. Disaster displacement risks are driven by rapid and unplanned urbanisation, the lack of enforcement of building standards and land-use plans, limited disaster and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and environmental degradation.[2] As people and assets concentrate in hazard-prone areas, the risk of disaster becomes increasingly urban as well.[3]

Displacement in urban areas alters the access to different spaces, resources, objects, social relations and key actors within them.

Compared to the non-displaced poor urban populations, IDPs lack access to adequate and secure tenure and basic services. During a displacement situation many people do not have proper documentation knowledge of the local language, job facilities, health access, among others which makes their condition of living unstable and vulnerable.[4] In many contexts, IDPs might avoid to get access to assistance for fear of being arrested or because of discrimination among the local population.[5] In other cases, IDPs might not receive support from local authorities in order to limit further mobility and stretching already limited resources.[6]

The relevant authorities, on the other hand, are seldom sufficiently well prepared to manage the demographic, public policy and social challenges of internal displacement in urban areas.[7] They often lack the capacities to mitigate and respond to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, especially for IDP housing options.[8] These limitations are further complicated by the fact that resources to address displacement

Heavy rains in 2014 led to flooding in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India in August and September, and in Sri Lanka in December.

© UNDP Bangladesh/GMB Akash.

are usually limited and only available in the immediacy of a crisis.[9] Local markets and institutions are often not ready to absorb the often sudden inflow of IDPs. Also it is difficult for local authorities to identify and register IDPs within complex urban settings which further reduce the ability of IDPs to access resources.[10]

At the global level, the groundwork for an 'agenda for initiatives' has been laid in the past years. The New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador, 2016, in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda 2015-2030, pledges to 'leave no one behind', giving special merit to countries affected by 'natural and human-made disasters'[11] and to IDPs.[12] The Agenda commits to bring disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation considerations into urban planning, and ensure decent work and tenure for IDPs, while building local capacities as well.

The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) connects with these agendas in several crucial points. The PDD 2016-2019 Work plan and Strategic Framework includes initiatives to enhance IDP protection in the context of disasters and climate change. Such initiatives range from addressing the lack of data and knowledge about IDPs and engaging with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, by doing this it aims to ensure that the specific protection needs towards disaster are included into public policies, such as disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response plans for IDPs. For more information, please visit our website and follow us on Twitter and Facebook. ■

– Atle Solberg, Head of Coordination Unit, Platform on Disaster Displacement, IEH Geneva, Switzerland

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11 UN Habitat III (2016), New Urban Agenda, Draft outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), available at https://goo.gl/nJ66ZC,paragraph 19 and 101.
12 UN Habitat III (2016), available athttps://goo.gl/nJ66ZC, paragraphs20, 28, 42, 57 and 107.

Photo: AIDMI.

AIDMI arguing to make Ahmedabad the first Smart City to be Safe City to the elected leaders, November 25, 2016, Ahmedabad.

Strengthening Urban Food Security Analysis in Humanitarian Crises

The word is urbanizing rapidly. By 2030 the urban population is predicted to exceed five billion people, and eighty percent of them will live in the developing world.

Millions of urban households are faced with problems and threats related to poverty: lack of secure tenure, precarious living conditions, no access to basic services, unemployment, violence, public health risks and poor sanitation, which are all underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity. The frequency and scale of disasters associated with climate change and the current food, fuel and financial crisis further exacerbate the problems.

Humanitarians working in urban settings are faced with a significant challenge

More and more, humanitarians are responding in urban situations which are largely unfamiliar. Identifying and targeting groups that are vulnerable to food insecurity in urban areas poses a significant challenge for organizations that have traditionally provided assistance to people living primarily in rural areas. The characteristics of vulnerability in urban settings are generally more complex and therefore require a different approach.

Adapting to an Urban World strengthens urban food security analysis in humanitarian crises

In line with the main objective of the Global Food Security Cluster gFSC

Kenya, Nairobi, Mathare slums in February 2012.

WFP/Rein Skullerud.

Working Group on Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings[1] to build tools and guidelines, a project called "Adapting to an Urban World" was initiated to develop food security vulnerability urban assessment tools by field testing them in six different urban food security contexts, including areas affected by conflict, natural hazards, migration, rising food prices and poverty.

Millions of urban households are faced with problems and threats related to poverty: lack of secure tenure, precarious living conditions, no access to basic services, among others which are all underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity.

The project aims to strengthen the food security analysis in support of humanitarian responses to food security crises in urban settings by developing guidance which will assist with;

a) Identifying levels of vulnerability to food insecurity in urban areas;

b) Assessing different types of urban food insecurity and vulnerability;

c) Organise appropriate responses to urban food insecurity;

d) Establish an effective collaborative mechanism for responses to food insecurity in urban crises. ■

Please read more about the project: http://fscluster.org/food-security-and-livelihoods-urban/document/adapting-urban-world-tailoring-food

– Marina Angeloni, Global Food Security Cluster Rome, Italy

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1 http://fscluster.org/food-security-and-livelihoods-urban/document/presentation-food-security-and

Shelter Associates – Shelter, Risk and Agenda for Asia

There have been many natural disasters in recent times that have occurred rapidly over a short period of time and had disastrous consequences; they have caused lives, shelter and infrastructure to be lost and in their aftermath have put pressure on the populations and systems that survived. These events are observed around the world as the global media documents the loss of life, the shattering of important supply networks (such as water and food), the destruction of important facilities (such as hospitals and schools), the displacement of people, and the deterioration of health. While these conditions are often the result of disastrous events, such events are not their only agent. There are many people who live in locations without adequate infrastructure for safe, healthy, dignified and comfortable living, who have not experienced extreme weather or earthquakes, they are victims of a different agents, insensitive approach of city officials.

An example to illustrate this point would be three developments on the periphery of Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad in Maharashtra which was completed as part of the Government of India' (GOI) Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) scheme. The municipal corporation has built residential units which provide shelter but little else as the units are not connected to a water supply or a working drainage system, and power and street lighting are only available at specific times. The remote location of the three developments relative to the peri-urban area has meant that beneficiaries use a disproportionate amount of their small income on transportation as none of the schemes

are served by public transport and the private transport providers charge premium rates. The municipal corporation has been moving their citizens from slums within Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad to these project sites, effectively throwing them out of the peri-urban area and displacing the established life-style of the citizen. The beneficiaries of the VAMBAY scheme in Sangli-Miraj are no longer near markets or places of healthcare, employment or education, and, due to the fact that the units are not connected to a drainage system the beneficiaries also have to defecate out in the open and face the associated violations of their health and safety.

While it cannot be said that the beneficiaries of the VAMBAY scheme in Sangli-Miraj were relocated as a result of an extreme environmental event it can be said that they were displaced by the insensitive approach of schemes implementing agents.

In 2009 Shelter Associates (SA) were appointed as consultants for the GOI' Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) also in Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad. Against the backdrop of the municipal corporations VAMBAY scheme SA developed a holistic city-wide proposal, informed by a poverty mapping exercise which optimised the use of land available for development and minimized the disruption to the established life-styles of the beneficiaries.

29 unofficial communities across Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad were included within the IHSDP, 7 sites were proposed to be cleared and rebuilt to a higher density so that they could

accommodate their initial population and receive the residents from 22 informal settlements that are designated by the municipal corporation and Government of Maharashtra (GOM) for demolition as part of their public works programs (road widening, commercial development, etc). The 7 receiving sites were located across the peri-urban area meaning that the distance that the relocated beneficiaries had to move from their current home was minimized. This was beneficial to the relocated beneficiaries as the disruption to their way of life was minimized; they were still near to all of the amenities that they have become accustomed to, employers, hospitals, schools, shops, public gardens, etc. and the communities which were required to relocate by the greatest distance were actually happy to do so as they would be closer to the amenities that they use and therefore benefit from a saving of both time and money in relation to transportation.

The project was supported at the community level due to the involvement of the beneficiary communities in the collection of data. Comprehensive settlement and household level data were methodically collected and linked with accurate maps using geographic information systems (GIS) technology in combination with remote sensing technology (Google Earth®). The data was arranged spatially across the peri-urban area and used to generate the IHSDP proposal. The beneficiary communities were also involved in the design of the residential units which include a bathroom and a separate toilet and the detailed design

Explaining designs to the community members.

of the community centres associated with each of the sites. The beneficiaries were also encouraged to take part in the implementation process as they attended progress meetings and assisted with site inspections.

The IHSDP in Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad demonstrates an alternative to the typical slum rehabilitation projects that are prioritised by city officials which fail to take cognisance of ground realities, do not view the issue of housing for the poor at a city-wide level and which are implemented in an insensitive, intrusive and opaque manner without the input of the beneficiary communities.

SA advocates for inclusive planning where projects are conceived as part of a holistic plan at the city level, where the beneficiary communities are active participants and where the whole process is informed by accurate data. Data is an essential component of inclusive planning, and is central to the philosophy of acknowledging informal communities as integral parts of any city. As a result of SA's IHSDP project the collection of data has became part of the GOI's policy framework under the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), which now requires city officials to map their informal communities using GIS and remote sensing technologies, and also earned SA the title of Google Earth Hero[1]. ■

– Ross Plaster, Architect, Shelter Associates, UK

1 http://www.google.co.uk/earth/explore/showcase/changetheworld.html#tab=shelter-associates

EARLY WARNING IN DRR

Early Warning and Forecasting System for Earthquakes: An Insight

Introduction
Various volcanic eruptions, landslides, explosions etc. in the past have resulted into large motions of earth's surface due to geological disturbances within the earth. Such sudden and transient motion of the earth's surface causes an earthquake. Many theories exist to explain the cause of earthquake. The most important is the theory of Plate Tectonics. This theory marks that the movement of Earth's crust results from building up of stored energy between two stuck lithospheric plates. The surface where they slip is called the fault or fault plane. The location below the earth's surface where the earthquake starts is called the hypocenter, and the location directly above it on the surface of the earth is called the epicentre.

The shaking is experienced by the seismic waves that are generated during an earthquake, which travel through the surface and/or body of the crust and finally reaches the location. Seismic waves are the waves of energy caused by the sudden breaking of rock within the earth. There are several different kinds of seismic waves which move in different ways. The two main types of seismic waves are body waves and surface waves. Earthquakes radiate seismic energy as both body and surface waves. Body waves travel through the earth's inner layers, but surface waves can only move along the surface of the planet like ripples on water. Earthquakes radiate seismic energy as both body and surface waves. Travelling through the interior of the earth, body waves

arrive before the surface waves emitted by an earthquake. These waves are of a higher frequency than surface waves. They are of two types-S wave and P wave.

Earthquake Early Warning System (EEWS)

The term "earthquake early warning" (EEW) is used to describe real-time earthquake information systems that have the potential to provide warning prior to significant ground shaking. It is based on a simple concept that telemetry data travels at a speed of light whereas the seismic waves travel at much less speed. Thus, if data about an upcoming earthquake could be collected near epicenter then this information could be transferred at the speed of light so that one could get some lead time. Warning are issued based on the lead times that range from a few seconds to a little more than a minute and are primarily a function of the distance of the user from the earthquake epicenter (see figure).

The whole EEWS is based on the community response and preparedness when the warning is issued, as there is no purpose that can be served by an EEWS if the community is unaware of things which should be done once the warning is issued by the concerned authorities. It is also important to educate community about an earthquake, education is the key for awareness and plays an important role when a disaster is underway.

Microzonation

Microzonation has generally been recognized as one of the most accepted tool in seismic hazard assessment and risk evaluation; and it is defined as the zonation with respect to ground motion characteristics by taking into account source and site conditions. The basis of microzonation is to model the rupture mechanism at the source of an earthquake, evaluate the propagation of waves through the earth to the top of bed rock, determine the effect of local soil profile and thus develop a hazard map indicating the vulnerability of the area to potential seismic hazard.

Development of Earthquake Early Warning in India

Areas that have been identified as severe seismic regions include the Himalayan belt in the north from Kashmir to Manipur, Gujarat in the west and Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the southeast. The faults in these areas are capable of generating large magnitude earthquakes that would subject the neighbouring areas to significant ground shaking. Thick population density and poor adherence to earthquake resistant practices have substantially increased the seismic vulnerability of these regions. However, in case of a large earthquake in Himalayas, most of these places can have a lead time of 30 to 70 seconds before the damaging seismic waves arrive. If this real-time seismological information is adequately tuned to the operational requirements of technical systems, life and industrial loss could be significantly reduced. The EEW Network of *Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (IITR)* covers the Garhwal Himalayan having approximate area of 100 Km x 40 km wherein 100 sensors have been installed.

Discussions and Conclusions

Tremendous strides made by our country in communication technology has opened up several frontiers which were inaccessible in recent past. Connectivity and rapid information are the most important parameters in today's generation development of earthquake early warning system. Recent studies have shown that severity of ground motion in several parts of Delhi would be quite high in case an earthquake of magnitude 7.5 to 8 hits in Garhwal. Thus, in the event of a big earthquake (magnitude 7 and above) in Himalayas, a successful EEW system could surely get credit for giving a second life to a large population of northern India including Delhi. Further, availability of real time strong motion data will substantially boost the information data base and research which is being pursued by IITR after big earthquakes in past. Real time recording would also open avenues for use of this data for disaster management.

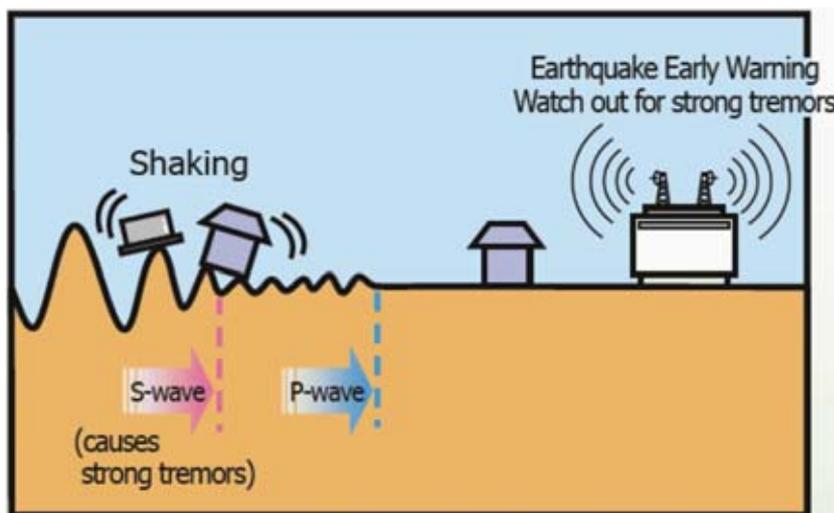– **Sangeeta Baksi,** Scientist, New Delhi *and* **Akarsh Mishra**

Figure: Basics of an EEWS.

Few Good Men and Women

Finally it happened after endless excuses, and reasons for delay on my part, (some valid some per-functionary), the trip to AIDMI finally happened, ever since Mihirbhai confirmed the date, I was anxious, looking forward to a wonderful long cherished interaction with Mihirbhai and the team AIDMI.

I have been associated with AIDMI since 2008 and have been following their sterling work and times closely since our first interaction. It was in Chennai, I was invited as a speaker to a seminar on protection and Monitoring during disaster. The effortless efficiency in conducting a seminar at a remote alien location such as Chennai did amaze me. The follow up of the seminar was done with great gusto and passion.

The true blue efficiency a la Mercedes Benz was reflected by the communications flowing to me on mail and phone, coordinating my travel and days program. Needless to say all the I's were meticulously dotted and so were the T's all crossed. To the extent that my both the web check ins were also done 48 hours prior and the boarding passes mailed to my ID. Even before I boarded the flight at Pune there was a call from the driver at Ahmedabad, designated to pick me up. It did reminiscence the AIDMI efficiency previously tasted in Chennai.

A day well spent at the AIDMI made me think of the amount of time I wasted before making this trip. The Campus was a revelation though spartan exudes a hum of efficiency, well cut out work and smiling faces; well they are all in it on their own. The campus split at two levels of the building seemed seamlessly integrated functionally.

An interaction with the Director, Mihirbhai and one of the senior functionaries Ms. Vandana Chauhan, was an insight into their body of work and the current projects at hand. The power of Human Endeavour and perseverance always amazes me, well the AIDMI have taken it to a different level. So much can be achieved with so less people in such a finite period of time!!! it is no mean job to strive and make contributions in a sector so very heavily a domain of the Government Departments and the highflying International agencies and NGOs.

The AIDMI Approach

The most fascinating thing I discovered was the AIDMI Approach to the problems being faced by the disaster communities. If I was to outline this approach it would be that it is what makes AIDMI different are the following points:
- They are committed to long term solutions for all the disaster related issues, being it capacity building, resilience or mitigation measures.
- All of them are working with an affirmation to act as a bridge between the disaster community and development, now that's a different take on the so popular development approach!
- At all times the AIDMI philosophy (if I may call it so) reflects the sanguinity of the development approach.
- Focusing on the poor and marginalized communities as these are the worst affected during disasters and also the least vociferous.

The interaction with the staff also revealed many a hitherto unknown facets of AIDMI and its team members, they have and so displayed a great ability to adapt and change as the things developed. Innovation became a staple and went along as the need of the situation and specific instance beckoned. Working with the government teams at the district level is no mean feat as you are dealing with people who deal the masses, priorities based on the masses demand, and many a time it is the quintessential issue of dealing with people **"Who do not know what they do not know"**.

Developing toolboxes for assessment of loss and damage at the local level have gone a long way in creating tangible results. This has been done by developing a 'methods toolbox'.

Other hallmarks of their work are updating of DDMPS, safety audits for Hospitals, school safety campaigns and pro poor DDMPs.

One innovation that stands out and can be said to be ahead of its time is the Micro Insurance for local Market Recovery.

Another noteworthy domain that the AIDMI teams have been able to step into is the relief work, this has always been the forte of the Forces and the Government Agencies given the immense amount of resources it needs. Herein the AIDMI teams with their locally rallied up resources have been able to make a mark including in Nepal during the recent calamity, where they played a pivotal coordinating role between the various agencies and aid efforts.

They way ahead as formulated and stated by the AIDMI, holds an optimistic and holistic approach to achieve a resilient society and therefore aims to put the poor in the centre of Global SFDRR. Aligning risk assessment to the smart cities seems to be a step in the right direction. A roadmap to harness technology in terms of GIS in DDMPs and partnering with universities is a novel aim.

An interaction with the finance team gave an insight into the fact that it was also aligned with the ' Project Approach "for budgeting and expenditure, it was very heartening to know. The practice of quarterly audits and closure is an excellent practice prevalent in the AIDMI and would surely keep the books straight and spotless at all times.

Also I had an opportunity to visit the premises of the AMA that are used by the AIDMI for conducting its training program, this is another example of how AIDMI is optimizing resources.

Having gleaned so much in the short span of a day, made me humbler and wiser to the power of the human spirit and resolve that the AIDMI exhibited. There were many a valuable lessons to carry home especially those a University master's in Disaster Management did not teach. ∎

– Sandeep Shaligram, Consultant, Pune, India

RESILIENCE IN HINDSIGHT

Ten Years Ago and Now

8th October is a day to remember those who lost their precious lives. It's a time to recall our responses to the situation and the lessons we might have learnt and harvested from the catastrophe that took place at 8:50 am Saturday 8th October and perished 87,000 lives and displaced nearly 3.2 million people who could not go back to their homes for many months as they had nothing to rebuild. As the calamity was unprecedented the response of both the international community and Pakistanis was too highly exceptional.

After spending night in a Mansehra hotel, on the 9th morning our driver Aziz and I left Mansehra for Balakot. The road leading to Balakot was jam packet with all kinds of vehicles - vans, private cars, buses and motorbikes etc. Hardly any vehicle was coming from the other side. Besides vehicles tens of hundreds of people were marching too. Each one was carrying some tool – hammer, sickle, axe, chisel or saw. Let's call them tool-carrying volunteers (TCVs). This was indeed an impressive show of passion and energy. Yet I was curious to explore what had motivated these people to take this adventurous act. I jumped out of the jeep and joined the caravan. "We are going to help the affected families in whatever way we could - remove the debris to get the injured or the dead out." They said. They looked extremely in hurry, as it was next to impossible to match with their marching speed. The distance between Mansehra and Balakot is 38 KMs. They were going to cover it all on foot. I got tired after walking just 5 KMs. I did not face any difficulty in finding my vehicle, as traffic was moving at snail's pace; I jumped in and processed what I had just experienced. The TCVs were overwhelmed what had happened around them. Their ability to feel the pain of the affected people was visible – empathy.

We reached Balakot in three hours. The city was completely flattened. The survivors were busy in removing debris to take their love-ones out. I did not see any NGO or state agency helping the affected people. It was all self-help. But the TCVs who were coming from Mansehra and other areas were in full action. I saw them joining the survivors in their efforts one by one. The humanity was simply in action.

I was deeply moved. Everyone was courteous, caring and disciplined - the qualities that we lack in normal times. This highly self-disciplined attitude was not an outcome of any training or drill. This was all spontaneous – a spectacular show of collective humanity. I wondered how could this be sustained?

But soon my hope dashed. A truckload of dry ration arrived at a spot where about two dozens of TCVs were helping a few families whose members were buried under debris. This well-intended philanthropist started to distribute packets of ration. The news spread around. The people thronged to the spot. Soon distribution turned into throw-and-catch game. Within minutes there was chaos. Everyone tried to grab as many packets as possible. The TCVs too turned into grabbers.

This was not new to me at all. I have been witnessing similar situations since 1992-flood disaster when I started to work with disaster prone

communities. I tried to stop the philanthropist but failed. He appeared to be proud of his act and continued throwing packets to people. It must be an empowering and noble experience for him – an act of *swab* too. In the following days I would find its repetition all over the place. The ugly outcome of well-intended spirit of humanity was killed with one wrong act - greed replaced empathy. I never saw TCVs again.

Sadly bad image of survivors continued to be built as our media have little understanding of disaster complexities. For instance, very often TV screens, newspapers or social media would show survivors fighting each other over few relief items. This not only diminished empathy in the society but also created negative image of survivors.

The relief-providers (officials, philanthropists, workers of NGOs and INGOs etc.) whose duty is to assist survivors with respect and care too contributed hugely in building negative image of them. They would not even hesitate to use derogatory words for survivors – greedy, grabbers, liars and cheaters in clear violation of UN Humanitarian Principles. 'Cheaters are punished, not rewarded.' A Survivor said in Balakot when an NGO wala accused him of telling lies. Many survivors did not have the courage to speak out. As a result it has become a dominant narrative. In a society where trust and social cohesion are already in huge deficit, this was not less than a crime. In my view both state and non-state actors are largely responsible for creating this negative image. We should ruthlessly reject such callousness.

The relief providers had no right to accuse the devastated people for 'poor behaviour' which was a result of their own folly. Therefore, the relief–providers do need to do some soul searching. But, it appears we lack the will to do that too as a nation. Consider this — since 2005 people have suffered from six mega floods, two middle scale earthquakes and two major displacements due to military operations against terrorists. There appears no improvement as far as treatment of internally displaced persons is concerned. We have seen pictures police baton charging IDPs time and again.

Though our public policy and legislation on disaster have seen a paradigm shift (from relief to disaster risk reduction) since 2005, in practice relief continues to dominate the mindset of our successive rulers. Yet, we do it terribly. They love doling out money to affected people as this help consolidate and expand their respective vote bank. Since most political parties heavily rely on primordial networks for electoral support, the relief and rehabilitation packages are too distributed through these structures which happen to be intensely partisan. This practice not only causes under-development in society but also undermines fairness. It reinforces sectarian, clan/biradri and ethnic rivalries. Resultantly, it weakens social cohesion and collectivity - a prerequisite for any resilience.

> *Though our public policy and legislation on disaster have seen a paradigm shift (from relief to disaster risk reduction) since 2005, in practice relief continues to dominate the mindset of our successive rulers. Yet, we do it terribly. They love doling out money to affected people as this help consolidate and expand their respective vote bank.*

As frequency of disasters is increasing in the country, the deterioration of society has also accelerated in affected areas. This further weakens ability of communities to bounce back in the aftermath of disasters. It is easy to rebuild physical infrastructures i.e. houses, water channels etc. But it is extremely difficult to reconstruct social cohesion, norms and decent values. During my recent visits to Balakot I met many people with diverse social background. Most of them told me that they have rebuilt their houses. But everyone appeared to be missing feelings of empathy and collectivity.

No wonder nearly 60% respondents of our recent study (released yesterday) on disaster and governance said that social cohesion had badly affected since 2005. The study also shows that the situation in flood–affected areas is more serious than the quake hit areas. This is perhaps due to recurrent flooding since 2010 and the repeated intervention of relief-providers particularly the state officials. The recipient mentality is now been deeply embedded due to the above-mentioned practice. For instance during our study we found many flood-affected families who did not rebuild their houses as they were expecting that soon someone from the government would come and give them money for reconstruction. This shows that a very serious damage is being done to the traditional resilient practice.

In the last ten years, empathy, respect, collectivity and resilience appear to be the major causalities of our relief interventions. Lets learn to trust and respect disaster survivors. ■

– Sarwar Bari,
Pattan Development Organisation

Kutch and Aceh Recoveries: A View

The past few decades have witnessed a steady rise in environmental disasters. At the launch of the 2015 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR15), the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned that the exposure to natural hazards combined with growing global inequality, urbanization and overconsumption of energy and natural resources "threaten to drive risk to dangerous and unpredictable levels with systemic global impacts" (UNISDR, 2015). A comparative research of 141 countries between 1981 and 2002 highlighted this urgency, but added gendered dimension to the analysis. Based on this comparative study, disasters disadvantage women in three ways: disasters kill more women than men; disasters have higher impact in lowering the post-disaster life expectancy of women; and socioeconomic status has a major role in weakening the gender gap in life expectancy (Neumayer and Plümper 2007). Urbanization poses specific gendered challenges. Post-disaster recovery, reconstruction and long-term development should be guided by such concerns, aiming to reducing vulnerability to gendered violence and discrimination.

Over the past decade I have conducted ethnographic research in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquake and the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia and more specifically in the provincial capital of Banda Aceh. Following the lives of Banda Acehnese through their everyday experiences offers insights into the relations of power and the potential structures of violence that are embedded in the aftermath: layered exiles and displacement; hidden narratives of violence and grief; struggles over gendered expectations of being a good and respectable woman and man; the hierarchical political economy of post-conflict and tsunami reconstruction; and multiple ways of arranging lives and remembrance, cherishing loved ones and forming caring and loving relationships outside the normative notions of nuclear family and home. Aceh, due to three decades of armed conflict, is still in economic terms, a periphery of Indonesia's economic development. Post–disaster governance has not been successful for maintaining the economic activities of the reconstruction period, nor addresses the question of structural poverty (22% compared with overall 15% in Indonesia, based on 2012 statistics) and social inequalities.

When comparing the district of Kutch in Gujarat that is recovering from the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2001 with the province of Aceh, somewhat similar phenomena of "post-disaster provinciality" seems to exist. Gujarat is well-known for its two decades of high growth economically, which has trickled down to industrialisation, increased migration and urbanization, including that of the semi-rural town of Bhuj. When I visited Bhuj briefly in October 2016 I was told that the number slums in town had doubled since the pre-earthquake days and the Planning Commissions estimate for 2011-12 for people living below poverty line in Gujarat was at 21, 5% - that of Kutch district potentially even higher than the rest of the state. In my forthcoming research I aim to understand how does gender intersect with post-disaster urbanization, urban planning and in Bhuj, approaching questions of resilience and recovery through ethnographic and life-historical methods. ■

– Dr. Marjaana Jauhola,
Adjunct Professor, Academy of Finland Fellow, University of Helsinki, Finland

Children Demand for Safe School and Safe Education

A consultation was held with over 54 children of 7 districts of Gujarat on August 5, 2016 at Ahmedabad. What is Safe School and Safe Education? This question was on the discussion agenda of the children. During the discussion three groups discussed by using different approaches one with visual representation, the other one with written representation; and the last one with debate.

The purpose of the consultation was to understand children's perspectives on Safe School and Safe Education in Gujarat.

A discussion with children was initiated by defining what a disaster is, and discussing the impact of disasters on schools and children. The Children worked on four aspects: Health and Children,

Preparedness and Children, Preparedness and School, Structural Safety and School. All children demanded for disaster management as a topic for their extracurricular activities in the school. They also feel that they should be part of assessing

hazards and vulnerability of their school. In addition to this, Children requested to learn and use mobile phones to make their school safe during emergency. This session was conducted by AIDMI with the support of CRCG and UNICEF. ■

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