

# Promoting and Protecting Rights in Recovery



*Regional Workshop on Promoting and Protecting Rights in Flood Recovery: Prevention and Response, December 7-9, 2010, New Delhi, India.*

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## Promoting and Protecting Rights in Recovery



Dr. P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti emphasised on establishing the link to the protection of right during disasters is critical.

### Welcome and Introduction

As a practitioner of one of the many innovative disaster risk mitigation organisations in Asia and as a representative of various civil society organisations in Asia, I welcome all of you to this important Asia wide event on human rights and floods.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the distinguished guests here today. We are honored to have CSO representatives from five different Asian countries and they are welcomed wholeheartedly. We value your presence and upcoming contributions to this regional initiative immensely and look forward to tapping into your wealth of knowledge. I have no doubt in my mind that we will enjoy the next few days together and that we will learn a great deal.

This is a unique group, joining a common concern. I encourage you to use this event as a platform for lateral learning and networking in and outside the sessions in this now cold and foggy Delhi.

### Asian Context:

The workshop is organised with the express aim of analysing the regional context (and the many national contexts within the region), sharing good practices within the region, and developing a concrete Asian view or strategy for rights promotion in disasters. All too often, either intentionally or unintentionally, egregious human rights abuses are occurring during disaster response. A number of these abuses have come to light; most recently after the 2008 Koshi river flood in Bihar, India and Nepal, after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake in India and Pakistan, and after the 2004 tsunami that affected much of South Asia. While many disaster-affected people have suffered rights abuses, monitoring and evaluation has shown us that there are certain groups who are frequently excluded during recovery. These include: women, children, *dalits*, indigenous people, the elderly, PWDs and HIV/AIDS sufferers. Owing to the regional context (and local and national contexts), these groups are more vulnerable to rights abuses. Thus it is

imperative to design and promote specific mandates and policies to protect their rights to reproductive health, medicine, treatment, and appropriate assistance in evacuation and relocation.

To address this problem, the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) together with Cordaid, Netherlands and the National Institute of Disaster Management has organised this two-day Regional workshop on rights protection for disaster-affected communities. We will discuss the added value of a rights-based approach to humanitarian flood response with emphasis placed on the national and regional context (using Koshi as a case study). We will also discuss the best practices and regional/national/local monitoring mechanisms in humanitarian flood response (with special focus on flood recovery).

I would like to stress that risk reduction is not a new thing. Communities reduce risk on a daily basis; without doing so they cannot survive. Most of them can benefit from support and facilitation. Joint action by CSOs, governments and communities can make disaster risk reduction possible.

I think CSOs and Governments together can easily make a significant contribution to rights protection issues in Asia. Some governments, donors, and global systems often undervalue the comparative advantage of CSOs. It is the poor, exposed to disasters and rights abuse, that has to fight and prevail over risk. The governments, donors and global systems should support these efforts. ■

– Mihir R Bhatt\*

(\*Speech delivered at the Regional Workshop on Promoting and Protecting Rights in Flood Recovery: Prevention and Response, organised jointly by the Cordaid, Netherlands, the National Institute of Disaster Management and the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute of Ahmedabad during the opening session on December 7, 2010, New Delhi, India.)

# A Page from the History of Recent Humanitarianism in India



November 19, 1977 marked the turning point in the history of disaster management in India. Divi Seema is located between the branches of River Krishna in the state of Andhra Pradesh, South East India. The region became world famous due to the unprecedented loss of human life suffered during the cyclone and tidal wave across the region in 1977, in which an estimated 10,000 people and more than 1,00,000 livestock and animals perished. The 18 to 22 foot tidal wave caught the coastal community and the government unawares.

The biggest challenge was removal of the dead and the carcasses, as people did not want to touch the bodies of other castes and religions. Mr. Prabhakarji, a world renewed Gandhian worker organised Shav Sena (volunteers to remove the dead) to promote the spirit of humanitarian volunteerism. For systematic relief, an organisation was felt necessary and this culminated into starting an NGO, Arthik Samata Mandal (ASM), as a relief and a rehabilitation call. Arthik Samata (Promotion of Economic Equality is the 13<sup>th</sup> Item of the Gandhian Constructive Programmes) as a movement was started in 1953 by Gora and J.C. Kumarappa, Gandhian social reformers.

After the disaster, the coastal villages were abandoned and believed to be haunted. ASM volunteers were led by Mr. Lavanam, Mrs. Hemalatha, Mr. Veeraiah and Mr. Vijayam spent nights in the villages to encourage people to return to their homes. ASM immediately started relief in the remotest villages through health camps, emergency feeding centres, counseling, reactivating livelihoods of small artisans (carpenters, masons

etc.) who helped in rebuilding the villages. The initial stumbling block was the lack of information of the affected population and villages. This resulted in gold rush and duplication of humanitarian aid. Later on, ASM became the point organisation for relief agencies to discuss strategies for coordinated operations. World renewed humanitarian leader, Mr. Frederic Cuny visited ASM and appreciated its effort in ensuring quality and accountability in coordinating humanitarian aid.

Ever since 1977, there were 50 incidents of severe or very severe cyclones and floods that struck Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh and in particular Divi Seema, which

is popularly known as the 'The Disaster Capital of India.' Thirty three years after the disaster, Divi Seema has come a long way. People have recognised the importance of culture of preparedness. ASM is presently working in the area to build resilience through integrated development and community-based disaster risk reduction.

In 2002, the Government of India released a commemorative postage stamp of Gora (1902-1975) for his life commitment towards social reform, spirit of inquiry and humanism. ■

– **Vikas Gora**, Director,  
Disaster Management Wing,  
ASM, Andhra Pradesh, India



Dr. Vijayam and Lavanam, who pioneered inclusive humanitarianism in modern India.

# A Story from the Sichuan Earthquake



In the aftermath of the giant Earthquake that struck China's Sichuan province on 12 May 2008, claiming more than 80,000 lives and destroying some 4 million homes, much of the world's attention focused on the quake's impact on China's prodigious economic growth.

But while important, this neglected a fundamental point: the earthquake didn't affect the country's newly acquired wealth nearly so much as it probed at China's soft underbelly - the rural poor left behind in the rush to develop.

This is because the poor are the most likely to reside in dangerous locations, such as flood plains, mountainous regions and flimsy slum settlements, and the least likely to have access to the means with which to mitigate this risk. The Sichuan earthquake's epicentre was a poor and mountainous region

isolated from government services in a province that itself contributes only 3.9% of China's GDP despite being one of the country's largest by population and area. In particular, there were two especially telling statistics to emerge from the earthquake's rubble that underlined the vulnerability of the region's people.

The first is that few of those affected were insured. Catastrophe modelling by AIR Worldwide estimated insurers losses from the earthquake at \$1 billion, a fraction of the disaster's estimated \$20 billion cost.

The second is the appalling toll wrought by the earthquake upon the approximately 9000 children killed when poorly constructed classrooms collapsed.

Both statistics underline points AIDMI has long made about the importance

of mitigation as a tool of disaster management, and the concurrent need to equip poor communities with the means with which to help themselves. AIDMI has pioneered two innovative programmes in India that offer practical solutions which directly address these issues.

The first is *Afat Vimo*, a micro-insurance scheme that covers the poor against 19 types of disaster for a small annual premium. By transforming them into policyholders with legal rights to assistance under the terms of their policy, *Afat Vimo* reduces the poor's reliance upon post-disaster support from government and aid agencies.

The second is the institute's ongoing focus upon school safety by educating children about the potential risks encountered in their school environment, and equipping them with the skills to overcome these.

Aside from empowering the poor, mitigation activities have been proven to save money and lessen the burden placed upon overstretched authorities. For example, the World Bank estimates the \$3.15 billion China spent on flood control over the last four decades of the 20th century averted losses of about \$12 billion.

Two years after the earthquake, this is the real economic story the world should be focusing on.

Sichuan has been known historically as the "Province of Abundance", and it will require an abundance of practical energy and good policy sense such as this if it is to avoid a repeat of the events of 12 May 2008. ■

– Julian Swallow,  
Australia



A collapsed building in Dujiangyan, close to the epicentre of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. (Source: <http://www.sustainablechina.info/2009/01/29/did-chinas-dams-trigger-the-sichuan-earthquake/>)

## Sweden Boosts Humanitarian Innovation Fund

The Swedish government has recently pledged 6 million Krona (SEK) to support and foster innovations in international humanitarian response. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has made the funding available to the newly created Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF).



The Humanitarian Innovation Fund is a unique grant-making body created through a partnership between two leading humanitarian initiatives, ALNAP and ELRHA. From 2011, the Fund will administer a grants programme to identify and support research and development efforts at the frontline of international disaster responses.

Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs said:

"In order to meet growing global humanitarian needs in an efficient and flexible manner, we need to invest in new technologies and innovative methods in humanitarian operations. The Humanitarian Innovation Fund is a valuable initiative that can be an important contribution in this effort."

Sweden becomes the second donor government to back the Humanitarian Innovation Fund since it was launched in October 2010. A start up investment of £900,000 was made by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

Responding to the announcement Ben Ramalingam, Chair of the Strategy Group for the Humanitarian Innovations Fund, said:

"We are starting to see a groundswell of support for the idea that we need to re-think not just what we do in the wake of disasters, but also how we do it. The Humanitarian Innovation Fund has the potential to bring about transformative change in how we provide assistance in international disaster response. We are thrilled to be working with the Government of Sweden in this exciting venture."

The first round of grants from Humanitarian Innovation Fund will be made available in the first quarter of 2011 through an open call for proposals. ■

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## Building Leadership in Universities

University Grant Commission (UGC) of India and Academic Staff College (ASC) of Saurashtra University with AIDMI support organised two workshops on 'Building Youth Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction' on November 23-24, 2010 and December 1-2, 2010 in Rajkot, a leading business city in peninsular Gujarat in India. The two sessions were attended by 60 faculty members from 28 colleges and universities of Gujarat. The objective of the workshop was to mainstreaming DRR in different streams at higher education because AIDMI has found in its work with various universities in India that Disaster Risk Reduction can not and should not be restricted to one or two disciplines but be embedded in multiple disciplines in a university. DRR is a cross cutting discipline.

Programmes for spreading DRR knowledge, or information to build culture of safety is not new to many faculty members of ASC. However, there is a need to link these programmes with the follow up actions where trained participants have opportunities to conduct events and implementing actions with youth in higher education. Both sessions resulted in action plan for promoting DRR in various disciplines in their own colleges. The plans were for 3 to 5 year duration, included teachers - student joint action, and had exploratory activities. ASC and AIDMI will provide support in taking ahead these actions but actual actions will be lead by participants trained at these two sessions. The two sessions are part of Local Capacity Building Cycle number 349 and 353. Both sessions built on Safer Schools Campaign of AIDMI currently ongoing in six coastal states of India. Two more ASC have demanded similar session in the coming six months. ■

– Vishal Pathak



"Building Youth Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction" on November 23-24, 2010 and December 1-2, 2010 in Rajkot, Gujarat, India.

## Solar Park: An Ecosystem-Based Development?

In a 3000 acre area comprising private agriculture land, government waste land and common grazing land, the Gujarat government in India has undertaken a plan to set up solar park for generating over 500 MWs solar energy in a dusty village Charanka. AIDMI has worked in this village for flood, earthquake, and drought recovery.

The state government has already acquired 2,500 acre of land for the park where basic infrastructure like plotting roads is being carried out and subsequently private companies, who have entered into power supply deal with the Gujarat government will set up their generating facilities.

This is the first solar power park in Asia with a 500-MW generation capacity at a single location. Once a drought-affected village is now home to Asia's pride.

Gujarat Solar Park will fetch investment of over 8000 crore in alternative energy sector, which has increasingly being promoted to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The Government of India's National Solar Mission aims to install 1,000 MW of grid solar power by 2013, and 20,000 MW by 2022. Gujarat is leading in India. The arid area is now on the national energy security agenda.

Gujarat energy department has allocated lands to two dozen private companies, who will lay solar panels for generating electricity while grid connectivity for power evacuation will be created by the Gujarat Electricity Transmission Company.

The project is part of the Solar Power Policy of 2009, which proposes to encourage generation of green



*Villagers inspect solar panels at the Gujarat Solar Park in Charanka village, in Gujarat state. Research suggests that the state, along with Rajasthan and Karnataka, is flooded with enough sunlight to accommodate large solar power plants.*

(Source: [www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/south-asia/](http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/south-asia/))

power. Parts of North Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra regions have been identified to have optimum solar power plant load factor where such parks will be set up in thousands of acres land. Many of these areas are flooding or drought prone.

The overall project cost in Phase I would be ₹ 1,287 crore, including ₹ 351 crore towards the cost of land and power infrastructure and evacuation facility worth ₹ 624 crore. Land that grew cumin seeds or barely will now grow solar power.

When complete, the 500-MW facility would have investments of another ₹ 7,500 crore and generate about 5,000 direct jobs locally for works such as assembling, electrical connection and cleaning of panels and development of green belt area around the site. Lower end jobs will come to local people, but not the profits from this green investment nor the skills to move up in the green job ladder.

According to Gujarat energy department, large parts of the state have solar insolation of 5.8-6.0kWh per metre square per day. Insolation

is a measure of solar radiation energy received on a given surface area in a given time. The chosen site of Charanka has an insolation of 5.9kWh per metre square per day, which means there is increased viability for solar plants.

Under the 2009 Solar Power Policy, the State Government had signed power purchase agreements for about 933 MW of solar energy, the highest in India's solar power sector. This is the second major step by Gujarat in this sector, after

signing of a MoU with the Clinton Climate Initiative of Clinton Foundation in 2009. Best of international technology and know how are being invited.

Anita George, a representative of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, said the IFC had invested \$1 billion so far on manufacturing and infrastructure projects in Gujarat. However, no thought is yet initiated to find ways to promote solar energy on recovery and reconstruction processes after a disaster. AIDMI is demanding a working group on this subject from the National Disaster Management Authority jointly with IFC, ADB, and Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission has approved a one-time additional central assistance of ₹ 210 crore for development of the solar power park. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also approved a soft loan of \$100 million for the project, including development of a smart grid for evacuation of power. ■

– Mihir R. Bhatt

# Learning From Each Other: Write Shop Method

This report from AIDMI covers a number of different aspects related to community action during the Bihar floods and afterwards. The main findings are discussed in depth but the cross cutting theme of community risk reduction is evident throughout.

The main objectives of the write shop were: to learn from other partner's field experiences their models, to understand the similarity and differences in approaches, to give practical ideas to each other and also to receive feedback/suggestions/ideas from others and to replicate good practices of other partners in organisation's on-going project activities. It has given opportunity to field level staff that generally does not have a time to document their experiences or have skills to do so to present good work done by them.

Shelter support can be seen as the main need of the victims of the floods, in particular for poor and marginalised people that have not the resources to borrow money and rebuild their house. AIDMI answering to the needs of these people including the building of shelter in its recovery plan. The way to approach the rebuilding is based on the central role of the community. This organisation gave the support to the community but it was the community who took decisions and built the shelters.

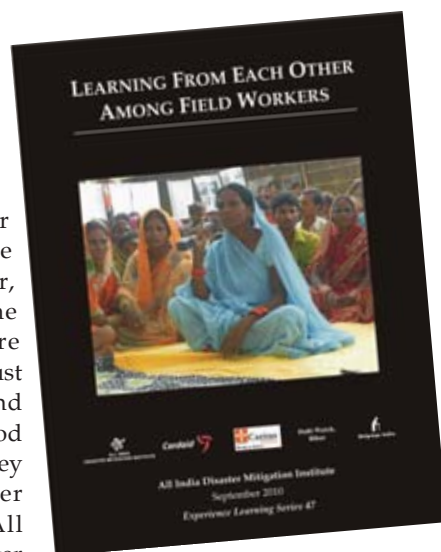
During the flood affected community lost the possibility to gain money, flooding had washed away all crops from their farm, killed the cattle and they had to reset their livelihood activity. AIDMI has included the livelihood support through Livelihood Relief Fund in their recovery plans. The Village Committee has selected beneficiaries considering basic criteria in mind like

the village/area must be disaster affected, the community which are living in the village must be poor, *dalit* and marginalised, the community members who are selected for the livelihood relief must have loss of their livelihood and being able to restart its livelihood with support, very importantly they must be needy. Risk transfer mechanism is important. All beneficiaries of livelihood and shelter are linked with *Afat Vimo* (disaster insurance) which covers life as well as nonlife risks.

In Bihar HelpAge India (HI) created elderly self-help group (ESHG) in 10 villages. The objective of the creation the ESHG is to guarantee financial security and social support to the elderly that otherwise aren't involved in community's activities. Activities such as a multi purpose community centre that is recreational as well as a flood shelter; grain banks were created in order to reduce food insecurity during the emergency; Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) has been instrumental in tending the health needs of the under privileged and destitute elderly people.

To make education safer two dimensions must be considered, on one hand buildings' structure must be safer and on the other hand teachers and children must learn to be prepared before and after the disaster.

The School Safety Campaign has generated awareness among school stakeholders including children through trainings, mitigation measures in schools, demonstration and mock drills, display material and insurance for school stakeholders. They are also insured against all sorts of accidents and hence their family burden of their treatment.



Dalit Watch undertook a monitoring process in relief camps to guarantee that *dalit* receives equal attention and care as did the upper caste people. The tools that were used are the assessment of damages to life, habitation and livelihood of marginalised communities, the access to government database, and the creation of database. During disaster mitigation interventions Dalit Watch went on its work identifying forms excluded *dalit* and formulating a set of *dalit*-central standards of disaster response that should be followed by agencies while intervening for reducing the risks and impacts of disasters.

Floods are an annual occurrence in the area and regularly resulting in the loss of life and livelihood, leaving many inhabitants homeless and destitute. The people from *dalit* and schedule caste communities were the worst affected. After seeing this entire situation and problems Caritas India, its local partner BDSSS, and the community members had a number of meetings. From these meetings they decided to formulate Task Force groups which would be helpful at the time of floods and other disasters. Women empowerment is effective for social empowerment. High plinth Community Shelter is helpful at the time of disaster. The permanent safer shelters are providing security to communities. ■

– Arpita Chhatrapati

## Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction in Flood-Affected Bihar

In July-August 2007, the Bihar state of India was badly affected by severe floods, as a result of which there was damage to infrastructure and properties and loss of lives in 19 districts out of total 38. AIDMI had reached the affected places immediately and had carried out damage and need assessment under local community leadership based on which it provided immediate relief to 2000 families through local organisations. In the phase II, AIDMI supported long-term recovery and disaster risk reduction activities in the same villages. Later on, AIDMI received the need for Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) and for that AIDMI has started building the capacity of the local community members of selected 10 villages to manage, mitigate, and reduce the disaster risks themselves. AIDMI has been conducting trainings to build the capacity of the local community members in new skills to add to their existing skills, so that they

become aware about and are themselves able to deal with the floods situation that arises frequently. Through such capacity building cycles, the village community members are supported to develop ways of on how to do hazard assessment, risk mapping, and action planning for their own villages. They are also trained on how they should take actions for the issues that come out from the action planning.

As an example, we can talk about the Lelinnagar village of Jhanjharpur block of Madhubani district of Bihar state. Under the capacity building initiative for CMDRR, the local village community members of this village, which has 57 houses, made a map showing the risks that they face, and five issues came out from this exercise that needed to be addressed. These five issues were a) problem of drinking water during floods; b) road to go towards the check dam during floods; c) need of boats for rescue

during floods; d) need of community centers for women with facility of sanitation; and e) school at a safer place. Out of these five issues, according to the village community members, the problem of drinking water during floods was the most important and they agreed within themselves that they should focus on and solve this issue first. Then for solving this issue, they themselves prepared an action plan. And after taking steps as per the action plan, the village community members were able to secure help from an international humanitarian organisation to make a platform with a height of 3 feet and place a hand pump on a 3 feet height so that they can get clean drinking water during floods. This way they themselves solved one of the issues that came out from hazard assessment and risk mapping.

It seems that such an action of the community members is a step towards a new era. ■

– Hasmukh Sadhu and Aparna Shah

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