

Rebuilding Uttarakhand: Challenges Ahead



Source: hyd-news.blogspot.com

Rebuilding Uttarakhand is not an easy task. The process has started off well and is moving ahead. However, it is useful to anticipate the challenges that will be faced in rebuilding Uttarakhand.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide \$200 million to help the Indian state of Uttarakhand in order to recover from the unprecedented losses suffered after the June 2013 floods and landslides that have affected close to a million people.

But how will this money be used?

In mid-June 2013, major cloudbursts, heavy rainfall, and floods washed away several fast growing hill settlements in Uttarakhand. The districts of Bageshwar, Chamoli, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag, and Uttarkashi were the worst affected. Almost 600 people lost their lives and more than 5,400 people are still missing. A joint damage and needs assessment by the government of Uttarakhand, ADB, and World Bank estimated the preliminary cost of rehabilitation to be close to \$700 million. However, the final cost could rise to more than \$1 billion.

ADB's loan will be used to rebuild 2,400 kilometers of state roads and repair or reconstruct 16 damaged bridges.

In 8 to 10 towns, the funds will be used to repair 20 kilometers of urban roads and rehabilitate water supply facilities, including water treatment plants and 56 km of water pipelines. This rebuilt infrastructure will improve access to services, markets, and jobs, benefitting people and companies. The design has attracted wide spread interest.



Source: www.indiatimes.com

On top of the \$200 million loan, ADB will also provide \$15 million to repair damaged energy sector facilities under an already approved \$300 million ADB financing facility that has been earmarked for the Uttaranchal power sector. This has given rise to certain questions such as: Who needs the energy the most? And what is the capacity to use it?

The rehabilitation works, due to be completed by the end of 2016, will be designed to better withstand future disaster hazards. But what are these future hazards? What risks do they pose and to whom? And who should take what measures to better design rehabilitation? Civil society in India is increasingly seeking answers to these questions.

The State Disaster Management Authority of the state of Uttarakhand will execute this project. But does the authority have the team capacity to execute this project? What sort of skills are missing in its capacity? What gaps can be anticipated in its skills and how can these be strengthened? These are some of the challenges that can be encountered in the long road to recovery and rehabilitation in Uttarakhand. ■