

# Children and Humanitarian Assistance in South Asia



Photo: AIDMI.

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*The views expressed in this publication are those of the author.*

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The enhanced vulnerability of children to the detrimental impacts of disasters and emergencies now qualifies as conventional wisdom in various humanitarian circles. Almost 70% of the affected population of a disaster or extreme event are children. Consequently, a lot of government and humanitarian agencies have taken up the cause of protecting and promoting the rights of children to safety and security.

The theory and praxis of humanitarian assistance in relation with child rights and protection are undergoing dynamic changes as well. New ideas such as safe schools, child centered disaster risk reduction, child centered risk assessment, etc. are gaining traction in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR). The rise of such child centric perspectives has great implications for the field of humanitarian assistance in South Asia.

This issue of Southasiadisasters.net focuses on the theme of '*Children and Humanitarian Assistance in South Asia*'. South Asia consistently ranks as one of the most disaster prone regions of the world as a result of which a lot of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations are concentrated in this region. However, children which comprise a third of the total 1.72 billion people in South Asia are rarely engaged as active stakeholders in the dialogue around disaster risk reduction.

This issue highlights the need and techniques of engaging children as active stakeholders in shaping DRR policies and practices in South Asia. An inclusive approach to DRR which makes the voices of children count would make humanitarian assistance and disaster relief more effective and efficient in the region. This issue is a must read for all interested to know about the role children can play in risk reduction strategies in South Asia. ■

- Kshitij Gupta, AIDMI

## INTRODUCTION

# City, Child and Risk in India: A View

The world is increasingly moving towards urbanisation and this growth makes our cities susceptible to the impacts of disasters and climate change in which a high proportion of urban residents are children. The latest census data clearly indicates that children form almost 30% of the total urban population in India.



On the other hand, there is enough evidence that natural disasters and extreme climate adversely impact children. According to a Save the Children report<sup>1</sup>, more than 50% of those affected by natural disasters worldwide are children. Children and women are 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster<sup>2</sup>. According to Unicef<sup>3</sup>, every year, between 2000 and 2009, 8.45 million children under five years of age were affected by disasters in India. Of these, 1.25 million children were malnourished. 85% of the country's area is vulnerable to calamities and 25 of the over 53 million cities are located in coastal states.

Disasters have a significant impact on children's growth and development. The destruction of infrastructure disrupts their education and safety. Sudden loss of income of the parents makes it extremely difficult for them to provide adequate nutrition. Disasters may lead to a loss of family members and guardians that may lead to a profound psychological impact on the children.

It is important for cities to develop resilience against these disasters. Our recent report titled - 'Forgotten Voices: the world of urban children in India' jointly launched with Save the Children India highlights measures that can help reduce its impact on children.

We all know that climate change poses serious threats to child rights pertaining to survival, food security, health, as well as access to water and sanitation, education and protection. Thus, it is important to integrate flood and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into day-to-day urban development and service delivery. There needs to be city-level partnerships and knowledge sharing, clearer role definitions in urban resilience planning, children's active participation in resilience building, and prioritising comprehensive school safety. Participation of children in resilience building activities needs to be promoted through activities of municipal education boards. Comprehensive school safety, early child care centres as well as 'safety of out-of-school children' are critical aspects of school disaster management and hence, need to be prioritised.

There are enough examples in Asia to prove that given the opportunity, children demonstrate extraordinary resilience. Thus, an inclusive and child-led planning process is essential to allow children to speak of the challenges that they face and provide solutions. ■

- Jaivir Singh,

Advisor to Chairman, PwC, PricewaterhouseCoopers Pvt Ltd., Delhi

1 Face of disaster, Children and Climate Change, Save the Children 2008.

2 UN Women: Facts and figures; 3 UNICEF in emergencies

# Children and Youth – "Don't Decide My Future without Me"

## INTRODUCTION

As a demographic group, children and youth are highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of disasters. This vulnerability stems from their unique stage of mental and physical development. Their enhanced vulnerability warrants an active participation of children and youth in the policies and practice of disaster management in India. However, this is not always the case.

In order to actively engage children and youth in the discourse on disaster management in India, the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) organized a series of consultations with children and youth from the Indian states of Assam, Bihar, Gujarat and Odisha. Through a structured talk, they were asked about how disasters are related to their lives and to what extent their school and community are resilient to these extreme events.

Those children and youth were told about the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – Sendai, Japan) and it was explained that the objective of the consultation was to hear their voices and take their opinions, ideas and suggestions to the international gathering.

The activity conducted was important not only to collect children and youth's voice (the primary objective) but also to enhance their awareness on disaster risk reduction. It is important to mention that many of the recommendations and questions raised are closely related to Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and developmental issues. It is interesting how easily children and youth are able to establish links between these

"We are looking forward to participate in Disaster Management training, because then we will be able to reduce disaster risk in our school and community."

- Child at Bapunagar Hindi School, Ahmedabad, India

elements and risk reduction - the right approach to create resilient societies.

## WHY ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The potential for change lies mainly within the children and youth. Once the right opportunities are given, they have a lot to contribute to reduce disaster risk and build resilience among the communities across the world. Besides that, engaging children and youth in the process and letting them take part in the solution is part of their empowerment. In the end, empowered children and youth hold the key to achieving sustainable development.

### 1. They apply what they learn

During the consultations, the students mentioned that they would like to be

part of the School Disaster Management Committee and they even came up with the idea of creating a Rescue Volunteers Team, where some of them would receive specific trainings to help executing the emergency plan in case of a disaster.

An interesting recommendation by the students was that they should receive appropriate training to develop the school's Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HCVA) by themselves. They said that they want to be able to evaluate and understand how their school may be impacted by different disasters and, therefore, propose solutions for that.

When children and youth are well-oriented about a subject, they easily comprehend the content and apply it in their daily lives. For instance, the issue of global warming which the children learnt in Geography was raised during the consultation and it was suggested by them that more trees need to be planted in their school's area.



Photo: AIDMI.

## 2. They spread the message

As agents of change, children and youth have the capacity to innovate, educate and reach out to their immediate and extended families and the wider community to raise awareness and change behavior to reduce the risk of disasters.

During the consultations, when asked what would be the benefits of their participation in disaster management activities, children and youth answered 'to save ourselves, to be able to help saving other lives and to spread knowledge among the community'.

In sum, empowered children and youth help the society to develop sustainably, as they play a key role in transmitting knowledge and raising awareness among their family, friends and community. For this reason, it is essential that both (a) children and youth are given the opportunity to study and (b) children and youth receive a high-quality education.

## 3. They have robust insights to share

Children and youth are crucial stakeholders in understanding the main problems and coming up with ways to address them. For instance, during the consultations the students suggested the following activities for a better learning on disaster management: (a) creating a library in the school with awareness materials and manuals about the topic, (b) training the children and youth on the different types of hazards, plus the dos and don'ts for each one of them, (c) bringing a practical approach to learning, for example through demonstration videos and plays and (d) including disaster management as a separate subject in the curriculum.

Children and youth also noted that they are not aware about the standards of a safe building. They would like to learn about it in order to be able to

better assess their own schools, demanding for changes and suggesting ameliorations if needed.

Children and youth voices must be heard, as they are aware about their community's strengths and weaknesses. All the topics mentioned by them in the consultations represent important inputs and feedbacks for developmental plans and programmes. Therefore, government and civil society organizations should address local problems both for children and with children - through a "building together" approach.

### APPROACH FOR ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

When a disaster strikes, children and youth can be either (a) one of the most vulnerable group among the community, in which the impacts would be devastating, or (b) a proactive group with an essential role in helping the community to respond effectively to this event. It is up to the government, national and international organizations and civil society organizations to ensure that the second option is realized.

For that to happen, a systematic and holistic approach for children and youth's engagement in disaster management should be developed. Following are some elements suggested for this approach, based on what was observed in the consultations and on the views of children and youth.

#### 1. Provide a positive environment

First of all, it is paramount to protect the rights of children and youth. Without access to basic services and opportunities, children and youth are deprived from adequate physical and mental development and citizenship. As so, they are not able to fulfill their potential and perform a proactive role in the society.

In every consultation, children and youth mentioned that they prefer to

be at school during a disaster rather than at home. Most of them live in slums and the poor conditions at home have a great impact on their standard of living. They mentioned how the inappropriate infrastructure of homes and neighbourhoods can lead to serious problems during a disaster - be it floods, earthquakes, fires, epidemics, etc.

After providing children and youth with a positive environment (which includes proper infrastructure, good education and developmental opportunities), means must be provided so they can work on the solutions to address local problems jointly with the communities. What was observed during the consultations is that simple measures recommended by the children and youth, even though sometimes they do not have much instruction on disaster management, are very consistent. Therefore, the more opportunities children and youth have to learn and develop, the more they are able to contribute.

#### 2. Asking the right questions

Notwithstanding the fact that children and youth are not always familiar with the technical aspects of risk and resilience, it was observed that, as long as the right questions are formulated, they are able to intuitively provide important feedbacks and inputs for disaster risk reduction.

That is the reason why focus has to be placed on how to engage children and youth. Methods that allow them to participate and share their insights need to be devised.

#### 3. Create tools for monitoring

The process is not finished once children and youth have spoken up. They should also be allowed to follow and monitor the respective programmes and plans.

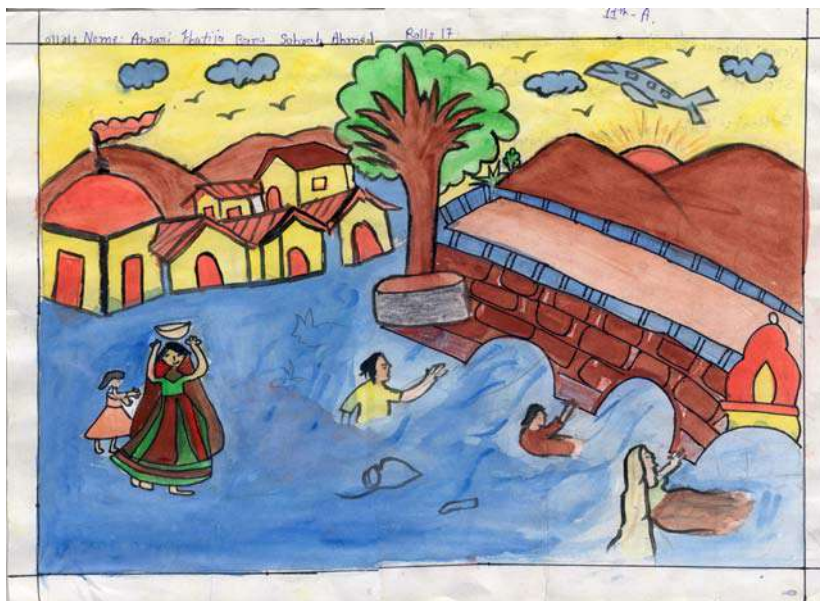
Creating monitoring tools targeting children and youth is a potent way to

empower them. More importantly, it is also crucial for the diffusion of development outcomes to the local level, an indispensable characteristic of good governance.

#### 4. Assure Girl Child's rights

The interplay of social, cultural, economic and political forces render the girl child in India highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in pre and post disaster situations. Special measures which empower are needed to address this enhanced vulnerability. Boys should also be involved throughout this process, learning to respect and to encourage their girl's colleagues and friends.

During the consultation with the students, a lot of the girls identified harassment on the street near to the school as a major hazard. If unaddressed then this problem can prove to be a major impediment towards girls going to school safely. This in turn can inhibit their potential to be change agents in the future. Thus, it is highly important to provide girls with a safe, secure and positive environment to live up to their highest potential.



#### CONCLUSION: AGENDA FOR SFDRR

It is clear that children and youth are willing to make a difference and to help their communities to better prepare and respond to disasters. Since their current their involvement is minimal, a powerful perspective on DRR is being underestimated. This sentiment is echoed in all major frameworks such as the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). For, the promotion of the perspective of Children and Youth on

Disaster Risk Reduction is directly aligned to the priority 'Understanding Disaster Risk' of the SFDRR.

Most importantly, this consultation has proved that a truly resilient community can only be wrought if its children are aware of the various hazards they are exposed to and as well as the ways in which such the impacts of such hazards can be prevented, mitigated or managed. ■

- Ana Carolina Richter, AIDMI

### CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE ON DRR

## Commitment to Safe Schools

#### INTRODUCTION

Schools are nurseries that nurture the leaders of tomorrow. They inculcate talent, promote creativity and impart the essential knowledge and skills required to help children to live up to their highest potential. However, a variety of natural hazards and conflict situations threaten schools and the continuity of education around the world. Therefore, ensuring a safe education through safe schools becomes a worthwhile humanitarian goal to be strived for.

The necessity of providing a resilient education through safe schools has

also been highlighted in various frameworks in the field of humanitarian action. The recently formalised Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) also acknowledges the importance of such safe schools. Priority 4 of SFDRR,

"I would like to stay at school during and after disaster as there is no space in my house or in my colony for safer and quick evacuation. Also my school is converted into a camp after a disaster".

- Child at Asarva School, Ahmedabad (Gujarat), India

'Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to Build Back Better' stresses the same.

Children are the principal stakeholders and beneficiaries of safe schools and resilient education. However, children's voices often go unheard in the discourse surrounding these issues. The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) has tried to capture and highlight such voices. This briefing note intends to showcase children's perspective on disaster risk reduction, as well as their recommendations on safe schools. Through a structured talk, students



Photo: AIDMI.

Experience sharing with SDMC students at Taumul school-3, Bihar.

of the selected schools from the Indian states of Assam, Bihar, Gujarat and Odisha were asked about how disasters are related to their lives and to what extent their school and community are resilient to these events.

The Comprehensive School Safety framework provides a structured approach to reducing hazards in the education sector. Comprehensive school safety rests on three pillars: Safe Learning Facilities, School Disaster Management and Risk Reduction; and Resilience Education. Children's assessment of their schools resulted in the following remarks and suggestions according to each pillar:

#### A. Safe Learning Facilities

##### 1. Installation of Early Warning System (EWS)

It is well-known how crucial EWS is and the importance of its outreach throughout the whole community. Children need special attention and it is imperative that schools count on EWS to avoid injuries and deaths through proper preparedness and response.

##### 2. Maintenance of Drinking Water Tank and Water Taps

Children expressed their desire to be sure that there is clean drinking water available at their school. Besides that, it was noted that whenever there is a flood, the water taps get submerged due to their inappropriate location. Children are aware of infrastructural elements that should be improved; they are perhaps the most informed stakeholder group to highlight the real gaps to be addressed.

##### 3. The Building & Surroundings

In all the places visited, students observed the importance of the open space available in their school. On the other hand, they all criticized the school's location: (a) it is close to the main road, which results in much noise and may lead to accidents; (b) it is close to industrial areas, which results in health issues due to pollution; (c) it is far from hospital and fire brigade. These elements brought up by the children must be addressed during the construction of a new school. It is suggested that architects and civil engineers

with background in sustainable development help in the process, as well as that governments develop building codes for schools.

#### B. School Disaster Management

##### 1. Evacuation

As most of the children consulted live in slums, they pointed out that they would prefer to be in the school during a disaster rather than home. This is because the school counts on evacuation routes and it is easy to evacuate. At their home, the neighbouring streets are narrow and there is no open space close by, as opposed to the school. Apart from that, children also suggested that the main gate remains open with a security guard in case of the need to evacuate during a disaster.

Concerning school disaster management, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) launched in 2010 an innovative initiative to enhance safety in schools: the Great Assam School Shake-Out Programme. The programme helped to empower students in many schools of the state by imparting trainings, assessing fire safety, conducting mock drills and also establishing evacuation routes.

##### 2. School Disaster Management Plan

Students are willing to engage in their school's disaster management activities. They expressed interest in getting to know how to conduct a Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA) exercise and in creating a Volunteer Emergency Team. Besides that, even though mock drills take

1 School Safety. Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Division. <[http://www.ndmindia.nic.in/School%20Safety%20Draft\\_Series1.0.pdf](http://www.ndmindia.nic.in/School%20Safety%20Draft_Series1.0.pdf)>

place in these schools, they said such drills should be conducted on a more regular basis.

Aimed at encouraging schools to include disaster management planning in its activities, back in 2004, in a pioneer initiative, the Government of India launched a manual on school safety. It was a handbook for administrators, education officers, emergency officials and schools principals and teachers, which highlighted ideas and steps to create safer schools<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Formalization of Disaster Safety in Schools

This subject was raised by teachers, however, owing to its importance, it is mentioned separately here. They recommended the formalization of Disaster Safety at the policy level - in other words, the creation of clear criteria and standards and the respective supervision by the government.

## C. Risk Reduction and Resilience Education

### 1. Climate Change Adaptation

When children are well-oriented towards a subject, they can easily comprehend the content and apply it in their daily lives. Students raised the issue of global warming, which they have learnt in class, and suggested that trees should be planted in the school's area. It is notable how children are proactive and, once they are provided the means, they lead relevant initiatives and put in practice the idea of sustainable development.

### 2. Education and Knowledge

Many activities related to information sharing and knowledge creation were suggested by the students. It

ranges from creating a library with materials about disaster management to implementing a practical approach on the subject, through extracurricular activities, demonstration videos and plays.

In light of this subject, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the main governmental agency for disaster management in India, designed an educational website for children. It encompasses different types of disasters and instructs children on how to plan and get prepared, the dos and don'ts, how to recover and rebuild from a disaster and, finally, how to prepare an emergency kit.

### 3. Spreading the Message to Community

Children have a vital role in engaging the whole community in a certain cause. They help raising awareness amongst the community as they share with families and friends what was

learnt in school. For this reason, it is essential that (a) children are enrolled in a school and (b) children receive a quality education.

### Emerging Issue: Girl Child Protection

Girls are more vulnerable and it is needed to ensure their safety.

To the extent that women's lack of opportunities and vulnerability negatively impact a nation's development, empowering them and providing them with a positive environment hold the potential for changing reality for the better.

During the consultation with the students, they mentioned the hazard of harassment from nearby the school. Unless this problem is addressed, girls will not be able to fulfil their potential and be change agents in the future. Like a vicious cycle, it only inflicts suffering to the girls and diminishes even more the socio-economic development of region. ■

- Ana Carolina Richter, AIDMI

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# Training on Child-Centred Risk Assessment



Children form the single most affected group in any disaster, constituting up to 70% of those affected by a disaster (SAARC, 2011). Bearing this in mind, and the existing cooperation agreement between SAARC and UNICEF's Regional office of South Asia to advance awareness, understanding and actions for children within the South Asia region, a training was organised for key planning officers on Child-Centred Risk Assessment. This 3-day training programme took place at YASHADA in Pune, India from 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July and was attended by over 25 participants from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Nepal. The participants included high-level government officials from National Disaster Management Authorities as well as representatives from across the South Asia region from UNICEF, Plan, Save the Children and World Vision.

Child vulnerabilities serve as an effective measure for community vulnerabilities exposing development deficits. Disaster risk assessments allow humanitarian

action to focus upon vulnerabilities, rather than being shock-driven, by identifying areas with the highest likelihood of future hazards. South Asia's population is young, with 31.5% of the total population below 14 years of age. Therefore it is crucial that any effort to reduce disaster risk – at the regional, national, local or community level – takes into consideration both the specific vulnerabilities faced by children, and the crucial role they can play in reducing disaster risk.

Considering that risk assessments help by reducing risks affecting children, as well as strengthening resilience across communities, the SAARC Disaster Management Centre and UNICEF's Regional Office were keen to focus their first joint training on Child-Centred Risk Assessment (CCRA). In fact, this was the first training of its kind in South Asia and generated a great deal of interest from both governments and NGOs in the region.

Officially opened by the Director General of YASHADA, Mr. Anand

Limaye (IAS) and with a key note address by Mr. Luc Chauvin, UNICEF's Regional Emergency Adviser, the inaugural ceremony also included powerful speeches by two 10th Standard school children from Pune, Manas and Rujul, who highlighted the risks to children and the need for them to be involved in identifying and developing solutions. Rujul, aged 15, urged participants not to "hold back on information on disaster risk reduction", as children also need to know how to protect themselves. This training not only demonstrated relevant tools for CCRA, but also focused on how to use them for programme planning, implementation and advocacy within SAARC member nations. Through a series of presentations by experts, group exercises to practice using tools, and facilitated discussions, the training covered the need for CCRA, tools for conducting CCRA at different levels (national, district, community and school) and policy recommendations for addressing identified risks.

Participants had several opportunities to work in their country teams to develop action points and strategies to apply in their future work. In the final session – titled 'The Way Forward' – participants identified a number of key priorities for SAARC countries on CCRA, including integrating CCRA into existing community-based DRR and school safety programmes in the country, developing specific tools to allow children to participate in CCRA, and advocating for CCRA in reconstruction processes post-disaster. Similar trainings on CCRA and child-centred DRR are being planned for the near future. ■

– Emily Bild,  
DRR Consultant, UNICEF India



# Odisha Leads Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in India

Odisha is leading other Indian states in Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in its mainstream development. This mainstreaming work is jointly initiated by Government of Odisha; Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA); and supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) is offering guidance and advice.

A Training of Trainers (ToT) on 'Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation' was organized at Jagannath Puri town in costal Odisha on September 28-30, 2015. The innovative GoI-UNDP project "Institutional and Community Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change" for the Government officials and practitioners from different parts of the state covers this ToT activity.

The training is a result of an elaborate Training Need Assessment (TNA) among the district level on line department officers. The three-day training with different learning tools will emphasize on moving from disaster response and management to risk reduction and adaptation to climate change by officials from various sectors including water, energy, agriculture, and urban.

Inaugurating the training, Shri P. K. Nayak, DGM, OSDMA said "Odisha's community has been able to showcase effective response during cyclone Phailin. There is a need to better understand and implement DRR and CCA concerns into development process. Development investments must be risk safe investments. This training is expected to create a pool of motivated skilled trainers who can take the cause to the grass-root development process."

Shri Mihir R. Bhatt, Managing Trustee, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) pointed out "Odisha has one of richest experiences in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation integration which can be better informing official development decisions for ensuring sustainable development in the state." AIDMI has been working in Odisha now for over 10 years on various DRR and CCA projects and initiatives.

The training was attended by important line department officials from key districts as well as other leading non-government practitioners who will be given a mix of class-room and exercise based training to understand, implement and monitor the mainstreaming of DRR and CCA in Odisha. This training also finalized a localized and standardized training module created by these officials and experts based on which more trainings will be



Photo: AIDMI.

conducted in each district. "There is a need for sensitization and involvement of all development stakeholders - especially government departments - for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and this ToT provides a platform for shared learning and will go a long way in taking further actions to mainstream DRR and CCA in Odisha", said Ms. Seema Mohanty, State Programme Officer, UNDP, Odisha. The experience of Odisha Disaster Recovery Project considering to DRR and CCA was briefly shared by L.N.Nayk, Social Expert OSDMA, plans are being made to review the

project to make it more disaster and climate risk sensitive.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), Loss and Damage, and Integrating DRR and CCA in Development are directly being addressed in this ToT. The case studies are generated from local initiatives and the training module takes the module developed by National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) a step or two ahead to current and local needs.

The training is drawn from some of the best global knowledge material from IPCC's (Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change) SREX report and CDKN's (Climate Development Knowledge Network) study on effectiveness of risk insurance in Cyclone Phailin in Odisha. The concept of "transformation" from livelihood point of view is also being explored. Key areas focused in the training are urban, transport, planning and energy.

Shri Kamal Lochan Mishra and his team at OSDMA are one of the leading champions behind this much needed integration strategy at the state level. This interest comes from long standing work on the ground in coastal Odisha. ■

- Vishal Pathak, AIDMI

#### SPEECH ON NATIONAL CONSULTATION

## Adaptation and Disaster Resilience in INDCs of India

Let me start by congratulating our Chief Guest, Minister Prakash Javadekarjee that there cannot be better timing than this to hold this consultation on India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). And there cannot be a better group than this to host such an important consultation here in Delhi.

Reducing risk is everybody's business. No single or small group can do so alone. Let me raise some questions for us to get our discussion on what should go into INDCs started.

Let us draw from the work of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. Can we come up with a formula for low carbon India? Can INDCs help us move towards such a formula? Can INDCs focus on cities; protecting forests, increasing agriculture productivity; and investing in clean energy that is ten times more efficiently used?

But a low carbon India has to be a safe India. An India safe from disaster risks and climate change risks. IPCC's Special Report on "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) suggests more risk, in more areas more frequently, and with more impact. Some of the best work on integrating DRR with CCA is done by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), worldwide, but also here in India. The CDKN work shows the need to address issues of heatwave, so far not on the main agenda. Further, recent thinking in CDKN shows that sub-national processes work and therefore should not INDCs focus on sub-national initiatives, institutions and investments?

A lot is being done at the sub-national level in India by organizations such as SEEDS and Action Aid, but also Swayam Shikshan Prayog and GEAG and others. The All India Disaster

Mitigation Institute's (AIDMI) work in 39 districts in 6 states has found focus on poverty to be important. The rising disaster risk is pushing people back to poverty. Should not India's INDC directly focus on poor people? Should INDCs not be anti-poverty measures?

Poverty has no national boundaries. Nor climate change and its impacts. What we say here in this consultation, is so important to the neighbours, for example, to Pakistan. In this sense this is a regional consultation. Should not INDCs of India have regional consideration and dimensions? Duryog Nivaran, a South Asia network, in its work of implementing Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) in Dhaka in June 2015 also found that integration of DRR or CCA have regional dimensions.

On July 17, 2015 Save the Children and PriceWaterhouse Coopers

launched the report, "Forgotten Voices: The World of Urban Children in India" here in Delhi where it was again clear that not only the risk is rising but its impact on citizens, children, is rising in India's cities. Minister Kiren Rijju was honest in admitting that measures (such as INDCs) must address most vulnerable in Indian cities. Among them children who are poor and out of school are most important to be kept in mind. These children are most likely to be displaced to new locations without social or humanitarian protection, work of UNICEF suggests in India. Should not INDCs address social vulnerabilities?

How can we miss out on 100 SMART CITIES work that India is taking up? Never before so much attention and such resources were devoted to India's cities that face both, climate and disaster risks. Work of TERI on coastal cities with USAID support shows the need to focus INDCs on urban areas. At ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP) in Bangkok, June 3 to 5, 2015, the urgent need to integrate DRR with

CCA came up and focus on cities and small towns was underlined by India, and its neighbours.

Recent initiatives by the French Embassy in India and Observer Research Foundation on COP 21 has rightly focused on not what India has not done for mitigation, but what it has, and more importantly what it can do more. So can INDCs focus on what India has done, and done well so far, such as investments in solar energy?

INDCs will cost. And may cost a lot to both, the authorities and the citizens. Can INDCs develop business opportunities? Opportunities for green and clean businesses? Asian Development Bank (ADB) has so clearly showed that investments in both, risk reduction and development are possible. INDCs must be investible.

But why only ADB or banks like ADBs? A wide new range of aid models are coming up in Asia. Work of JICA shows the need for convergence of aid models that are

emerging in Asia. India has played a lead role in offering aid to countries in Asia as well as in shaping new two development banks. Should not INDCs of India must converge, within India and with other countries so that overall global impact is greater? In fact, can new donor convergence lead to innovations in INDCs? Work of Humanitarian Innovation Fund shows us a new fund model that facilitates and nurtures local innovations for global use.

For a moment we cannot shift sight from work and employment links of INDCs. Employment focused Disaster Risk Management is the way to go and let me ask if work focused INDCs are possible and essential for India's young and fast skilling citizens? Should INDCs not generate more jobs for young Indians? Work of GROOTS worldwide gives us hope to consider this option.

Let me sum up. Let me thank Dr. Prusty, MoEFCC and Dr. Kamal Kishore, NDMA, for this opportunity to raise above ten questions. ■

- Mihir R. Bhatt

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

# Rebuilding after Typhoon Yolanda

## *Local Disaster Management Planning in the Philippines: Results and Way Ahead*

On 08 November 2013, Typhoon Yolanda (internationally referred to as Haiyan) made six (6) landfalls in the Philippines, causing widespread flooding across 171 cities and municipalities in 14 provinces across six regions of the country. It is by far the strongest typhoon to ever hit land in recorded history, registering a wind speed of 360 km/hr. with storm surges of over four meters. It resulted in 6,300 reported deaths, 1,472,251 families affected, and damaged around 13.5 billion

dollars worth of property. Typhoon Yolanda has drastically transformed the landscape of disaster risk reduction and management in the Philippines.

Under the Philippine Disaster Law, there is a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Council composed of representatives from national government agencies, local government units (LGU), non-government organizations and other relevant stakeholders. The same

structure is also replicated at the local level. The Philippines DRRM Framework, meanwhile, has four thematic areas namely: (1) Prevention and Mitigation; (2) Preparedness; (3) Response; and (4) Rehabilitation and Recovery, which are all articulated in a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan. The law mandates that LGUs must have their own Local DRRM Plans. In implementing the Plans, the local governments are tasked to create their respective DRRM Councils and



Offices. The law emphasizes that Local DRRM Councils will take the lead in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the effects of any disaster depending on the magnitude, scale, and scope of the disaster. When there is a disaster, it is the LGUs which have primary responsibility as first disaster responders.

Typhoon Yolanda has uncovered the vulnerabilities of government in managing disasters of this magnitude. It has seriously put in question the DRRM policies and implementation mechanisms of the national government, the preparedness of the communities, and the ability of the local governments to respond to emergencies in the aftermath.

Concretely, Typhoon Yolanda has highlighted several issues such as (1) effective coordination mechanisms at the local, national, regional, and international levels, (2) relevant standards and protocols during the humanitarian phase of the disaster, (3) reliable early warning systems, and (4) sustainable recovery and rehabilitation interventions after a disaster.

While our disaster law is very clear in defining the role of LGUs in DRRM, the impact of the devastation of Yolanda forced decision-makers and stakeholders to reassess the capacity of LGUs in handling their DRRM responsibilities. It allowed the government to: (1) allocate more resources in capacity-building for LGUs and empower local chief executives; (2) invest in state-of-the-art early warning systems; (3) strengthen coordination among stakeholders; (4) conduct trainings on community disaster preparedness; (5) integrate the build-back-better principle in rehabilitation and recovery efforts; and (6) engage in periodic dialogues with LGUs and other stakeholders on emerging DRRM issues.

Almost two years after Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines, the Filipinos are more vigilant in preparing for and responding to disasters.

The recent typhoons after Yolanda has shown tremendous change in how LGUs prepared for and responded to disasters. The low number of casualties and damage to property

highlight the fact that people in affected areas have become more cautious and willing to follow preventive evacuation orders issued by local leaders. Similarly, senior government officials have conducted pre-disaster risk analysis days before the onset of typhoons to provide accurate weather forecasts, preposition goods and resources, issue early warnings, and setup redundancies in power, transportation and communications.

Furthermore, after Typhoon Yolanda, local disaster management planning in the Philippines has quickly evolved and rightfully transformed the mindset of key players in Philippine DRRM. It has shifted the attention from national government to local government in terms of financial resources, policies, people, and opportunities.

In hindsight, Typhoon Yolanda did not only showcase the unwavering determination, indomitable spirit, and resilience of the Filipinos. It provided the government an opportunity to speed up the review of the disaster law and integrate good practices and lessons learned from Typhoon Yolanda. It also provided a platform to consolidate the key provisions in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 and the coordination mechanisms and protocols of a UN Declaration for Level 3 category of a disaster in the amendments to the disaster law. Furthermore, it highlighted the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for disaster rehabilitation and recovery at the local and national levels. This will eventually close the loop to integrate local disaster risk management planning in the long-term sustainable development planning of the country. ■

– **Atty. Lesley Y. Cordero**,  
Undersecretary for the Office of the  
Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation  
and Recovery (OPARR), Philippines

# Typhoon Committee's Role in Implementing Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

The framework outlines seven global targets to be achieved over the next 15 years: a reduction in global disaster mortality; a reduction in numbers of affected people; a reduction in economic losses in relation to global GDP; reduction in disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services; an increase in the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020; enhanced international cooperation; access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information assessments. The framework includes four priorities for action.

The ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee is an intergovernmental body established in 1968 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ESCAP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in order to promote and coordinate

the planning and implementation of measures required for minimizing the loss of life and material damage caused by typhoon-related disasters in ESCAP region. The Typhoon Committee is currently composed of 14 Members: Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Laos; Macau, China; Malaysia; the Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; Viet Nam; and U.S.A.

The Typhoon Committee, serving as an intergovernmental body functioning in disaster risk reduction, will fully support and implement the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. TC will adjust existing strategic plans that are the main tools for achieving the Typhoon Committee's vision and mission. As part of it, the Strategic Goals and Associated Activities and Annual Operating Plan should be aligned with the Sendai Framework, such as an attempt to capture and monitor the typhoon related disaster data from member countries and set TC's goals in each of the related seven targets. TC will concern itself with the four priority areas when it raises any new projects or activities in coming years.

Regarding international cooperation, TC will continue enhancing technology transfer involving a process of enabling and facilitating flows of skill, knowledge, technology, and experience from real cases through the annual workshops and expert missions for improving the ability of disaster prevention and mitigation from tropical cyclone impacts to member countries. Recently, Typhoon committee has been managing a successful project called Synergized Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) that is a project of the WMO/ESCAP TC and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) which had recognized a strong need to create synergies in early warning systems among different types of coastal hazards by reviewing existing Standard Operating Procedures. This is a good example of international cooperation between two intergovernmental bodies in order to improve the ability of disaster prevention and risk reduction for vulnerable regions affected by disasters.

TC will continue seeking new projects for improving public awareness of disaster risk related to typhoon impacts, such as a project last year to produce a video that can raise public awareness of dangers and hazards associated with storm surge and landslides caused by typhoon impacts (<http://www.typhooncommittee.org/2015/03/19/tc-hazard-video/>)

With support from WMO and ESCAP, the unceasing efforts among the TC members are moving forward TC's version of improving the quality of life of the member's populations through integrated cooperation to mitigate impacts and risk of typhoon-related disasters. ■

– **Mr. Lei Pun Chi (Barrie)**, DRR Expert of Typhoon Committee Secretariat



During 9<sup>th</sup> WGDRR Annual Meeting, which was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 19–20 May 2015, TC Members discussed how to implement the Sendai Framework.

# Droughts in India and Saritsa Foundation's Contribution to Prepare People in India

## Background:

Droughts affect all parts of our environment as well as our communities in India. The droughts experienced in 2013 and 2014 have caused severe conditions in 11 States of India. These droughts in India have signified the importance of immediate measures which are to be taken for prevention, mitigation and preparedness by communities with integration of local government authorities.

## How Saritsa Foundation has been preparing people?

It is important to share that, Saritsa Foundation's frame work to make disaster response an accountability of affected communities is an important dimension of disaster risk reduction. It has been advocating and practicing People centered, People led and People owned approach to disaster risk reduction to make people resilient and safer at local level. It sensitizes people with guidance to develop capacity to make maximum use of local resources to cope with natural disasters like droughts and integrate this effort with government initiatives.

The concept is based on the idea of participation by the local people who can make a huge difference in fighting intolerable situations of deprivation caused by droughts and other disasters. It has been an innovative transformation of the mindset of powerlessness amongst the frequently affected people and makes them active citizens for collective cooperation. Here, it has been able to narrow the very existence of divisive policies based on gender, caste and religions.



*Bihar Campaign.*

Saritsa Foundation has been conducting workshops in most drought prone states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bihar. These capacity building workshops have identified two distinctive stages where people have to build their capacity to cope with disasters. It is a singular contribution where women, youth and citizens from rural and urban areas have been actively involved to take part and develop capacities to minimize impacts of droughts.

Saritsa Foundation has encouraged capacity building by interactive and participatory methodology including experience sharing as well as use of local expertise. The points taken care are given in succeeding paragraphs as short term and long term measures.

### Short Term Measures:

1. Provisioning water, saving water for use of family members and cattle, goats and sheep.

Project their needs of water to water suppliers based on water trucks or camel carts or bullock carts.

2. Raising awareness to use water judiciously and store water in containers for emergency use.
3. Taking care of children, women, especially pregnant women and older people from threats of heat waves and making necessary arrangements. Visualization of use of oral dehydration salts, water purification tablets and vitamin A tablets. Drawing plans to take care of epidemics like cholera.
4. Rehabilitation of existing wells or hand pumps as well as purification of traditional water storing places like Johads, Bawadis and ponds.
5. Specific efforts by all to take care of health.
6. Adequate measures to take care of people affected by hunger.

7. Keeping a check on fodder prices.

**Long Term Measures:**

1. Building check dams at local level.
2. Rejuvenating lakes and ponds as well digging new tube well with a view to higher yield of water.
3. Establishing early warning systems for timely warning.
4. Provisioning and experimenting crops cultivation and time cycle.
5. Plant protection measures as well as plantation of hardy trees and plants which can survive with lesser water.
6. Continuous research with support of government agencies.
7. Encouraging roof top water harvesting.
8. Sanitation and hygiene education.
9. Raising awareness about crop insurance schemes.
10. Building capacity to take care of live stock – water, fodder and alternative grazing sites/ regions.
11. Planning of ground water recharging provisions.
12. Diversifying livelihood looking beyond the villages.
13. Planning fodder cultivation wherever possible.
14. Educating and preparing people.

**Conclusion:**

Natural disasters such as droughts take a heavy toll on all including livestock. Children, women and elderly people are more vulnerable. What has to be taken care is raising the level of awareness of people and educating them to be equal partners in the process of prevention, mitigation and preparedness. ■

**- Prof. Smita Kadam,**  
Executive Director of Saritsa  
Foundation, Mumbai

**HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

## **START: Two Decades of Impact in Asia**

**S**TART, the global change SysTEM for Analysis, Research, & Training, was founded in 1992 to build the scientific capacity of developing countries to understand and respond to global environmental change. For the past 23 years, START has been active in Africa and Asia providing 450 research grants, 160 fellowships, 200 young scientist awards, and 420 training opportunities for scientists and policymakers to address climate challenges from monsoon risks to urban planning to agricultural forecasting.

Over the past two decades, START has enhanced human resource capabilities in Asia through training, and engagement of early career stakeholders in academia, practice and decision-making communities, in regional research programs on global environmental change.

START alumni in Asia are now in leadership positions in academia, governmental and non-governmental organizations in Asia. A significant number of START alumni contribute to the international endeavors such as the assessments done through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and are active in climate change adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction challenges. Indeed, START alumni are the real impact of START in Asia and elsewhere.

When interviewed, alumni often credit START with providing critical skills, experiences, and connections to other researchers at pivotal times in their careers. Hendricus Andy Simarmata participated in two Cities at Risk training events and says, "The START program helped me to understand global issues, to meet international experts, and to learn from other countries' experiences. This has helped me to understand and define development needs for my own region."

START has over 700 alumni in Asia who have benefitted from a START program. Consistent with our "train the trainers" philosophy, we look for ways to re-engage alumni with new projects, like in the case of Prof. Rodel Lasco. Prof. Lasco joined the START family as a Principal Investigator for an international project on adaptation to climate change (AIACC). Now, as Scientific Director of the Oscar M. Lopez Center in the Philippines, Dr. Lasco is a vital partner in an alliance fostered by START to implement the Pan-Asia Risk Reduction (PARR) Fellowship Program. Dr. Lasco is building the capacity of the next generation of climate scientists in Southeast Asia.

We look forward to increasing our impact in Asia by adding new people to the START family and re-engaging alumni in the future with programs like PARR. ■

**- Ms. Abby Gwaltney,** Outreach and Communications Specialist *and*  
**Dr. Hassan Virji,** Executive Director, International START Secretariat,  
Washington DC, USA

# Role of Sphere India in Coordination in J&K Flood Response

## Background:

Ever since the floods were declared in J&K state, Sphere India has been responding to it in many ways. It started with Conducting the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) with participation from Government and Non-Government representatives, in the immediate response phase. The findings were shared across various platforms to help agencies improve on their respective areas of responses. Inter Agency Coordination and strengthening Go-NGO Coordination including Sectoral Coordination Meetings, District Coordination Meetings was a regular feature of Sphere India's response which complimented other ongoing activities. Myriad of emerging issues were taken into account and a varied response plan was crafted to meet these emerging and growing needs like Collaborative Advocacy on access to Government Entitlements as per SDRF norms, Capacity development for disaster preparedness: Training of Master Masons and Knowledge Management: Developing District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs), Google Mapping, Monthly Response Bulletin. For wider dissemination and multi-sectoral use of the outcomes of response activities, initiation of Digital Platform and a multi stakeholder consultation on Common Lessons Learnt was also conducted.

## Key Activities of Sphere India in J&K Coordination:

Sphere India has been playing a pivotal role in the coordination in the post flood response in the state of J&K. The activities that were conducted primarily involved coordination across sectors both vertically and



JRNA debriefing at Srinagar, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

horizontally through District Coordination meetings and sector specific meetings and conducting JRNA and sharing of findings. Sphere India also provided technical support in developing DDMPs, capacity building for disaster risk reduction and flagging post disaster advocacy issues.

Activation of **Unified Response Strategy (URS)** in J&K, releasing of coordination updates with emerging need in consultations with district and state administration on Sphere Google Group along with regular updation of the J&K Response in specific to area to avoid duplicity and Planning Matrix by Agencies and development of IEC material on Collaborative Advocacy, Government Entitlements under SDRF norms, Food and Public Health Safety in consultation with State Administration and relevant sector sub-committees are some of broad thematic areas of response.

## Establishing Health Coordination Centre and Emergency Operation Centre:

Setting up of Health Coordination Centre, Coordination Facilitation Centre to monitor the health surveillance issues in the first one month post disaster and Emergency Operating Centre interact with more than 50 Agencies which approached for information collection and coordination with other Agencies and interface with the State and District Administration.

**JRNA:** Initiating the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment in J&K where 65 NGO & 10 Government representatives participated in 10 teams to 8 districts in Kashmir. In Jammu 50 participants in 6 teams were sent to 6 districts. The JRNA Report was shared with the Divisional Commissioner and all Agencies responding in the J&K Floods.

**Coordination Team in J&K:** For the implementation of the project



activities recruitment of coordination team in Jammu and Kashmir was made. Placement of 7 district coordinators in Kashmir and 4 in Jammu division from September–December 2014 was done. Sphere India district coordinators facilitated GO NGO coordination meetings and processes at district level and became the first point of contact for the NGOs responding. All circulars from government were share for smooth response and the challenges in any kind were addressed by the State and District coordinator to establish a transparent and hassle free response operations.

**Coordination:** General Coordination meetings were organized on 13<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 with representation from more than 50 organizations. These initial meetings were the first coordination platform for many Agencies who were responding in J&K for the first time. 11 GO NGO Coordination Meetings at the district HQ were organized to strengthen coordination between district administration and NGOs and to identify needs and gaps. A space in Social welfare board, Old Secretariat, Srinagar was allotted for Go-NGO facilitation.



Group discussion with community at Bandipora on HVCA.

In addition to this, 9 Sector Group Planning Meetings were organized on Shelter, WASH and Health, Protection and Education, Food, Nutrition and Livelihood in EoC–Srinagar to discuss the Strategic and operating guidelines. 1 Sector Group Meeting on Psychosocial Issues and convergence of psychosocial interventions post Floods. Based on the recommendations of the shelter group, the Shelter Forum at the National level has come out with agreed principles for mid and long term shelter interventions in J&K and Shelter Strategy which was shared with the National Shelter Subcommittee. Inputs by various sector groups were also taken for contextualization of ToRs and detailed multi sectoral assessments in Health and Shelter.

**Knowledge Management:** Response Bulletin – Monthly newsletter was initiated to document and widespread the best practices and case studies directly from community, NGOs and Government. As part of Knowledge Management, Information was collected on the number of shelters provided by agencies or government in the district

and Geo tagging of 2 districts was carried out on pilot basis. With this effort the Shelter Sub Committee has come up with a centralized database with beneficiary details and further it is mapped in the Google earth mapping.

**District Disaster Management Plan:** Providing technical support to the District Administration of Bandipore Baramulla, Kulgam, Sophein & Poonch in developing comprehensive District Disaster Management Plans.

**Capacity Building of Master Masons:** CARE India in collaboration with SPHERE India organised a series of training programmes on Disaster Resilient Construction for 63 master masons (Bandipore–23, Baramulla–20 and Kulgam–20) on request of the District administration, Govt. of J&K in 3 districts of Srinagar division namely Bandipore (5<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> Jan' 15), Baramulla (10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> Jan' 15) and Kulgam (15<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Jan' 15). The event was inaugurated by Dr. Shah Faesal (IAS), Deputy Commissioner, Bandipore; Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Wani, ADC–Baramulla and Mr. Sajjad Ahmad – ADDC Kulgam in their respective districts.

**Distribution of Dignity Kit:** Keeping the affected population into consideration along with Sphere India and EFICOR proposed to provide 6250 Dignity kits in the most affected districts. The dignity kit has been contextualized as per the local needs. EFICOR and Sphere India worked together on the distribution plan of these dignity kits to respond to the most needy adolescent girls and women in Pulwama, Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian and Bandipore Districts of Kashmir. ■

– Dr. Henna Hejazi,  
Program Manager, J&K Flood  
Response, Sphere India, New Delhi  
(for more <https://sphereindiablog.wordpress.com>)

## Responsible Inc.

Due to its unique geo-climatic condition, India is vulnerable to natural disasters. We as a country has progressed but frequent disasters backtrack our development initiatives. In recent years we have faced several disasters like Cyclone *Hud-hud* (2014), Urban flood in J&K (2014), Utrakhand flood (2013) etc. The approach of disaster management in India has changed from reactive to proactive. Gujarat earthquake (2001) & India Ocean Tsunami (2004) can be considered as turning point for this transition. UPA government in 2005 enacted Disaster management act and institutional mechanism was established. National Disaster management authority was also established. In this context, the restructuring of NDMA by NDA government can be termed as good decision.

Corporate sector has been primarily contributing in philanthropy manner during disasters. Business houses like Birla's & Tata's have been contributing for mankind in the form of charity for a very long time now. These contributions are primarily in the form of cash or in-kind donation. These days consumers easily make out brand building activities of companies in the form of corporate

social responsibility. Corporate need to think beyond traditional CSR activities. There is a great need that both corporate sector & disaster management agencies collaborate.

Corporate sector can contribute both in pre-disaster & post-disaster phase. It can help in creating awareness amongst vulnerable population. It can contribute in formulating disaster management plans & policies. It can also help in creating trained professional. It can help in making resilient society.

If disaster struck, it can contribute in immediate relief activities. Disaster management agencies can leverage expertise of corporate sectors in assessing needs, coordination and information management. Advances in information & communication technology can help in better disaster management interventions. Real time and accurate information can help in creating responsive & efficient system.

Best management practices can be used in managing relief activities. Companies' expert in logistical activities can also contribute in creating efficient disaster relief chains. Bench marking &

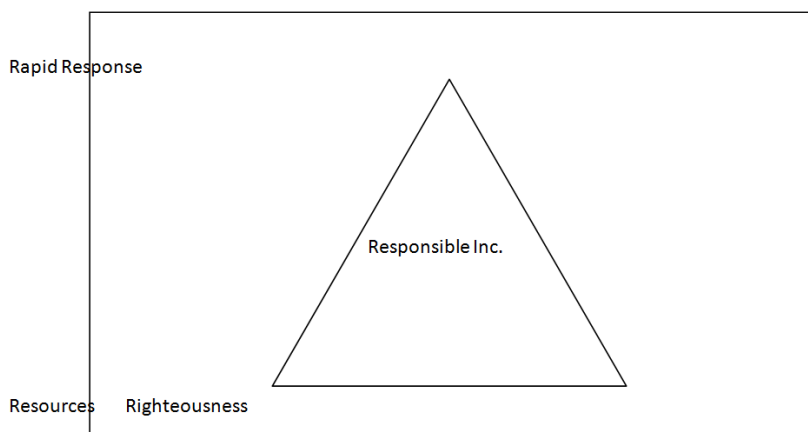
accountability parameter can help in assessing performance of various agencies. Emergence of social networking site like Facebook, twitter can be leveraged in spreading/transmitting real time information. Big data analytics can also be advantageously used.

One such example is alliance between World Food Program (WFP) and TNT. Since 2002, TNT, a Netherlands-headquartered global provider of mail, express, and logistic services has been an active partner of the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). Each year, WFP provides food aid to an average of 90 million people, including 56 million children, in more than 80 countries. TNT is proving to be an important partner in helping WFP aid gets to where it is needed most.

Similarly IBM India also contributed in Southern Asia Tsunami (2004). It helped in deploying and developing technology for relief efforts. It also helped in relief materials managements, tracking of affected population and creating reports and statistics. Corporate sector can also contribute in rehabilitation & resettlement process. They can contribute in design & construction of houses. Corporations need to come forward & behave in more responsible manner.

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**- Hamendra Dangi,**  
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# 10 Years Later: Reviewing Recovery of Tsunami Affected Women from India

This short article is based on the results of a comprehensive study undertaken by the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) with its associated partners in August, 2014 to examine the impact of the response to tsunami relief and recovery efforts in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. AIDMI has worked on tsunami recovery issues from December 27, 2004 onwards. The focus of this article is to discuss and highlight key findings from Tamil Nadu in India.

The study used innovative methodologies, including appreciative inquiry, self-organizing group interviews, and some quantitative methods to better reach out to women and youth. Data was collected from about 15 locations along the coast from Chennai to Kanyakumari, from over 1500 families. There are not many methods or tools available to reach out to women to find out the impact.

The Women's Resilience Index (WRI), assessing the extent of women's involvement in preparedness and recovery in eight countries of South Asia (including Japan) stated that 'current data for the monitoring and evaluation of DRR are inadequate to track and measure progress on gender equality' (EIU 2014: 6)<sup>1</sup>. Four key observations from the AIDMI study in Tamilnadu in India with

relevant findings from other studies are discussed below.

First, the number of families that were counted as being below the poverty line (BPL) had decreased in the past ten years. Income has gone up. Far less poor were visible in Tsunami communities now and even less poor women in need of a home and income. Direct focus on women's income and a place to live from response stage has made a difference. The housing support was identified as an important driver of the livelihoods recovery in the recent impact evaluation of Swiss Solidarity Asian Tsunami Programme in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka (Ferf. A., et al 2014: 5)<sup>2</sup>.

Second, almost all children of school-going age were enrolled in and attended school regularly. More schools were available. More types of educational options were available. The girl child was in school in almost all locations. Listening to women's request to focus on education in response and the relief stage set the direction. A Save the Children study in Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Ache Province) shares similar insights, 'new schools are standing in the place of those that were destroyed and in both countries there has been progress made in incorporating DRR into the school

curriculum' (Featherstone A. 2014: viii)<sup>3</sup>.

Third, the overall investment in houses (built by the government as part of the relief measures) had increased, improving the asset by addition of rooms, facility, service, and more. Invariably toilets were added as soon as kitchens were in place. The yard had more spices planted. Fruit trees had come up due to care offered by women and children. Men bought cars. Women added rooms to the house with additional savings. Experience of *Duryog Nivaran* members across South Asia (including Indonesia) shows that prioritizing investment in areas where women have direct control such as household level food security, WASH and traditional livelihoods lead to positive outcomes for resilience building (Duryog Nivaran 2014:13)<sup>4</sup>.

Fourth, though income from coastal fisheries had decreased, an increase was observed in fishing mainly due to rise in deep sea fishing. Smaller boats had given way to more motorized boats, group fishing to early but successful corporate fishing. As a result the role of women in fishing had decreased, but income from fishing had gone up in families. A recent Oxfam report noted that because most livelihood

1 The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2014, The South Asia Women's Resilience Index, <http://www.economistinsights.com/sites/default/files/The%20South%20Asia%20Women's%20Resilience%20Index%20Dec8.pdf> (accessed on 13 January 2014)

2 Ferf. A., et al, 2014, Impact Evaluation of Swiss Solidarity Asian Tsunami Programme, Summary Report, <http://tsunami.swiss-solidarity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/141206-Summary-Report-Final.pdf> (accessed on 13 January 2014)

3 Featherstone A. 2014, tsunami ten years on, stories of change, [http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/TSUNAMI\\_TEN\\_YEARS\\_ON\\_2ND.PDF](http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/TSUNAMI_TEN_YEARS_ON_2ND.PDF), (accessed 13 January 2014)

4 Duryog Nivaran (DN) 2014, Towards Post-2015 Agenda for DRR (HFA2): Women as a force in resilience building, gender equality in DRR Report of the consultations in Asia Pacific, <http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/HFA2%20Key%20Area%204%20paper-%20Women%20and%20Gender%20equality%20in%20DRR.pdf> (accessed on 13 January 2014)

rehabilitation activities focused on male-dominated sectors such as fishing, livelihood needs of women were overlooked and found limited support (Oxfam 2014: 20)<sup>5</sup>. But in many cases tsunami recovery also opened new opportunities for women through vocational training and education in non-fishing jobs such as construction and masonry, including coir industry.

Most of these observations demonstrated that tsunami response and relief work has created mainly favourable social and economic opportunity in the affected regions for women and on gender relations. Hardly any violence on women due to their active role in this process was reported. For example, the response to send the girl child to school as soon as possible and long term measures to offer free public bus transport towards girl students lead to many girls going out of village to vocational training centers. There was robust improvement in Rights of Child in the region where UNICEF

had done work with other Child Rights agencies.

There was a rising awareness of "green energy" at all levels of the community and authorities, and this would have to be studied further that why green energy was not featured into account in response but also in the recovery phase. Why solar and wind energy was not used as one of the key sources of the energy for the households. A good case for Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management was clearly desirable. Also visible was the need for integration of eco-system based adaptation with recovery efforts. CDKN and PFR have picked up this area.

The history of SHGs in the coastal region in Tamil Nadu – good work of SNEHA, DHAN, and others – meant that there was some familiarity among the victims, and their families with concepts like financial discipline and financial literacy. This familiarity was helpful for the recovery process as the money was

used by the family in a more planned and thoughtful manner. Though all SHGs did not survive beyond initial 3 to 5 years, the ones that did, indeed, made a sustained difference in the lives of the poor and women. It was also felt that SHGs need to move beyond their traditional functions of promoting savings and credit to include risk transfer.

Overall exercise showed that given a chance in response women do take up leadership position from response to recovery phases after a disaster. They need visibility in the process and voice in the decision making. Complaining all the times about lack of women's involvement and leadership in recovery can help, but only to an extent, what is equally if not more important is to promote and share appreciative inquiries and their results if we want to achieve far reaching impact. Only then can we make women a force in resilience building and achieving gender equality in DRR through SFDRR. ■

- Mihir R. Bhatt

<sup>5</sup> Oxfam 2014, The Indian Ocean Tsunami, 10 years on, ISBN 978-1-78077-774-0 in December 2014, <http://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/337007/10/rr-indian-ocean-tsunami-response-10-years-181214-en.pdf> (accessed on 13 January 2014)

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