

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction: Upward and Onward



Image: AIDMI.

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Emerging Issues of CMDRR in DDMPs

Background:

The District Disaster Management Plan (DDMP) of India do not fully take up Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) in its plan or planning process. What are emerging issues?

Making India safe from natural disasters is high priority for the Government of India. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has paid increasingly more attention to local action after the guidelines and policies have been worked out. The Planning Commission of the Government of India has set up a Working Group to suggest ways to incorporate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into the 12th Five Year Plan. This article addresses the points discussed on June 7, 2011 Sub-Group meeting and draws from a recent review of DDMP in Madhubani district organised by Bihar State Disaster Management Authority and Delhi-based Sphere India. The article also draws from All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)'s ongoing work since 2010 with five partners to review District and City Disaster Management Plans in six locations which suggested many areas for capacity building and information sharing.

Disasters and Economic Growth:

It is a fact that disasters slow down India's economic growth. More growth cannot be achieved if disasters slow it down. A way out is building national capacity to reduce risk through the Twelfth Five Year Plan.

In any given year an estimated one-fifth of India's districts face disasters: droughts, floods, cyclones, landslides and more adding up to 13 natural hazards. In any given year new community based initiatives to

reduce risk and build resilience against disaster are undertaken across districts and small towns throughout India. Though UN agencies, international and local NGOs, local authorities, and communities have put in unprecedented efforts, especially since the establishment of the NDMA five years ago, there still remains a long way to go to make India safer. The Twelfth Plan can give a big push towards making India safer by investing in the capacities of district, village, and local authorities to plan and manage disaster risks. This is because, as AIDMI's work since 1995 has found, all disasters are local, and it is local capacities—urban and rural—that mitigate and reduce risk. AIDMI's ongoing review show that best return on plan investments can be realised at district and local level.

Areas for Plan Intervention:

First, the district authorities struggle a lot to know how to measure and analyse risk or its reduction, especially in their own district where it matters the most. Many efforts are made with limited resources by district and local authorities. Claims on their capacity for development work do not leave spare capacity to address risks. Most Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives are planned and resourced at the national level, not at the state or community level. Districts hardly have any say in such national initiatives. Direct investment by the national and state governments in district capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction is rare. As a result, DDMP prepared under National Disaster Management Act remain in general, mainly focused on response even though National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has put in many efforts to make these plans comprehensive. **The Twelfth Plan should allocate resources for building district and city capacity to make**

District Disaster Management Plan and City Disaster Management Plan based on analysis and measurement of risks. What the Government of India should support and what states should support needs to be worked out for such an initiative. AIDMI's ongoing national study has some possible suggestions for this division between SDMAs and NDMA.

Second, the district and local authorities struggle to address inequality in communities which makes any disaster risk reduction effort weak. The poor are more vulnerable to disasters. Women and *dalits* almost always get delayed relief. Small businesses get left out of the compensation packet. These are some examples of exclusion. **The Twelfth Plan can directly invest in civil society in making District and City Disaster Management Plan more inclusive of *dalits*, women, small businesses and the poor.** This can be done in several ways and must be discussed in more detail. Some tools are developed by National Dalit Watch for such inclusive response.

Third, district authorities have fast developing information systems but they do not have integrated and coordinated monitoring and evaluation systems that local communities and Panchayati Raj Institutes can use to target vulnerable and at risk communities before and after a disaster. Neither the risks are well known nor those who are at risk. Though information is available in general it is not context-specific and communities-specific. **The Twelfth Plan can launch Government-civil society awareness scheme to bring key elements of District and City Disaster Management Plans on line, updatable and usable by communities and local district, city, and panchayat institutions.** The above mentioned pilot in Bihar must

be reviewed to find ways to detail this recommendation.

Fourth, national initiatives are good at developing approaches and concepts but not on targets and estimating costs of reducing risks in the districts. Most targets are, in general, shifting and often non-existent. When targets do exist, they are based on poor information and no baseline data. So who can tell if risk is in fact reduced? Who can tell if the school is safe? How many schools in a district or city are safe? **The Twelfth Plan should demand specific targets for risk reduction from district and city authorities via SDMAs and provide funds for the cost of setting up such a system.** How many schools will be safer? How many hospitals will be safer? The 12th Plan should build capacity to set targets and share information on the targets. All risks can not be reduced by all stakeholders with given time and resources. Prioritising and targeting is an important issue coming out of AIDMI review.

Fifth, points 3 and 4 mentioned above lead to developing national statistical systems that help move district and city plans ahead. Now more is known about the national cost of disasters but still there is a lack of information on what is rebuilt, by communities, with their own contribution. The cost to the community (in money and other resources) of rebuilding shelter, livelihood, and infrastructure is unknown and so a little is known about how to plan—for resources and long term recovery—at the district level. **The Twelfth Plan should allocate resources for ongoing national studies of costs of recovery, response, preparedness, and more with NIDM for the next five years through an Expert Group.**

Sixth, there is uneven and scattered public spending on disaster risk reduction across communities, authorities, UN system and INGOs. There is an opportunity to combine funds, and to sustain and target those funds at local levels for District and City Disaster Management Plans and

community initiatives while leveraging more funds from government and private sectors. **The Twelfth Plan should converge all direct and indirect investments in disaster risk reduction in District and City Disaster Management Plans.** This may also include civil society and international aid agencies' spending. How to do so? What is effective? What are past expenses of convergence? This must be discussed. AIDMI ongoing review found that this issue of convergence is now falling in-between SDMAs and DDMA's. Neither have skills or mechanisms to converge investments in risk reduction.

The above six areas of CMDRR in India offer, as explained, key opportunities for the Twelfth Five Year Plan to invest resources in District and City Disaster Management to reap robust returns of disaster safe economic growth for community. ■

– Mihir R. Bhatt,

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

INTRODUCTION

Promoting Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction

Almost all states in India are facing or faced disasters in the form of flood, cyclone, drought, cloud burst or even Tsunami. Tsunami was the disaster which hit more than one country in 2004. That was an "alarm" for our Government and also for development agencies like us. That was the time, when efforts started shifting from "Rescue and relief" to "Disaster Risk Reduction".

Cordaid, with the help of ten partner organisations is trying to build the resilience capacities of communities mainly in Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Orissa and Andaman and Nikobar Islands. The main emphasis is to make this intervention truly "Community Managed" where most marginalised are engaged in each stage not just as "respondent" but also as "decision makers". The whole focus is on "reducing the vulnerability" and

"Increasing the Capacity" of Community so that RISK can be reduced. It is important that "relief" should not be considered as "charity" or a service for "first come first serve". It is indeed a matter of "Right". It is encouraging to see that AIDMI is promoting through this publication and workshop. There are agencies which are fighting for the entitlements of the poor, I am sure this effort of AIDMI is going to strengthen their efforts as well.

In this direction, engaging Government, mainly local Governance such as Panchayats and *Gram Sabhas* is one of the main priorities of intervention. It is important to engage Community, Government and other civil society organisations in all stages of movement to make the intervention more effective, efficient and sustainable.



Image: AIDMI.

With the efforts of AIDMI and other partner organisation, we hope, we will be able to achieve true RIGHTS perspective in near future. ■

– Munish Kaushik,

Cordaid Advisor, India

Making CMDRR Inclusive

It has been observed that *Dalits* have been systematically excluded from relief and rehabilitation efforts, and the specific vulnerabilities faced by *Dalit* communities affect and impact their coping mechanisms to disaster as well as their access to response and recovery. An understanding and recognition of these factors can help build the necessary mechanism to provide adequate and efficient disaster mitigation and response mechanisms. The long term issues of chronic poverty, malnutrition, ill health, migration, inability to access education, child labour, other exploitation among vulnerable communities, and inter-community conflicts are accentuated by inappropriate disaster responses.

With this background, a workshop on "Vulnerability Mapping and Inclusion Monitoring in the Context of Disasters, from a Dalit Perspective" was held on 10-11 March 2011, in New Delhi, for its state and CMDRR network partners. The objectives of

the workshop were (i) to develop a clear conceptual and practical understanding of exclusion of Dalit communities in disasters and learn methods to monitor and record such practices of exclusion; and (ii) to equip the state/organisational representatives to train their frontline staff in inclusion monitoring during and after disasters.

The workshop intended to collectively evolving a much refined methodology/tool of vulnerability mapping and inclusion monitoring, incorporating experiences and learning from different regions of the country, exposed to disasters of different kinds. The workshop also aimed at capacitating the frontline personnel who are in direct touch with the communities at risk. In a nutshell, the overall envisaged outcome of the training was to strengthen the existing skills set of the participants and equipping the field staff with the understanding of vulnerability from the Dalit perspective.

The participants hailed from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The organisations they represented were Human Rights Forum for Dalit Liberation-Karnataka (HRFDL-K), Unnati, Dalit Watch-Andhra Pradesh, Rural Volunteers Centre (RVC) and HelpAge. Continuous references were brought in of Bihar Kosi flood experiences by representative from HelpAge, while Unnati shared about its valuable ongoing interventions with the communities living through drought conditions in different parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan, and flood monitoring experiences were brought out by Dalit Watch AP, HRFDL-K, and RVC.

The outcomes from the workshop were:

- Participants were enabled to identify the vulnerability of the Dalit communities in the context of disasters, also encapsulating the dimensions of exclusion based on gender, disability, old age etc.
- A framework (tool) was collectively developed through the workshop to record the vulnerability of these social groups, in order to communicate the same to the duty bearers (state & CSOs) to respond to it.
- Participants were enabled to orient the field staff with the mutually evolved framework and get it going at the community levels; get their inputs and further incorporate their fine knowledge from the field into the preliminary framework.
- A community friendly method evolved to enable the community members (task force) to record vulnerabilities of their communities. ■

– Lee Macqueen, NCDHR, New Delhi

In the year 2010, a similar kind of national two-day event was organised by National Dalit Watch on June 18-19 in New Delhi. It was a national consultation on "Exclusion of Dalits from Disaster Response and Risk Reduction Interventions: Advocacy for Effective Civil Society Monitoring, Enabling Policy Regime and Well Defined State Entitlements to Ensure Inclusion". It was very much inspiring to many participants since the people had been much active on the issue at the state level. The participants were able to consolidate the learning that emerged from five states towards building up a methodology for Vulnerability Mapping and Inclusion Monitoring. Besides the National Dalit Watch partners in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam, Unnati from Gujarat and HelpAge from Delhi also participated, bringing in the experiences from Rajasthan and Bihar, both from flood and drought responses. Even flood or drought relief can exclude *dalits* as often they do not have title to land. The participants collectively developed a basic framework for Vulnerability Mapping and Inclusion Monitoring to be done at the community level in a community friendly manner. These tools were to be piloted in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam and shared in a follow-up workshop at a later stage, if time and resources permit.

– Prasad Chacko, National Co-ordinator,
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), New Delhi

CMDRR: A Focus Area for Humanitarian Agencies



Image: Caritas India.

National Conference on CMDRR, March 24-25, 2011, New Delhi.

Two - day National Conference on CMDRR was conducted by Caritas India at Yusuf Sadan in New Delhi on 24 and 25 March 2011. The conference was attended by various organisations, national and international active in the field of DRR in India. The two day conference served as a platform for all the organisations to share their experiences, viewpoints and activities with all the other participants.

Ms. P. Jyoti Rao, Hon'ble Minister, National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India was the chief guest on this occasion. In her inaugural address, Ms. P. Jyoti Rao expressed her perspective on disaster management, and what has been the role of the government in this domain. She also pointed out the fact that Disaster Audit conducted by NDMA is a commendable act in this area. She made the gathering realise that everyone present at the conference is a stakeholder in this area and should act responsibly in this sphere.

She stressed on key elements which if incorporated within the programme efforts, will add greater value:

- Engaging Civil Society Organisations in Disaster Management, since they are the driving force for implementation during emergencies.
- Gender mainstreaming is a must and it should be inclusive in all the interventions related to Hazards.
- There is a need for holistic involvement of DM in all fields.

- Decentralisation of initiatives to enhance participation from all groups is essential.
- Quality and human dignity issues rising during disasters need to be addressed.
- Documentation is a must to share and record the processes, practices on Disaster Management.
- Validating them with science.
- Generating Capacity at the micro level.
- Awareness mobilisation and sharing of knowledge.
- Alternate livelihood, has to be a part of the mitigation process.
- Skill development programme should be introduced from the Ministry of Labour.

Caritas India also launched a video documentary on "Minimising Risks" and a book on "Most Significant Stories of Change" during the event that capsules the changed influence in the lives of the people. ■

– **Babita Alick**, Team Leader, Disaster Management, Caritas India.

Local Capacity that Led Towards Risk Reduction of Children

A demonstration on fire safety was conducted by AIDMI in partnership with Mahila Vikas Ashram (MVA), a local in partner of AIDMI, for students, teachers and staff members in the KGBV school in Rahika, Jhunjharpur wherein the usage of fire extinguishers was also demonstrated. The students were also given practical training for using the fire extinguishers effectively.

After few days of the training there burst a fire because of short circuit in one of the room of the school and the furniture caught fire. Soon other things also started catching fire. Seeing the smoke and fire, some of the staff members came running near the burning room. At that time, the warden, Miss Kundan immediately took out the fire extinguisher and used it tactfully to extinguish the fire. Soon the fire was in control. Thus, the training which she had received became very helpful. After this incident teachers and students of the school have regular discussion on fire safety. And other schools also learned lessons of fire safety. ■

(A case study from Mahila Vikas Ashram, Bihar)

Making Relief Inclusive

In December 2010, the Collector Rajendra Ratnoo had constituted a flood relief coordination committee consisting of A. Maria James of Rural Uplift Centre (convener); Ahmed Khan, president, district unit of Indian Red Cross Society; Rajendran of Lions Clubs International; Sivananthan of Rotary Club; Celine Mary of Social Action Movement; Angelus of Kottar Social Service Society and Arul Kannan, secretary, Disaster Response Team, to provide flood relief assistance to flood victims in this district.

The Rural Uplift Centre had distributed relief materials worth Rs. 2,200 each to 580 families at Ezhudesam and Mankadu panchayats with the aim of making relief effort both, inclusive and leading to disaster risk reduction. Each member of affected community was reached out and community committees came up as an outcome of this relief process. Community committees will now take up disaster risk reduction and



Image: Rural Uplift Centre.

RUC with the support of Cordaid, The Netherlands, supplied relief materials to 1600 families in Kanyakumari District worth rupees twenty eight lac after floods in 2010.

also interact with District Disaster Management Planning process at district level. Experience of this committee will be put into the District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs) to make it better prepared for relief next time. Another 600 families would be provided relief at the rate of Rs. 1,400 each.

John Joseph, MLA, inaugurated the relief programme at Ezhudesam. The relief materials consisting of cloth, utensils and healthcare goods were distributed to flood affected persons. The Red Cross supplied mats and bed sheets to 800 families in Ezhudesam and Mankadu panchayats. ■

– A. Maria James,
Rural Uplift Centre, Tamil Nadu, India

Building Resilience to Disasters in Bihar

The state of Bihar happen to be highly prone to floods related hazards and disasters primarily due to existence of number of rivers like Ganges, Ghagra, Gandak, Sone, Kamalabalan, Falgu, Budhi, Chandan, BurhiGandak, Kosi, Mahananda etc. And floods have become annual phenomenon for districts on Indo-Nepal borders. The floods in 2007 were most devastating in recent history. Madhubani and Darbhanga districts were the worst affected districts. Since then HelpAge India is continuously involved in helping most vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of the society (elderly, widow and disabled) to improve their resilience and prepare them to for flood related

disasters. The approach is to establish and institutionalise community managed structures towards collective advocacy and social protection in 38 villages. The elderly in all the 38 villages have access to primary and emergency medical health care through Mobile Medical Units. Through networks of eye care hospitals HelpAge is helping elderly to get operated for cataracts and restore vision. To improve preparedness among communities at risk, more than 300 Elderly Self Help Groups (ESHGs) have been formed and working to enhance the quality of life through inter-loaning and livelihood generation. All the 38 villages are having Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation

Committees looking after Multipurpose Community Centers, Grain Banks, and Fodder Banks. They are also taking care of measures necessary for immediate rescue and relief including Boats (jointly prepared by community and HelpAge India), life jackets and PA systems.

It is through ESHGs, Village Level Federations and local support that elderly are able to raise their demands for rights & entitlements at village, district and state level. The efforts of HelpAge India are successfully replicating within and by the local communities. ■

– Sushil Kumar,
HelpAge India

CMDRR Issues from *Aila* Cyclone in Sundarbans

Background:

In May 2009, Cyclone *Aila* swept through the Indian state of West Bengal. Concern Worldwide India, which supports partners initiatives in India to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives, provided immediate support to its local partners for relief operations in *Aila* affected areas of Sundarbans. Two years after the Cyclone *Aila*, AIDMI was asked to carry out an evaluation of the humanitarian response supported by Concern Worldwide India.

The purpose of the evaluation was to measure whether the project activities in the cyclone-affected project areas had been implemented effectively and efficiently and to identify good practices, document lessons learned and identify issues that require further examination.

The project had been implemented in North and South 24 Parganas by Concern through its local partner organisations – Association of Bengal Collaborators for Development (ABCD) and Sabuja Sangha respectively. Panchayats in these districts were severely affected by the cyclone especially by the tidal surge from the surrounding rivers.

The overall objective of the project was to provide early recovery assistance to the most vulnerable people affected by *Aila*. Thus, the project aimed at improving food security at household level, providing semi-permanent shelters to extremely poor families, creating access to safe drinking water and latrines, and enhancing disaster resilience at community level.

Findings:

Given the available means, targeting of villages was accurate in terms of need and impact. Beneficiaries covered were the poorest of poor. Cash transfer through infrastructure improvement and development as well as the provision of alternative livelihoods was well received in communities and played an important role in overall recovery of the communities. However, GoWB and NGOs including Concern Worldwide were not adequately equipped to provide relief in urban areas as well as communities on isolated islands in Sunderbans.

Involvement of local partners in carrying out project activities was important and so was their presence in the communities for possible future activities. However, project enhancement, apart from sharing experiences and consultation, had not taken place with other agencies

working in the area or government agencies like DDMA.

Integrated farming as an instrument for recovery was well received by the target community and provided food security and livelihood options. It also proved to be an effective instrument for economic empowerment of women. Though, task forces were not particularly enthusiastic about it and they also lacked plans to spread awareness in communities beyond those already targeted.

Another evaluation criterion considered the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures during recovery. Concern has a DRR policy and strategy which is completely aligned to the Hyogo Framework for Action. However, under this specific project, the risk reduction activities should have been executed earlier. For example, micro credit is now spreading throughout the target community, yet micro finance such as micro insurance was not considered as a potential DRR measure.

Recommendations:

Communities can prepare themselves more effectively by reviewing village risk assessment more regularly and sharing them with PRIs for integration in Village Disaster Management Plans (VDMPs). Humanitarian agencies and governments should encourage target communities to make and regularly update recovery plans for better preparedness against multiple hazards.

Local partners should focus more on coordination in future events.



CMDRR Approach: High trust in people's ability to manage structural risk reduction measures.

Moreover, as good practices are scattered in different communities, good results achieved through the implementation of project activities should be well documented and disseminated among all the stakeholders, including the government authorities.

The local implementing partner of Concern Worldwide India, Sabuj Sangha, is recommended to establish a community evacuation center in the target communities, providing emergency shelter during future disasters.

The Government of West Bengal can improve its disaster related activities on several points. It is important for the state government to train PRIs how to prepare VDMPs and contribute to making DDMP. It is recommended that the local state government should incorporate the good practices learned from *Aila* work into its DM policy at state level. The state disaster management agency can invite key agencies like Concern Worldwide India to incorporate their inputs into the district to state disaster management plan and DRR planning for the state.

Integrated farming and demonstration plots for organic farming had received a good response from the target communities. The district and state governments should encourage implementing agencies and practicing communities to share such green livelihood practices in making or updating climate change adaptation policies.

Part of Concern's response was the formation and training of task force teams. Task force teams need to be integrated with District Disaster Management Authorities for their planned activities. ■

– **Aparna Shah,**

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs): Early Findings

India is increasingly subjected to natural disasters, but these have never been adequately factored into the planning process either at national level or more importantly at local distant level. Role of civil society and local authority is crucial in making impact sustainable and inclusive to develop and nurture culture of safety, where it matters the most: communities.

AIDMI has conducted a DDMP review of disaster preparedness and capacity of small sample of disaster-prone areas – Villupuram and Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu; Bhuj and Ahmedabad city in Gujarat; Darbhanga in Bihar and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India. The objectives of conducting study were: a) to review a sample of DDMPs in India to map achievements and challenges; and b) to develop long term systematic action plan to make DDMP work. 9 key questions were identified for data collection from existing status to response, coordination, partnership, capacity building and review of needs in DDMP making process and products.

Data was collected through literature research, field visits, interviews, and limited but effective ground assessments; and a comparison of the mandated plan outline with the actual realities on the ground from government, community groups and local organisations. First responders are always the disaster-affected people themselves, and all disasters affect a locality and the people in it.¹ For these reasons, AIDMI chose to emphasise the need for strong, effective, coordinated, efficiently managed and well-designed DDMPs in assessment. While reviewing the accessibility of the plan, it is observed that citizens have hardly any access to DDMPs on state or city websites. Citizens can not access these plans in person either without connection.

Generally the process of DDMP preparation was found administrative with top down approach rather than participatory. No many consultations were made to make DDMPs more usable and up-to-date. Information sharing is found mainly across government departments eliminating role of other key stakeholders such as private sector or business. This somewhat closed and inward looking process has resulted in lower level awareness on existence of information about DDMP among at risk citizens. Information like important contact numbers of the key contact persons and authorities in the time of emergency is crucial, but not updated, which is very important.

Outstanding issues that came out are include slow change of focus from response to DRR; delivery to empowerment and design to development for better sustainability. Direct focus on poor and excluded is the most important and unaddressed issue that came out in discussions. Involvement of PRIs and citizens, sharing responsibility with private sectors and strengthening community protection systems are important areas to be addressed in future DDMPs. Linking with key entitlements like right to information, food, health, education and many more is missed in DDMPs. To increase the performance of DDMP and DDMA, need to prepare mitigation and preparedness plan components in DDMP. But skills, knowledge, and attitudes of staff lack at local level. Programmes of Government and INGOs/CSOs should be framed to reduce impact of climate change risks and development of ecosystems such as wetlands area development in upcoming DDMPs in areas such as Sunderbans or Kutch. The review work is continuing with CordAid support. ■

– **Arpita Chhatrapati and Vandana Chauhan,** AIDMI

¹ UNISDR, "Local Governments and DRR," 2010.

CMDRR Lessons from *Aila* Cyclone in Sundarbans

Introduction:

The one-year project 'Post *Aila* Recovery' – implemented by Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) with support from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) in Sundarbans, West Bengal, India from February 2010 to January 2011 – sought to help cyclone-affected vulnerable families rebuild their lives and increase their resilience to future disasters.

Shortly after the project's conclusion, in January 2011, AIDMI conducted an impact evaluation of the project to determine if, and to what degree, the project had met its goals and generated positive impacts on target communities. The evaluation mainly focused on the organisations formed by the project i.e. Village Disaster Management Task Forces (VDMTFs) and Village WASH Committees (VWCs).

Evaluation process/Methodology:

The impact evaluation involved a review of the project and relevant documentation and reports, field data of target communities, interviews of key stakeholders, and other tools designed and implemented by AIDMI team in the 5 selected project communities out of 18 in 3 GPs of 3 blocks in North 24 Parganas district, as well as a review of other key initiatives in Sundarbans for recovery and disaster management of the communities affected by the *Aila* cyclone.

Key Findings:

The evaluation found multiple positive impacts generated by the programme. The key findings are listed below:

- Active community participation in salinity clearance from ponds,

water bodies' restoration, and other disaster response activities led to strong feelings of personal responsibility for community development and risk reduction activities.

- Safer buildings for community members (men and women) will ensure greater protection of themselves and their possessions during disasters.
- The project team inspired and guided local target villages to make their plan of action. Some of these villages could successfully convince their GPs to grant and allocate Rs. 640,000 for resilient community development purposes.
- The evaluation found local empowerment of task force members as a result of training and socio-economic development with significant female participation. The taskforces formed included women and provided added support for them to participate in project activities at various levels.

Recommendations:

In line with the Hyogo Framework for Action, the following key recommendations are provided for different stakeholders of the project:

For Target Communities:

- The communities need to build on ADRA's risk reduction work by sharing these risk reduction practices and activities with other communities.
- Taskforce members should articulate challenges faced and build on lessons learned to meet their future needs. This might point to a need for greater engagement and joint visioning and sharing at taskforce meetings on the ground.

For ADRA:

- ADRA should focus on disasters beyond than the *Aila* cyclone and make the communities more aware of multi-hazard risk reduction.
- Risk transfer tools such as insurance (e.g. life, property), savings, and more may be explored as ADRA has significant capacity as well as experience with similar activity (sheep insurance) in the existing project.

For ECHO:

- A regional workshop with ADRA – as a practitioner; target communities; and local, state and/or national authorities as stakeholders on 'Resilient Livelihoods to Changing Climate Risk and Changing Disaster Risk Landscape' by ECHO and UN – may be timely.
- Sundarbans is one of the most climate sensitive areas in the world. More should be invested into long-term projects that focus on climate risk reduction and eco-friendly development activities such as kitchen garden, sheep rearing and duckery.

For Government:

- Livelihood recovery and school-based disaster risk reduction activities carried out under this project should be better linked with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).
- Task force teams formed in this project should be integrated with District Disaster Management Plan activities. ■

– Sanchit Oza,
All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

Joint Efforts with Teachers for Safer Education in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANIs)

The population of ANIs lives in a group of 36 inhabited islands of the total number of 572. The islands are located in the Seismic Zone V. One of the largest fault lines in the tectonic plates identified, line in the region causing severe turbulence in the 10 degree channel separating the 2 groups of islands. Additionally, being islands, surrounded by seas makes islands prone to floods, cyclones and cyclonic storms. Island disaster management is quite different and more further compounded by the distance from the mainland and the difficulty in movement between islands especially during monsoons and high wind seasons because of extremely choppy seas.

Recently, AIDMI with WBVHA (West Bengal Volunteer Health Association) with support from CORDAid carried out assessment of school safety situation. All covered 53 schools are located in Andaman Islands. The assessment from school safety perspective assumes significance especially because of the isolated and extremely vulnerable islands that children and communities reside in and the need for more intensive communication with the children for promoting the culture of preparedness and mitigation.

Teacher's views were in central during the assessment process. The focus of study was to assess the knowledge of teachers on DRR and school safety; preparedness and safety; impact of project carried out by outside agencies related to DRR and school safety; and current need of the schools by safety point-of-view. Initial findings and recommendations are listed below for educators and humanitarian agencies.

Key Findings:

- 2004 earthquake and tsunami push the school community to build awareness about both the disasters. However, stakeholders do not have any kind of regular practices or/and platform for DRR awareness creation.
- Schools lack basic safety equipments like first aid kits and fire safety equipments. Several schools do have fire safety equipments but do not know about how to use and maintain such equipments.
- Locally some school networks do exist, but integration of these networks with DRR and School Safety is not there.
- In terms of awareness specific to DRR aspects, school staff has good awareness about early warning signs, do's and don'ts, and impact. However, they require more knowledge on preparedness, risk reduction and scientific knowledge of occurrence.
- Teachers recognised the importance of practical exercises but were unknown about how to conduct such exercises like

disaster specific mock drills, fire safety, first aid treatment etc.

- Basic education related to disasters has been introduced in syllabus but importance of DRR education and practices are needed for long-term perspectives.
- According to teachers, majority of school buildings are not safe against natural disasters.

Key Recommendations:

- There is high difference in terms of risk perspective of one school to another. The action plan should be made based on the detailed school safety assessment.
- It is clear that teachers are prime target group who can make school safer effectively. Thus based on above-mentioned risk scenario, more investment should be made for teachers to make them DRR leaders in education field.
- We should not wait for another tragedy in ANI as it located in Zone V and school buildings are not safe against earthquake. The schools should be made safe structurally and non-structurally as early as possible.

Involved agencies are planning to take more actions on capacity building of teachers with practical exercises and follow-up actions which will be designed with the school stakeholders. Some actions are made to make ANI schools safer like ToTs on School Safety, awareness material, and displays, which will promote a culture of safety in 64 schools. ■

– Vishal Pathak, AIDMI



Mr. Bishnu P. Roy, M.P. discussing school safety issues with teachers during consultation at Rangat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

We are Prepared: People Centered Approach in Disaster Management

"We build resilient community communities" a slogan which got uttermost response from the people was the center of focus of the entire programme. Community Based Disaster Preparedness project, a three phase project created thousands of task forces specialised in several disciplines. Participatory approaches in disaster management ensured the owning up of the entire project by the coastal communities under the reference area of the society. A new breeze of disaster induced development had been carried out in the entire areas as a part of the first phase and second phase programmes. Consortium of Caritas India, Kerala Social Service Forum (KSSF) and Quilon Social Service Society (QSSS) is introducing the third phase of CDBP project with new windows for community managed Disaster Risk Reduction programme (CMDRRP).

Coastal communities of 15 wards of Alappad Panchayath, Thanni ward of Kollam Corporation and 13 wards of Arattupuzha panchayath were empowered to cope with and take action to effectively reduce the adverse impact of disasters and to promote sustainable development and envisages up scaling the various disaster risk reduction activities launched in the earlier phases with more focus on local development planning ensuring good governance in the region.

Community initiated a Plethora of task forces capable of reducing the risks associated with the future disasters. The main target of the community was peddling up of the development of the region through people's participation namely



Image: CMDRR. 2011, Quilon Social Service Society.

An ongoing platform to community for sharing, learning and planning development work is very crucial.

through task forces such as emergency response teams (ERTs), Disaster Management Teams (DMTs), Kuttikuttamm (children's group), Self Help Groups (SHGs), youth clubs, community leaders, social activists, and general community.

Task force actively took part in the local level developmental process maintaining effective linkage with the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and other players. They were also involved in capacity enhancement of the community on good governance, legal instruments, RTI and MGNREGA. Trainings on the information communication technologies associated with disaster management were also effective.

The following were the results of the programme:

- Effective lobbying and networking ensuring more participation of PRIs in the community based disaster preparedness project and thereby effective disaster management system in place.

- Community consciousness on eco-restoration and community based sanitation and waste management practices resulting in increased good health of the people.
- Increased awareness among the community to preserve and practice sanitation for healthy well being resulting in arresting water borne diseases.
- Effective dissemination and channelisation of disaster warning into the community resulting in evacuating people from vulnerable area to safer zones and hence reducing the risks - both human and material.
- Appropriate bio-diversity promotion and social forestry programmes resulting in rejuvenation of the ecology.
- Communities in the target villages enabled to enhance their livelihood options through participatory analysis, entrepreneurial developmental and effective linkages. ■

– Rineesh Antony,
Quilon Social Service Society, Kerala

CASE STUDY

Risk Transfer for Risk Reduction

Mahila Vikas Ashram (MVA), a local partner of AIDMI in Bihar, is an NGO working in flood affected areas of Bihar since last 21 years. AIDMI, in partnership with MVA since 2007, held the school safety trainings in various schools in these villages through MVA. As a part of Safer Schools Campaign, while giving the knowledge of school safety, AIDMI also focuses on school safety insurance. In Darbhanga and Madhubani districts, students, teachers, and staff of 14 schools have been covered under this student safety insurance policy.



Image: School Safety Insurance, 2011, MVA.

School staff handover insurance amount to parent.

MVA is running education support centers in Darbhanga district where most students come from Dalit families and other schedule tribes. These education support centers are also covered under insurance. One of such education support centers of Hanumannagar of Chanaur panchayat of Manighachi block of Darbhanga district was also covered under insurance. This insurance was started in 2007 and all the students and staff were covered. The support center also continued renewing the insurance. In this education support center, a girl student named Sangita Kumari Kundan Saday was studying. On October 5, 2009, she died because of snake bite at 10 o'clock night. She was immediately rushed to the

Manighachi referral hospital by her parents and the school committee members. But as the hospital did not have the injection related to snake biting, she was taken to the primary health center of Manighachi. Though treatment was given in the health center, she could not survive.

After official declaration of death of Sangita Kumari, MVA informed about this tragedy to AIDMI. After any death, few documents such as prescription of MBBS doctor and postmortem report need to be submitted to claim the compensation from the insurance company. All other reports were available with Sangita's parents but because of

unavailability of postmortem report, her parents were not allowed to claim the total insurance coverage amount of Rs. 25,000 but still they were able to receive an amount of Rs. 18,750 from United India Insurance Co., Ahmedabad through AIDMI. This amount was credited in the account of her school and then the school gave the money to her parents.

After knowing this case, other schools in the district are also going for school insurance and are keen to march towards the safety of children and school. ■

– Vishwanath Mishra, Secretary,
MVA, Bihar.

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