

Managing Disaster Risk

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Only thing constant is change. All around, things are changing and raising new aspirations and new challenges. Environment, economic, social and political environment across the globe are not the same which used to be in late 80s and 90s. Technology and natural environment have also guided the development discourse. Year 2015, has been very significant where three major global agreements have been signed. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Paris agreement on climate change—cop 21 and Sendai Framework Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30. International communities have committed themselves for achieving goals and targets set in all three agreements. All the documents have many common ground also where these three are converging. Studies on disaster losses have shown that if we have to achieve sustainable development goals we have to plug disaster losses as priority and for reducing disaster risks, we have to address issues of extreme events and climate change. All these three development, disaster risks and climate change are inter connected. and hence solution are also required to be integrated.

Disaster and SDG Challenges

Disaster risk reduction cuts across different aspects and sectors of development. There are 25 targets related to disaster risk reduction in 10 of the 17 SDGs, firmly establishing the role of disaster risk reduction as a core development strategy.

Building disaster resilience is critical in achieving the goal of eradicating extreme poverty. As one of the key drivers of disaster risk, given the way it creates and aggravates economic and social vulnerability, poverty has significantly contributed to the growth in risk conditions, which further limit the progress of sustainable development. Evidence suggests that the impacts of disasters undermine hard-earned development gains in both developing and developed countries, potentially dragging the poor and most vulnerable even deeper into poverty. By 2030, there could be 325 million people trapped in poverty and exposed to the full range of natural hazards and climate extremes particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This suggests an urgent need to build and strengthen the resilience of poor communities to prevent future disaster events from pulling more people into poverty and to protect their livelihoods and assets to help them recover.

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The Nepal earthquake post disaster damage and loss study has clearly mentioned that this disaster will end up pushing an additional 2.5 to 3.5 percent people of Nepal into poverty in 2015-2016 which translates into at least 700,000 additional poor and damage is of almost US \$7 billion. It also reveals that the poorer population residing in the six lowest Human Development Index (HDI) districts that witnessed disaster effects above (National Population Register) NPR 130,000 per person are in Dolakha, Sindhupal chowk, Gorkha, Nuwakot, Rasuwa and Dhading, which confirms that the poorest and the most vulnerable people usually sustain the worst impact of disasters.

The impact of disasters upon our societies has become a major impediment in our vision for achieving sustainable socio-economic development. The economic damage and loss is estimated at billions of dollars, setting back our goals for a prosperous region. With every disaster, there is a significant impact on various sectors of development like agriculture, housing, health, education and infrastructure.

Paradoxically, the increased impact of disasters and people's increased vulnerability to disasters have much to do with unsustainable development activities, such as improper use of land and environmental degradation. Given the increasing frequency and scale of disasters in our region, our countries need to have coordinated solutions in place to protect communities, critical infrastructure and development.

It is essential that the process of development planning identifies and analyzes the underlying causes of current and future social and economic risk and factors in measures to reduce the risk. If national targets for growth and development - including employment and trade - are to be realized, the shift from managing crisis to managing risk must be

reflected in public policy frameworks and planning decision processes so as to enable risk-informed investment and practice.

Disaster Management

The very definition of disaster as adopted by United Nations (UN) which also has been coopted in National Act of Disaster Management 2005, has defined as "disaster is a serious disruption of a community or a society functioning, causing widespread human, material, economic and/or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Natural hazards may be prevented through application of careful planning, preparedness and mitigation measures"

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Different stakeholders have understood "Disaster management" differently. Those who respond, for them it is purely a response management. Those who get engaged in relief and immediate recovery, for them it is a humanitarian crisis and relief management. Both are post disaster activities. Pre disaster planning for risk reduction, risk mitigation and preparedness are the new rule of business in the sector. And those who believe in it, for them it is both i.e pre disaster risk reduction and post disaster response. In most part of the world, especially in South Asia and in India too post disaster response was considered as one of the most important activities for disaster management. Hence, Institutional system, manuals, policy, programmes were designed to address these concerns only. Entire governance for

disaster management was developed to address post disaster scenario. But, fortunately it is now the story of the past. Now, since last one and half decade, disaster management in India has gone into change and it is getting redefined on a regular intervals with new experiences.

India, after the Sendai framework adopted in 2015, hosted first Asian ministerial conference in the month of November 2016 to draw a Asian road map for Disaster risk Reduction, predominantly pre disaster activities, for the Asian and Pacific nations. Hon'ble Prime minister of India had inaugurated and guided by giving ten principles for disaster risk reduction and resilient development. Prior to that risk reduction, for the Global Road map, in Sendai (small city of Japan) global conference was organized in the month of March 2015, where more than 185 countries of the world signed the document for disaster risk reduction is called as Sendai framework of Action 2030. India is also one of the signatories.

Disaster response is visible with high accountability but and hence everyone is willing to respond. On the other hand, disaster preparedness and risk reduction is invisible but of high outcomes go unattended. Not much have been done despite lot of conventions and declarations across the globe. Global community have realized with lot many evidences based on success stories that prevention pays. India too has witnessed such example. In case of super cyclone in Odisha, 1999 we lost more than 13000 lives with huge damage to the property. Whereas, in 2013, when cyclone Phyllin hit, which was kind of repeat story of 1999 cyclone, with almost similar intensity. But the impact was entirely opposite of 1999. The number of death toll reduced to just 22. Of course, damage to property was enormous. This event become the Global Best Practice as how India has been able to reduce the death too substantially low level.

Recent Cyclone in Tamil Nadu Vardha has also shown the similar results where death toll is just 14 although the damage to property is huge as in case of cyclone Hudhud. Hence it is clear that with our sincere efforts made in making ex-ante investment in building capacity has demonstrated a positive result in reducing the death toll. Now the concern is how to address the losses occurring to property- roads, bridges, housing, hospitals, electricity, productive capital loss etc. ?

Globally, regionally and at the local levels, mainstreaming risk reduction in development process has been an important agenda but remains complex undertaking with many challenges. We have to learn from our past if we are to build a resilient future.

There still remains a need for knowledge sharing among the larger DM community and we need a common platform to create a versatile interface among policy-makers in the Government and disaster managers at all administrative levels.

This means that at national and local levels, plans should be harmonized to incorporate awareness generation of adopting disaster resilient building bylaws, land use zoning, resource planning, establishment of early warning systems, and technical competence. To this end, it is also necessary to take help of and disseminate new science and technology innovations, early warning systems, and capacity development and integrate them into national, subnational, and sectoral policy planning.

In most of the success stories, where certain commonalities can be underlined for future lessons which could change the entire discourse of disaster management. Ex-ante investment in pre disaster time is prudent than just focusing on response and relief. And, this lesson is not new in India. Just to quote 1956 Earthquake in Anjar, Gujarat.

One of best practices of disaster risk reduction in Gujarat was after the earthquake, the state government had relocated the construction of city and a disaster resilient construction was carried out. In the Bhuj earthquake of 2001, half a century later, most of the houses in the town of Anjar had witnessed great devastation, except those, which were in the relocation site of 1956. This shows one of the best examples of mainstreaming disaster risk in development sector but unfortunately, was forgotten over time. We need to document and learn from our past experiences and to use these to reduce vulnerabilities at regional, national, and local levels. Kutch earthquake 2001 of Gujarat, in long term reconstruction programme mainstreaming DRR was the key principle which lead to an exemplary recovery programme as Build Back Better. It has also been conferred UN Sasakava Award for best practices and recognized globally.

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Numerous economic and financial studies have described the needs and advantages of disaster risk reduction. According to an UNESCO estimate, today only \$4 out of every \$100 allocated for humanitarian assistance are spent on risk reduction measures despite research illustrating investments in disaster risk reduction saves a significant amount in prevented disaster losses. To reduce negative impacts of human activity on the environment and to build the capacity of vulnerable populations to protect themselves against natural hazards, disaster risk reduction should be an important aspect of global poverty

reduction initiatives in the coming years.

Sendai framework 2015-30

The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The HFA was conceived to give further impetus to the global work under the International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction of 1989, and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, adopted in 1994 and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of 1999.

The Sendai Framework is built on elements that ensure continuity with the work done by States and other stakeholders under the HFA and introduces a number of innovations as called for during the consultations and negotiations. Many commentators have identified the most significant shifts as a strong emphasis on disaster risk management as opposed to disaster management, the definition of seven global targets, the reduction of disaster risk as an expected outcome, a goal focussed on preventing new risk, reducing existing risk and strengthening resilience, as well as a set of guiding principles, including primary responsibility of states to prevent and reduce disaster risk, all-of-society and all-of-State institutions engagement. In addition, the scope of disaster risk reduction has been broadened significantly to focus on both natural and man-made hazards and related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. Health resilience is strongly promoted throughout.

The Sendai Framework also articulates the following: the need for improved understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of exposure, vulnerability and hazard characteristics; the strengthening

of disaster risk governance-including national platforms; accountability for disaster risk management; preparedness to "Build Back Better"; recognition of stakeholders of new risk; resilience of health infrastructure, cultural heritage and work-places; strengthening of international cooperation and global partnership, and risk-informed donor policies and programs, including financial support and loans from international financial institutions.

The new National Disaster Management Plan will maximize the ability of our country to cope with disasters at all levels by integrating disaster risk reduction into development activities across all sectors. The NDMP will also take into account global trends in disaster management and incorporates the approach laid out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 to which India is a signatory.

Conclusion

For reducing disaster impact, in resource scarce nations/states, it is important to make ex-ante risk reduction investment in development planning. Moving from risk blind to risk informed decisions for making investment would be a prudent choice. Projects planned for the future in high disaster prone areas should mandatorily undertake disaster risk audit of the projects. Whether it is private or public investment it should be made as basic principle for protecting development gains and attaining resilience. There has to be a broader and a more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk. Disaster risk reduction practices need to be inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective. Governments should facilitate, incentivize and engage with relevant stakeholders especially private sector in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards. There is a need for engaging women as leader, youth, children, civil society, academia for making it inclusive. Also, all states should be engaged with scientific and research institutions, to work more closely together and to create opportunities for collaboration, and for businesses to integrate disaster risk into their management practices for making SDG achievable.

Readings

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