



LONG TERM DISASTER RECOVERY IN KASHMIR

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Disguised opportunity is the inevitable concomitant of any disaster. The unprecedented flooding experienced by the North Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir was one such event where widespread destruction gave way to great opportunities for recovery and reconstruction. After the promulgation of the Sendai Framework and India's own National Disaster management Plan (NDMP) there has been an onus on the "Build back Better" aspect of disaster recovery. The recovery experience following the 2014 Kashmir floods offers many lessons for such a long term recovery.

This issue of *Southasiadisasters.net* is titled "Long Term Disaster Recovery in Kashmir". It contains many insights from practitioners and academics from different areas who have focused their attention on rebuilding Jammu and Kashmir after the devastating floods of 2014. Often dubbed as the most severe flood to hit the state in over 100 years, the havoc wreaked by these floods affected close to 550,000 people. The Indian state as well as the international community were quick to respond to the crisis that followed this disaster. Devoting massive financial and human resources, many long term recovery initiatives have been started in the state. This issue is a compilation of such initiatives that capture the many facets of Kashmir's complex long term recovery process to "Build Back Better". ■

- Kshitij Gupta

INTRODUCTION

Disaster Recovery in Kashmir: Five Lessons for Himalayan States of India

Kashmir is located in Himalaya, an area which is well known for its high vulnerability to intense and frequent flood and earthquake. Long-term disaster recovery activities have shown positive effects and progress in disaster risk reduction (DRR) of the state. This has offered valuable lessons for DRR activities in another Himalayan states, and possibility replication of models in other countries. This *Southasiadisasters.net* issue highlights these lessons learned.

High Altitude Recovery is not a common term in Build Back Better (BBB). While most BBB literature is related to plain areas, limited research is done on disasters in high altitude areas. Due to its distinctive characteristics, Himalayan disasters, as P.D. Ray, Member of Parliaments, Sikkim often asserted, thus, need additional attention and expertise. Kashmir recovery offers an exception.

To begin with, Needs Assessment in Kashmir were challenged by the disasters, weather, and ongoing conflicts. Due to these factors, modifications need to be done in these assessment. Himalayan states can learn from this experience to tailor their assessment and programs design to their local contexts.

So, what are the lessons that Kashmir experiences offer for reducing risks in the Himalayan states of India? Here are the five lessons.

First lesson is to mainstream (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Development Planning of Himalayan states. Adequate inputs data and specific programme guidelines will help accelerate the mainstreaming process.

Second lesson is to focus on urban risk reduction by reaching out to the capital city and smaller towns in Himalayas. The institutional approach

should provide technical supports to strengthen governance structure in districts and towns in Himalayan states.

Third lesson is to invest more resources from the government and other sources in providing technical assistance and building capacity for multi-stakeholders in Himalayan states. A shortcut and efficient way may be to develop a pool of experts,. Developing a pool of experts, strengthening the training institutions, and matching them can offer a shortcut and efficient solution.

Fourth lesson is direct investment in Knowledge Management, including developing a centre to hold ongoing resource studies, document experiences, sharing experiences, and to accelerate state-to-state cooperation in Himalayas.

Fifth lesson is that more work can be done to enhance resilience of vulnerable communities to cope with disasters and climate variabilities by implementing pilot school safety projects. Schools are the first step to community safety. Work of UNICEF in Bihar and AIDMI in Assam has demonstrated this link through the program of Comprehensive School Safety and Security.

What is urgently needed is the full and active support from the Government of Jammu and Kashmir in enhancing institutional and community resilience. AIDMI's work in Kashmir over the past ten years has shown that Kashmir is ready to take a leap closer to transform traditional risk reduction pathways.

The above lessons offer ways on how long-term recovery in Kashmir can be applicable to other Himalayans states. Moreover, this is not only useful to India and Nepal but also to other countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, and Bhutan in South Asia. ■

- AIDMI Team

How Kashmir is Implementing Disaster Risk Reduction Projects

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a long history of natural disasters ranging from catastrophic earthquakes to destructive floods, snow blizzards to avalanches, landslides to wind storms; all owing to its peculiar topography, rugged terrain, extreme weather conditions, and unique geographical and geo-climatic settings.

- In February 2005, Waltengu Nad in Kulgam District of South Kashmir was hit by a Snow Blizzard and 175 people lost their lives.
- The State falls in seismic Zone IV and V and on 8th October 2005, an earthquake of magnitude 7.6, resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries. More than 24,000 houses were fully damaged.
- In the intervening night of 5th and 6th, August 2010 a sudden Cloudburst occurred in Leh District, followed by flash floods and mudslides. This unprecedented event resulted in the death of 255 people, including international tourists, and caused damages worth Lakhs of rupees. Leh is a cold

desert and the amount of precipitation that occurred during the cloudburst was equivalent to the total rainfall recorded in the entire year.

- The State witnessed devastating floods in September 2014 killing almost 300 people and damaging over 2,50,000 houses fully or severely. The floods affected almost all the Districts of the State. More than 5,50,000 people were displaced and had to be provided temporary shelter. Colossal damage was recorded to the public service infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and offices. Residential houses and business establishments were severely damaged as well. Historically, the Valley has experienced massive floods, back in 1841 and 1893, but the damage due to 2014 floods was colossal.
- Avalanches are a recurrent feature, during winters.
- This is besides the share of human induced disasters our State has had to face in the past.

In the wake of recurring disasters, the State has always paid heavily in

terms of loss of life and property. Enhanced vulnerabilities of the built environment make the State highly prone to natural disasters.

However, the Relief and Recovery activities carried out in the affected areas by the Civil Administration, Police, Security forces, Army, Air Force and NGOs has been laudable.

The courage, dedication and zeal of the local community revealed that human relations were at their peak during the disasters.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir recognizes that hazards are inevitable, but these need not necessarily convert into disasters.

A pro-active, holistic, comprehensive and multifarious approach is required, for disaster risk reduction and management.

The State has thus, adopted the twin principle of minimizing human suffering, during disasters and reduction of financial losses through integration of DRR activities into development planning.



Awareness on Psycho Social affects of Disasters.

In the aftermath of the devastating floods, the Government of India requested assistance from the World Bank and an emergency project was started, the Project is named as Jehlum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project. The project focuses on restoring critical infrastructure using international best practices, on resilient infrastructure. Given the State's vulnerability to both floods and earthquakes, the infrastructure is being designed with upgraded resilient features, and includes contingency planning for future disaster events. The project aims at both restoring essential services disrupted by the floods and improving the design standard and practices to increase resilience.

Jammu and Kashmir has a structured institutional mechanism to deal with disasters at the State level.

- The State Disaster Management Authority is headed by Honourable Chief Minister.
- The State Executive Committee is headed by the Chief Secretary.
- The State has the unique distinction of having a shifting State Capital, between Srinagar and Jammu, every six months and therefore Jammu and Kashmir is the only State in the country to have two unique Divisional Disaster Management Authorities for Kashmir and Jammu Divisions, which are headed by the respective Divisional Commissioners.
- We also have 22 District Disaster Management Authorities, headed by the Deputy Commissioners of the Districts, to manage the whole gamut of disasters.

Land has been identified at the State level for establishment of State Emergency Operation Centre, for ensuring effective management of disasters. Till the time permanent EOCs are constructed, interim EOCs have been established at all 22 District Headquarters.

The State Disaster Management Plan, the State Disaster Management Policy and District Disaster Management Plans have been prepared, implemented and uploaded on the website www.jksda.org. These plans are regularly being updated and upgraded.

The State has established two dedicated Battalions of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). The process of upgrading SDRF with adequate manpower, capacity building and equipment support has been initiated.

Besides this, the Fire and Emergency Services is also being strengthened and upgraded.

Community is amongst the first responders in any disaster situations and therefore, the State has taken innovative steps for strengthening the community and creating awareness amongst general masses for enhancing their capacity, so that they are better equipped to handle any exigencies.

300 volunteers per District (Total 6600 in the State) have been identified by the respective Deputy Commissioners and are being training in basic life skills, including fire-fighting, first-aid, search and rescue. For ensuring proper training the training capability of Civil Defence, SDRF, Red Cross and Health Department are being utilised. These volunteers have been drawn from the community and comprise of able-bodied youth. It has been ensured that women are adequately represented. These volunteers are being equipped with personal basic emergency equipment's, so that are able to act as first responders in any emergency.

Training of students and teachers on School Safety Measures has been accorded top priority. Mock drills are being held on a regular basis in various educational institutions. The

Chief Education Officers have been nominated as Nodal Officers for implementation of the School Safety Programmes at the District level.

State Government Officers and officials including Revenue Officers, Tehsildars, Patwaris, Senior Administrators and Municipal Ward Corporates are being imparted training. After the training, they are involved in preparation of Community Level Disaster Management Plans, including Village Disaster Management Plans.

In order to strengthen the District Disaster Management Authorities, the Tehsildar Headquarters in the office of Deputy Commissioners have been re-designated as District Disaster Management Officers and are actively involved in the Disaster Management issues at District level. The first batch of pass-out students of MSc Disaster Management from the prestigious University of Kashmir have been engaged as Disaster Management Professionals and deployed in the various District Disaster Management Authorities.

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the first States in the country to have established the State Disaster Mitigation Fund, by allocating Rs 1.00 Crore per district as District Disaster Mitigation Fund.

Jammu and Kashmir has initiated the process for procurement of 100 No's of Satellite phones from BSNL (Inmarsat) for establishing a fail-safe communication network across the State.

Disasters cannot be prevented, but all necessary measures can be taken to minimize damages due to disasters. A prepared community can deal with disasters in a better manner.

The State believes in the slogan "*Help people, to help themselves.*" ■

- **Aamir Ali Mir**, Srinagar,
Jammu and Kashmir

Kashmir Recovery: A Habitat View

Housing is at the core of Habitat for Humanity India's work. Anchored by the conviction that housing provides a critical foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty, Habitat for Humanity India builds homes and sanitation facilities for economically weaker section (EWS) and low income families. The sustainable development goals (SDG) 6 – clean water and sanitation, and 11 – sustainable cities and communities, and 17 – partnerships for the goals; guide our work across 20 states in India wherein we partner with local organizations and governments in expanding our reach. The main verticals of intervention include affordable housing, water and sanitation, volunteer program and disaster risk reduction and response (DRRR).

Habitat for Humanity in India began its operations in Khammam in Andhra Pradesh and then went on to responding effectively to the post disaster situation of the Tsunami of December 2004. Our disaster

Habitat for Humanity India restores shelter and livelihoods of people affected by disasters, conflicts and decreases vulnerabilities through organizational capacity building and risk-reduction strategies. More than 181,000 lives have been rehabilitated under our disaster response program up till March 2017. Habitat's Disaster Risk Reduction and Response program has helped more than 35,000 individuals to cope with disasters across India.



response expands across India with outreach ranging from immediate relief, humanitarian aid kits, and temporary shelter to reconstruction of houses with disaster resilient technology. Disaster insurance and community based disaster risk reduction management (CBDRM) are also a part of our disaster portfolio. Habitat India responds to disasters initially through a Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) and an analysis of the situation and go on to executing the immediate relief response and the long term rebuilding of communities. For assessment of damage to schools we source information from the Directorate of Schools / Educational Department. Housing, water and sanitation and health and protection form the core focus of our response.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir received torrential rainfall on 2nd September, 2014 causing devastation to more than 10 m people in the adjoining areas while more than 1 m people were directly affected. As the rains continued, on 6th September, 2014, Jhelum River

flooded into the streets causing havoc, heavy casualties and loss of property. Near to 300 deaths occurred and more than 50,000 people were injured, Many parts of Srinagar were flooded and vital roads were submerged under the deluge. Communication means broke down and power supply was also affected. Many families lived on boats for days together till the water receded but at the cost of losing everything that belonged to them. Majority of the flood victims belonged to the bottom of the pyramid. Pulwama in Kashmir was one of the most affected districts and Habitat India was able to address a part of the housing crisis, wherein in partnership with the Aditya Birla Group we constructed 22 houses.

Reconstruction of homes post disaster is a part of Habitat India's Disaster Response strategy, which emanates from empowering disaster affected communities and families, especially women and girl children, through dignified living. **Since the September 2014 floods in Jammu and Kashmir, Habitat for Humanity**

India has till date built 102 houses in Kashmir region and another 20 houses are under construction.

Disaster response and mitigation must occupy a pivotal role in public policy. It is imperative that we offer innovative solutions to build community resilience and strengthen self-recovery of communities and localize mitigation programs that incorporate culturally appropriate solutions. Better communication and transportation in making disaster prone areas more accessible will help. Preparedness in dealing with disasters is in our opinion very desirable, which is facilitated by a strong local disaster response network, coordination between organizations and capacity building of local community based organizations. We also need to recognize and respond to diversity and create space and opportunity for communities, women and disabled people to participate in disaster

"In our Kashmiri language, there is a phrase - 'If you have a roof over you, then you can live your life peacefully.' The floods took away everything from me. My house, my job and we had to live in a makeshift shed. However it wasn't strong enough to face the snowfall during harsh winters and the torrential rains in monsoons. My son Tariq started falling sick very often. The new home built by Habitat for Humanity India is a blessing for us."

- Habitat home owner Jana Begum, Pulwama district.

response processes that affect their lives.

Today, Habitat India chooses to be a catalyst for change and transformation by initiating a coalition in the sanitation space called Sensitise to Sanitise (S2S) Coalition and the Housing for All Coalition of India, launched more recently. We hope to bring multiple stakeholders from banks, builders, beneficiaries and community, NGOs and the Government to work together to ensure desirable policy change, effective implementation, create access to finance, encourage

design and technology innovation and ultimately scale implementation to reach each and every family in need. Our national strategy is also guided by an integrated approach to development implementing multi-sector, multi-year and multi-donor projects district by district in India. This way we are committed to making housing for all a reality even in disaster affected areas in India and ultimately ensuring sustained development. ■

- **Lara Shankar Chandra**, Director, Strategic Management Unit, Habitat for Humanity India, Mumbai



Photo courtesy: Ritwik Sawant, Director - Communications, HFH India.

Lessons from Jammu and Kashmir Earthquake and Floods

The natural disasters like the Earthquake, 2008 and the Floods, 2014, that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) highlights the challenges of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the hilly and mountainous terrain of India. The few seconds of tremors or few hours of unprecedented rainfall followed by large-scale inundation due to overflowing rivers enhances both human as well as economic losses. While Earthquake is occasional, floods have become a recurring risk in the entire north-western Himalayan region.



HVCA at Kupwara district, Jammu and Kashmir. Photo: AIDMI.

The impact of the above-mentioned disaster in the state of Jammu and Kashmir highlighted why human mortality is also much higher and immediate response difficult due to weather conditions as well as difficult terrain. Responding to earthquake or floods in the hilly terrain is different from responding to disasters in the Indo-Gangetic plains as the skill and equipment needed are also different. Collapse of structures or rapidly rising/gushing waters do not provide enough time and space for people to evacuate. Earthquakes or Floods in hilly areas are normally accompanied by landslides, which severely interrupt transportation and mobility. It is very difficult to mobilise local response immediately, as most of the first responders including police, fire and health personnel themselves are affected. The response, rehabilitation and recovery agencies had to face delays not only to move the requisite skilled manpower in a timely phase but also in procuring the materials to rebuild the life of the affected area. Both the requirements had to be

supplemented from outside the state, through stakeholders who had little or no knowledge of the context and needs of the population of the hilly terrain.

Lessons from these events highlighted the urgent need to improve the early warning systems urgently with a robust last mile monitoring system. Since earthquakes cannot be predicted, installing adequate seismograms to monitor the plate movements would go a long way in strengthening the mitigation measures in landslide prone areas to prevent additional losses. Further, regular monitoring rainfall, temperature, precipitation and water discharge of various rivers/ river lets besides monitoring and analysis of cloud formation is required, that can be used for real time flood forecasting.

Further, as in high altitude areas, wetlands act as a natural reservoir for the runoff from mountains and prevent flooding. We need to ensure that these wetlands are free of encroachment and pollution, are

protected and conserved through specific legislation, regulatory measures and people's participation.

For immediate response to earthquake or floods district-level responders must be trained as they are more effective, given their immediate presence on the ground and familiarity with the terrain. So investing in first response capacity at the district level and below must be an immediate state priority.

In view of the recent climate trends and recurrent disasters, it is also important to address the underlying risks of floods in the state. This requires improvement of river flow, de-silt of flood channels, synchronise the release of water from reservoirs, conserve wetlands and provide effective early warning.

It is not possible to prevent natural hazards like earthquake or floods from occurring, but its human and economic losses can certainly be reduced by implementing well-identified measures. ■

- Abha Mishra, UNDP, India

Pattan in Kashmir Recovery

Sectarian and Political Biases weakened Community Cohesion



On October 8, 2005, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude devastated the Kashmir region. It killed 87,000 people, left 75,000 people with severe injuries, and damaged 0.6 million houses rendering 4 million people homeless.

Pattan was one of the first few early outsider respondents. We reached there within 24 hours of the quake and continued working with the survivors for five years. During this period we established community based structures and built a strong bond with the partners, which still lives on.

I have been working with disaster prone communities since 1992. During this long interaction with the survivors of different kinds of disasters, I learnt one important lesson – besides looking at devastation, it is essential to look at how survivors cope with the emergency. What are they doing together and how decisions are made and implemented? Consider what we found the next day of the



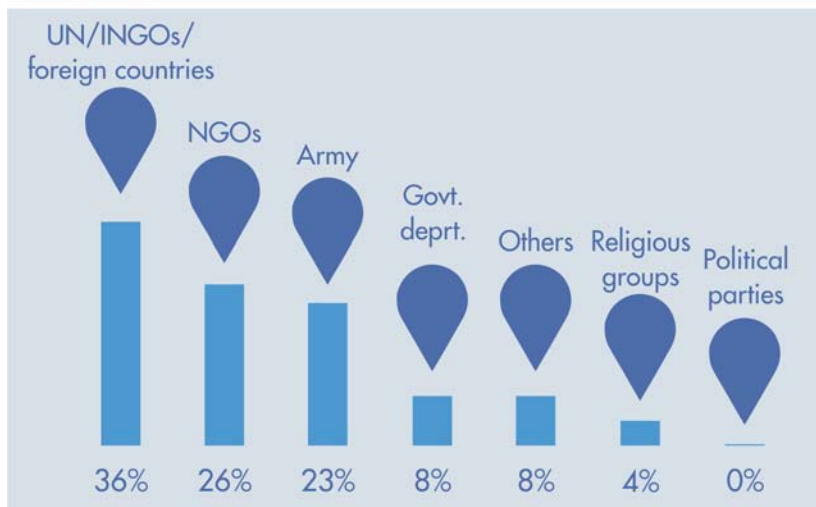
Hope remains a dream. Not a single house has been built.

Photo by Pattan, August 26, 2015.

quake in Balakot, was indeed a heart shattering and hugely unprecedented experience. Despite that we could find encouraging signs of resilience and togetherness – the people were busy removing debris to save those who were trapped underneath, digging graves for the burial of their loved ones and saving what was left

behind for recycling. The conclusion – disaster hit people have always been the first respondents to an emergency – an obvious fact. Lesson for external actors – don't forget this reality while planning your response strategies. This short essay tells a tale how this simple lesson is often ignored and how this weakens community cohesion.

Which agency provided you support on merit?



As the 10th anniversary of the quake was nearing, I was anxious to know about the state of rehabilitation of the survivors. The best way to learn this was to conduct a scientific study. We used both qualitative and quantitative methods i.e. focus group discussions, transect walks and structured interviews for the purpose. The highlights of the study were released on 10th anniversary of the quake in Islamabad followed by a protest demo. Moreover, BBC Urdu language service and Pakistan TV channels also held talks about the study.

Some highlights of the study. Rehabilitation efforts often focus on physical and psychological aspects, but ignore community cohesion, but ignore community cohesion. Shockingly more than 50% respondents of the study reported that in the aftermath of the quake intra-family and intra-community cooperation have declined. Most of the respondents were likely to blame the way cash compensation and other grants were allocated and distributed. For instance, in case a family had lost one married man, he might have left behind a widow, two brothers and parents. We came across numerous cases of conflict between brothers, between a brother and sister-in-law (widow), between widow and a father-in-law. There were tens of thousands of such situations. Similarly, there was intense competition across neighbourhoods and communities over recovery of services and rehabilitation of infrastructures.

Our data shows that political and religious groups played a negative role in this regard. The following table shows how various agencies provided support on merit. When merit is violated, it reinforces existing marginalization and disparities, which resultantly affects community cohesion.

Since, political parties heavily rely on local power structures (biradri/ clan) and religio-political groups on sects, they dole out relief/ rehabilitation on the basis of these primordial loyalties. Though this practice help consolidate their vote bank, it seriously undermines community cohesion. On the other hand the respondents were highly likely to appreciate secular agencies. Our study clearly establishes these facts.

More than two-third of respondents said their economic situation had

worsened since 2005, while only 34% households reported improvement. And, 65% of the respondents said they did not build their houses according to the official (quake resistant) design due to lack (or lateness) of financial support from the government. More poverty means heightened vulnerability not only to natural hazards but also to the power. Therefore, I would like to civil society organisations and state actors to consider that their interventions must not undermine community cohesion. There are no two opinions that most communities have internal differences. Despite this they live in harmony. Outside agencies must not use the internal differences for their narrow interests. In the long run it will also damage them too. ■

- **Sarwar Bari**, National Coordinator,
Pattan Development Organisation,
Islamabad, Pakistan



Ten years after the earthquake, a family in Balakot starts constructing the house, after receiving money from a family member who works in the Middle East.

Photo by Pattan, August 26, 2015.

Community Involvement and Leadership by Women

The Kashmir Earthquake was a major earthquake event on October 8, 2005, with a magnitude Mw 7.6 struck the Himalayan region of northern Pakistan and Kashmir. Since it caused wide spread and serious damage to the people and the communities, we have a lot of issues to discuss in its recovery process from technical issue to resource mobilization. However, one of the most important aspects which we have to shed light on is how they could ensure the local initiative in the recovery process.

In the recovery process, unlike the emergency response process, it takes a long time to develop the recovery plan, implement it and review the outcome of it. If they really develop an effective recovery plan, they need to have a sufficient information on the target site with a long-term perspective. I do not think the good recovery of the affected community is not a brand-new community with well-organized houses. It is not the houses which should be recovered. It is the lives, jobs and communities which should be recovered and sustained.

The building code is very important when they set up the new houses in the affected area for building-back-better-than-before approach. However, they sometimes should be very flexible in applying the building code to the new houses. If you try to observe the building code with 100% accuracy, the recovery operations might be sometimes delayed and become unaffordable to the locals. It might be more practical to apply the building materials from the rubbles of their own houses.



Source: International Organization for Migration. Kashmir Earthquake 2005 Learning from the Shelter Response and Rural Housing Recovery.

It takes time to meet with the local citizens and reconcile their interests with those of the donors and government sectors. But in the long run, it pays. This is one of the important lessons of Himalayan Settlement Recovery Process.

The other very important aspect in the lessons of Himalayan Settlement Recovery Process is that they successfully and actively used the leadership of the women in the communities. We have been discussing a lot that seniors, children and women are the most prone demographic groups to disasters. The discussion is no doubt about it. But at the same time, women are the most powerful resource to make the recovery of the communities effective, sustainable and practical since, in most of cases, the women stay in the communities and manage the various issues in the communities. The women also have very good network in the communities, which is a practical tool to facilitate the decision-making

process of the recovery planning for the affected communities.

If those women in the affected communities are appropriately informed and educated, the recovery would be very effective and sustainable and in the end their communities would be the ones with sufficient resilience to the next extreme event.

There must have been other excellent lessons in the Himalayan Settlement Recovery Process. The two items I mentioned in this short article have one common characteristic. Both of them are based on the confidence of the capacities which the local residents of the disaster affected area possess originally. It is the governments and the donors that are requested to bring out those potentials of the local residents with education and information. ■

- Koji Suzuki, Executive Director,
National Research Institute for Earth
Science and Disaster Resilience
(NIED), Japan

Kashmir Flood Recovery: Achievements of NDMA

The State of Jammu & Kashmir has been regarded as heaven on earth, as it is bestowed with lofty snow mountains, fascinating valleys, sparkling streams, rushing rivers and emerald forests. However, at the same time, State also has a long history of disasters and has witnessed many catastrophes in the past. The Kashmir (J&K) urban flood of September 2014 was unprecedented; the main reason was very heavy rainfall (300% to 600% more than normal¹) in bowl shaped valley, for which the State was quite unprepared.

In the words² of Shri Omar Abdullah, the then Chief Minister of J&K, "We had actually been toying with the idea of declaring large parts of State as drought affected and then the heavy rains started on 1st Sept 2014. *I can't remember another natural disaster where the Government was so completely paralysed*". The flood claimed over 300 lives³ and further caused massive damage to the Govt and private infrastructure.

In these tough circumstances, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) coordinated with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and the State Govt. to deploy teams for rescue and restoration purpose at strategic locations, and also organized the vehicles (boats and trucks) and set up *fuel chain management*, followed by air force evacuation and Army coordination.

The entire State was struggling with scarcity of drinking water, at this juncture *NDMA deployed Vehicle*

1 State Disaster Management Plan of J&K, May 2017

2 Blog of Shri Omar Abdullah, September 2014

3 J&K State DM Policy of J&K, October 2017

4 Prime Minister National Relief Fund

5 PMNRF Rehabilitation Package

Mounted RO plants at various locations, by coordinating with other States and agencies. Further, the *Heavy Duty Pumps* were sourced from ONGC, GMR for dewatering the cities of J&K.

Apart from these short term immediate relief measures, NDMA was also involved in the medium and long term recovery process. It was **first time in the country that the allocated money was transferred to disaster victims through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism**. The priority was given to those families who lost their *pacca* houses completely (Rs 1 lakh/ house as per PMNRF⁴). Similarly the payments were made to the beneficiaries of severely damaged (Rs 50,000/-) and partially damaged (Rs 25,000/-) categories. In this entire rehabilitation process, NDMA directly coordinated with State Relief Commissioner's Office and concerned District Collectors, for verification and distribution. This initiative was well appreciated by all the beneficiaries and concerned stakeholders.

The **Health & Medical related support** was also extended by NDMA in a phased manner. Initially the accommodation and logistic support was provided to the Doctors

and Psycho Social professionals. Concurrently, the process of arranging critical care specialized medical equipment's also institutionalized, and as per the specific rehabilitation package⁵ 1278 equipment's (217 line items) were procured and installed, through the technical agencies like HLL Life care, etc. This timely initiative helped the flood disaster victims.

Apart from it NDMA also played a vital role in the J&K Inter Agency Group (IAG) meetings, to mobilize agencies and arranging required resources, in order to meet specific needs of the flood affected victims. NDMA presence also gave a boost to the GO NGO Coordination, which in turn helped in identification of actual needs & gaps and also prevented the duplication of efforts.

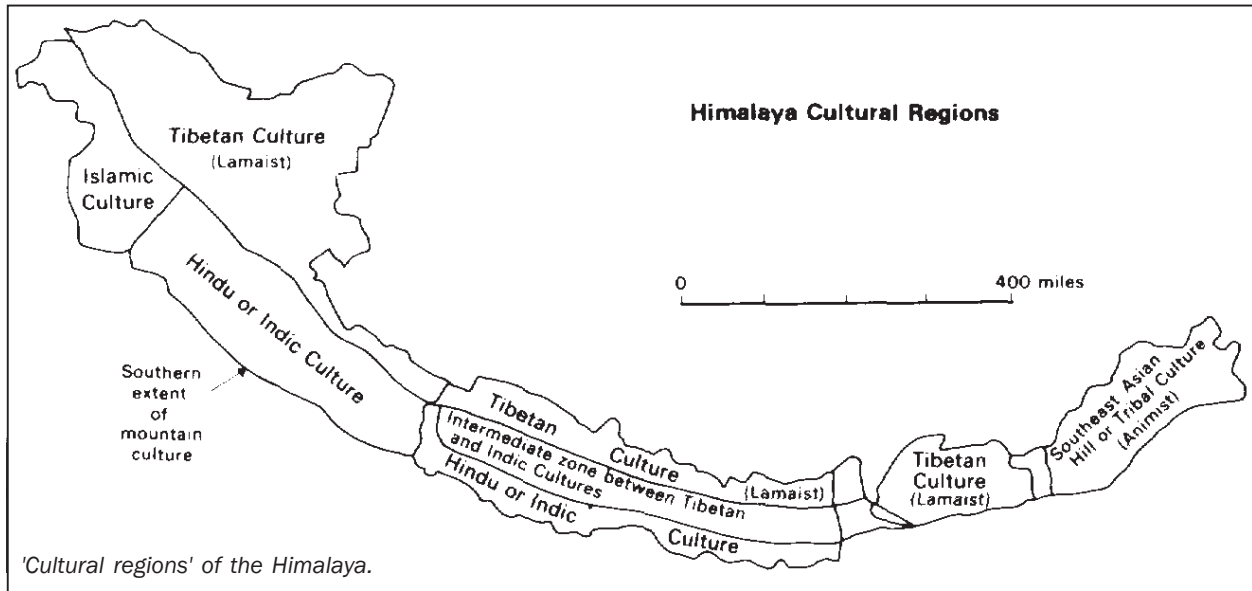
In the entire response, restoration & recovery process, NDMA acted as a bridge between Govt and the public of J&K. Such hand holding was very much required, especially when the State machinery was not equipped to handle the gigantic flood. The role of coordination and facilitation was very challenging in the hostile terrain and adverse weather conditions, which was well balanced during the hour of need. ■

- Amit Tuteja, AIDMI Team



Evacuation process, J&K flood, 2014.

DRR Road Map for Himalayas



Source: <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/80a02e/80A02E05.htm>

Recurrent disasters including flash floods, landslides, earthquakes coupled with climatic extreme events including extreme rainfall events, temperature fluctuation and changes, have led to the emergence of health issues and concerns, that pose a significant threat towards sustainable development in the Himalayan region (North Indian states, North Pakistan, and Nepal). Concrete actions for reducing disaster and climate related risks needs to be taken up on priority basis in the region for making sound and effective DRR investments.

The recent disasters (floods and earthquakes) need to be seen as an opportunity to build back better so as to reduce over reliance on post-disaster relief mechanisms. A DRR road map for the Himalayan region can provide strong support for reducing risk. This is required at both levels - regional - Himalayan

countries, as well as northern states of India. The following factors in the DRR road map can make the Himalayan region disaster resilient:

1. Ability to make informed choices and decisions about development actions considering disaster and climate risk;
2. Building systematic capacity on DRR CCA linkages with a focus on motivation, as a driver of change, with long term process commitment in hilly areas;
3. Understanding the requirement of constant involvement with stakeholder engagement and at every phase of disaster risk reduction.
4. It is not about the implementation in a single project, but a strategic engagement across all development efforts in the Himalaya;
5. Importance of the local context, covering requirements, and

expectations from the institutions and sectors;

6. Provide constructive inputs based on the so far progress and utilization of the agreed frameworks and planning such as the Sendai framework; national and state disaster management plan; national and state climate change action plan; and national mission for sustaining Himalayan ecosystem.

The issue is highlighting the need for cooperation among Himalayan states as well as countries. The problems and interests are shared, thus the actions for solution needs to be shared too. DRR is not new in the Himalayan region, neither for communities nor for institutions. However, there needs to be a greater focus on poor and vulnerable populations from the beginning. ■

- Vishal Pathak,
AIDMI

Long Term Disaster Recovery in Kashmir

The north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir is one of most beautiful and picturesque places in the country. The verdant Kashmir valley surrounded by the snowy peaks of the Himalayas lead the Mughal emperor Jahangir to call this place as "paradise on earth". However, since 1947, this paradise has been marred by violence emanating from a long standing territorial dispute between India and Pakistan along with rising insurgency of the last three decades. Moreover, the people of Kashmir are also exposed to various natural hazards.

Most parts of the Kashmir valley where 50% of the state's population resides falls under seismic zone V,

while the rest of the state including Ladakh and Jammu division falls under seismic zone IV. This has made the state of Jammu and Kashmir especially vulnerable to high intensity earthquakes. Instances of floods and flash floods are also rising in the state. Landslides, cloudbursts and avalanches are also common hazards that often take place in the state. Given the enhanced vulnerability of the state to various hazards, it is important for state and non-state actors there to devise effective long term recovery strategies.

The state has suffered through many disasters that include the 2005 earthquake, 2010 cloudburst and 2014 floods. The devastating floods

of 2014 have been considered to be the worst flood to hit the state in over 100 years. Affecting close to 2500 villages, with a casualty figure of 280 and 550,000 affected, the floods of 2014 were unprecedented in their scale of devastation. As the Indian state has provided massive financial resources to help the recovery process in Kashmir, it is important to make this recovery effective and sustainable.

Similarly, the World Bank has approved 250 million dollars (about Rs 1600 crores) under the "Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project", for flood affected Infrastructure and strengthening the capacity of the J&K government to manage natural disasters. The World Bank project,





according to the official description, "will restore and improve the connectivity disrupted by damaged roads and bridges. The infrastructure will be re-designed to withstand earthquake and floods as per the latest official design guidelines. Another key component of this project will be to strengthen and reinforce existing weak and vulnerable flood control infrastructure. Investments will primarily include rehabilitation/renovation of storm water pumping stations in several areas."

All these measures are aligned to India's National Disaster Management Plan which in turn is closely aligned with the goals and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). Both these frameworks stress on the need to "Build back Better" which in principle means rebuilding all the assets lost in a disaster or emergency better to withstand similar exigent conditions in the future. Since, disasters are complex and have an adverse impact on a wide range of sectors ranging from infrastructure to human health, and from

education outcomes to livelihoods, it is only fair for long term disaster recovery measures to be as diverse and eclectic as well.

One of the most important long term recovery measures that should be undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir is that of Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR). It is almost common knowledge that people and communities are the first responders to a disaster. Therefore, if adequate resources are devoted to improving the skills and capacities of at risk communities to effectively face disasters, then their response to them would be far more measured and systematic. There is a need for comprehensive community-based disaster risk reduction plans need to be prepared at the district level on priority and communities given training on how to handle such emergencies. Several Indian states already have such trained community response teams.

Another important long term recovery measure in Jammu and Kashmir should be school safety. In 2005 earthquake, almost 19,000

children died in Pakistan administered Kashmir region. To avoid a similar tragedy on the Indian side, there needs to be concerted school safety programme in Jammu and Kashmir. Such a programme can focus on capacity building of school teachers and a handful of students to identify, understand and mitigate all the risks they face in their schools. School risk assessments and school disaster management plans (SDMPs) can become a big part of such an initiative. Similar school safety programmes have been successfully conducted in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam with great success. Perhaps such a model can also be replicated in Jammu and Kashmir.

Preparedness forms an essential part of long term recovery. Such preparedness measures can be institutionalized through district disaster management plans (DDMPs). However, it is important that DDMPs in Jammu and Kashmir are adequately contextualized. Being a Himalayan state, the nature of risk exposure and vulnerability of J&K is quite different from that of other Indian state, this difference should be factored in any preparedness approached that form a part of the DDMPs of this state.

Most importantly, it is time to stop viewing disaster management as an isolated space but rather a multidisciplinary one. A space where knowledge-driven solutions form the back-bone of the long term recovery and planning measures. A space where technocrats and local communities come together to devise and decide on such measure and strategies to pursue. Only after adhering to such prescriptive measures, can long -term recovery as well as disaster resilience be made sustained and enduring in this "paradise on earth". ■

- Kshitij Gupta, AIDMI

Srinagar Flood Recovery – What Worked And Why?

The unprecedented floods in J&K in 2014 have been one of the worst floods in last 100 years which led to colossal damage of infrastructure, loss of lives and livelihoods. 190 and 78 deaths were reported in Jammu and Kashmir divisions respectively. 1.5 million households spread over 5794 villages were affected. More than 3,44,607 structures suffered damages; 90,000 cattle/sheep perished; and 0.65 million Ha of land crop loss was reported. The immense losses reaffirmed the urgent need for coordinated disaster preparedness and effective emergency response for a large scale disaster.

Early warning system was well managed. The messages were disseminated through radio, mosques and *Imambaras*. This helped in speedy and timely evacuation of communities. The Unified Response Strategy (URS) of Sphere India was activated following emergency coordination meetings in New Delhi

and Srinagar. URS aims at facilitating an organized and coordinated response to disasters, by building common understanding among stakeholders. Coordination between GO NGO and within NGOs was a big challenge during the first week of response partly due to telecommunication failure and partly because most of the INGOs (almost 30-40) were not aware of the State context. The first IAG Meeting was facilitated by Sphere India on 14th September, with representation from NDMA and participation of 20-25 INGOs to discuss a detailed coordination action plan and assigning sectoral responsibilities, for rescue, relief and response activities and to plan for the Joint Rapid Need Assessment (JRNA). The Joint Needs Assessment was carried out with endorsement and participation of the Government officers in the Assessment Teams. The JRNA Report findings were shared with the State and District Development Commissioners for

necessary response. Needs Assessment apart from capturing the basic life saving needs and gaps (WASH, Food, Shelter) also highlighted the protection concerns of the most vulnerable putting up in the relief camps, including women/adolescent girls, PWDs, pregnant, children elderly, etc.

The ensuing response saw the involvement of diverse stakeholders such as personnel of the NDRF, Army, Navy, State and District Administration, a range of local, national and international NGOs but most importantly a significant and predominant role of volunteers and community based organizations, who were part of the early rescue and response.

Multi-stakeholder coordination was made possible and response was provided through establishing a GO NGO Coordination mechanism at State and district level. The development of common strategic



The second IAG Meeting which was organized in Srinagar on September 17, 2014 attended by 51 participants from 32 INGOs, NGOs, and CBOs.

and operating guidelines for various sectors like Shelter, WASH, Health, Protection, FNS and Psychosocial support, paved a good beginning and attempts were made to sustain these strategies with active participation and consultation of local actors and groups as per their specific local needs and concerns. GO NGO Coordination Meetings at the district HQ further strengthened coordination between district administration and NGOs and helped in identification of needs and gaps and prevented duplication of efforts. Contextualisation of the Relief Kits in accordance with the Sphere Minimum Standards was ensured. *Masjid/Mohalla* committees played a vital role in search, rescue and provision of relief. Youth also played a very positive and active role in demonstrating volunteerism.

It was an excellent opportunity for NGOs to coordinate with each other and come forward with a comprehensive and coordinated rehabilitation programme for the affected population and resulted in capacity building of local NGO representatives on DRM issues.

After the early response phase, Sphere India led the collaborative advocacy initiative 1. to identify key

advocacy issues and joint strategies for recovery and rehabilitation, 2. to facilitate the formation of an Inter-Agency Group (IAG) in Kashmir which can collectively take forward the effort, 3. to ensure quality and accountability practices with advocacy needs and 4. to document the unified humanitarian response including best practices. Organizations including Caritas India, RedR, Handicap International, Save the Children, Care India, Action Aid, IGSSS, CEEO, DFY, JKWDC, Police, Civil Defence, Aman Trust, etc. actively shared their inputs in collective advocacy for rights in crisis.

Structural appraisals of some flood affected houses revealed that bad masonry practices had led to collapse of the constructed structures and not the use of mud bricks. The Shelter Forum agreed and advocated for ten non-negotiable principles for mid and long term shelter interventions in J&K. Culturally suitable shelter designs were recommended and technically supported by INTACH for reconstruction of houses. Similarly WASH Forum also constituted basic principles for WASH interventions in response efforts.

A large number of flood affected communities lost their documents during the recent floods. These documents include important credentials such as ration cards, voter IDs, health cards, NREGA job cards, LPG cards, ATM cards, bank passbooks and academic mark-sheets. Efforts were made by many NGOs to facilitate linkages of such families with the respective departments. Information on pamphlets was made available on SDRF relief norms and government entitlements, which led to wider awareness and filing of applications to avail different government schemes/ex-gratia relief under SDRF.

The Cabinet approved a special financial package of Rs. 44,000 Cr approximately for rehabilitation of the people who suffered due to floods and for restoration of the damaged infrastructure. It also decided to approach the Union Home Ministry for releasing funds to the tune of Rs. 1947.20 Cr under NDRF besides requesting the Union Government to declare tax holiday for the J&K State for a period of 10 years to help in the revival of the State's economy. ■

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