



Beyond AMCDRR Ulaanbaatar



Photo: AIDMI.

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Work at the sub national (province, district and below, and city) levels are crucial and needed, and DN can play this role in advocacy, and promoting action by its national networks and sub national members.

4. And in all this what role AIDMI and SEEDS can play with volunteers to make a difference on the ground?

AIDMI and SEEDS can play important roles at the sub national levels and for this greater dialogue is needed to identify complementarity. In addition, they can work to expand their influence by working with volunteers on the ground, and by shaping voluntary action by organisations who have adopted this as a key modality. Red R India, which partners with both, can help each identify areas where support is

needed. The VERVE Volunteer commitment made at SFDRR by MARS Practitioners Network is now getting new energy with leadership and support from Red R India and plans for piloting in at least two Indian states are being worked on, and resources for support to the volunteers are being mobilised. ■

- Mihir R. Bhatt

(Questions From Mihir R. Bhatt and answers by Loy Rego, August 14, 2018)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR RISK REDUCTION

Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan and India: Some Policy and Cooperation Imperatives



The Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe and the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on Disaster Risk Reduction on 14th September 2017 in Gujarat, India. (Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2017)¹

India and Japan are at different developmental progression pathways but they share a significant commonality in disaster risks. Both are among the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Yet, the approach they selected to disaster risk reduction (DRR) have significant differences.

The ability of the Japanese people to react and learn from disasters to "Build Back Better" is pronounced, and is arguably one reason for the country's developed economy despite its high risk to natural hazards. DRR in India has been improving yet slowly and there are ways in which both countries can cooperate in DRR. Realising the

potential for cooperation in the field of DRR, both countries signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) in the field of DRR during the India visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe (please see the Photo). The MOC aimed at exchange of information, technologies, and policy advancements between both the

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. 2017. Japan-India Summit Meeting. Available at https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/in/page3e_000747.html (Accessed 3 July 2018).

Box 1. Main DRR Regulations, Policies and Plans in Japan and India

Japan

- Disaster Countermeasures Basic Law
- Basic Disaster Management Plan
- Basic Plan for Earthquake Disaster Prevention
- Disaster Relief Act
- Earthquake Disaster Management Special Measures Law
- Act on Promotion of Tsunami Measures
- Landslide Prevention Act
- Erosion Control Act
- Soil Conservation and Flood Control Urgent Measures Act
- Activities Volcanoes Special Measures Law
- Act of Special Countermeasures for Heavy Snowfall Area
- Marine Pollution Prevention Act
- Special Measures of Nuclear Disaster Act
- Act Concerning Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims
- Act for Promotion of Earthquake Proof Retrofit of Buildings
- Act for Earthquake Insurance
- Act for Special Financial Assistance and Subsidies to Cope with the Great East Japan Earthquake.

India

- The Disaster Management Act
- National Disaster Management Plan
- PM's 10-Point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.

countries. In specific, the MOC specifies exchange of expertise, policies, infrastructure and early warning systems for tsunami and earthquake risk reduction.

Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Regulations

Some of the main DRR policies in Japan and India are listed in Box 1. Japan has acts and plans for specific disaster events and to cater to specific stages of disaster management (e.g. for relief and reconstruction). These policies are continuously reviewed and revised to take into consideration the emerging needs and knowledge in addressing the issues. For example, the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Law was updated most recently in 2016 to enhance the role of local governments, and the National Disaster Management Basic Plan was updated in 2017 to reflect lessons learnt from the Kumamoto Earthquake and Typhoon Lionrock in 2016.

In the case of India, all the DRR provisions are laid out in the National Disaster Management Act and the operational details are laid out in the National Disaster Management Plan. Recently, the Prime Minister of India has laid out a 10-point agenda to promote DRR in India. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana would take the insurance to the poorest and most vulnerable in India. DRR in India, is both in terms of response and mitigation, is a state subject and hence it reflects in terms of limited number of laws and policies promulgated at the national level. This also created a microcosm of innovation by some states, such as Gujarat, in DRR. Similarly, many local level innovations exist in Japan as well to support the national policies and cater to the specific nature of local disaster risk profiles.

Potential Areas of Cooperation

The policy development in Japan and India look significantly different

and there is ample scope for both countries to cooperate on DRR. Japan is the single largest donor for DRR globally, surpassing the World Bank. It has supported several projects across all stages of the disaster management cycle, and notably on prevention and mitigation in the Indian Ocean region. As recent examples, technical and financial contribution was provided for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, and JICA has also been implementing several projects contributing to DRR in India.

For India, Japan's experiences in designing and implementing policies and acts could provide a significant source to emulate and innovate from. Secondly, the technological advancements made in DRR in Japan could help India in bridging the gaps in disaster risk data and information. In specific, the advancements made in early warning systems, earthquake resistant infrastructure engineering and related technologies could provide useful experiences for India to look into. Promoting risk mapping prominently appeared in the Indian PM's 10-Point Agenda and Japan's use of high-resolution digital hazard and risk maps up to local level could be something that can be applied in priority areas in India. Coordinated international response is an area where both countries could cooperate and develop a model that could potentially help countries in Asia and beyond, a prominent proposal discussed during the MOC signed by both the countries. Japan-India cooperation on DRR could also be beneficial for the SAARC countries where India is playing an important role in strengthening DRR. ■

- **Tomoko Minowa, and Prabhakar,**
Research Manager and Senior Policy
Researcher (Climate Change
Adaptation), NRM Group, Institute
for Global Environmental Strategies
(IGES), S.V.R.K., Hayama
Kanagawa, Japan



Udayan Mishra, ICIMOD.

parts of the HKH region, particularly in Nepal and Pakistan, have become more vulnerable to glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).

Food insecurity originating from erratic weather patterns is a major concern. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the demand for timely and accurate information on indicators related to

climate and crop conditions in response to these growing challenges. A lot of climate information has been made available in the past decade but their use by decision makers at the local and management levels remains relatively low.

The gap between potential solutions and old-fashioned practices on the ground underlines the importance of establishing effective climate services based on new technologies. An effective mechanism for providing climate services to local people and policy makers may significantly reduce the rate at which climate change induced 'hazards' turn into 'disasters'. Losses in agriculture and threats to food security, livelihoods, and infrastructure, as well as the number of fatalities to disasters can be reduced by ensuring timely provision of climate services and their use in disaster preparedness and management.

A drought monitoring and early warning system, for instance, can support national-and local-level planning and agro-advisory services

to help local populations and governments prepare for drought and cope with its impacts on agriculture. Similarly, community based flood early warning systems (CBFEWS) can also provide effective early warning regarding debris floods and flash floods. These can alert vulnerable communities who can then relocate their moveable assets, food items, and livestock to safer places, reducing the risks of both transitory and chronic food insecurity.

Along with disaster preparedness measures, a range of climate-resilient adaptation practices-micro irrigation systems, water harvesting and storage practices, and soil nutrient management-can be customised to local situations. Such practices can play a vital role in improving food security in the HKH region. ■

- **Abid Hussain, Faisal M. Qamer, and Maxim Shrestha**, Media Officer, Knowledge Management and Communication, The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal

Editorial Advisors:

Denis Nkala

Regional Coordinator, South-South Cooperation and Country Support (Asia-Pacific), United Nations Development Programme, New York

Ian Davis

Visiting Professor in Disaster Risk Management in Copenhagen, Lund, Kyoto and Oxford Brookes Universities

Dr. John Twigg

Senior Research Fellow in the Risk and Resilience programme, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu

Sub-Regional Coordinator, Central Asia & South Caucasus, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Kazakhstan

Mihir R. Bhatt

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, India

Dr. Satchit Balsari, MD, MPH

The University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell, New York, USA

T. Nanda Kumar

Former Chairman, Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), Anand, Gujarat, India



ALL INDIA DISASTER MITIGATION INSTITUTE

411 Sakar Five, Behind Old Natraj Cinema, Near Mithakhali Railway Crossing, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad-380 009 India. Tele/Fax: +91-79-2658 2962
E-mail: bestteam@aidmi.org, Website: <http://www.aidmi.org>, www.southasiadisasters.net