

# Capacity Development of Local Institutions For Disaster Risk Reduction

Aditi Madan, Associate RIKA



## ABOUT RIKA

RIKA is a social entrepreneurship startup (DIPP-29629) with an aim of bringing research into the core of disaster management activities in India and other parts of South Asia. Resonating the Sendai declaration in relation to the need for widening the scope of Science and Technology in the disaster management, we at RIKA envision to act as a bridge connecting academic research, policy makers and field practitioners to make informed decisions and use of new technologies

E : [rika.india.com@gmail.com](mailto:rika.india.com@gmail.com)

W: [www.rikaindia.com](http://www.rikaindia.com)



## Introduction

Within the last thirty years, disasters have increased globally with sharpest increase being in Asia-Pacific region. Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) recognizes China, USA, Indonesia, Philippines and India as the top five countries frequently hit by natural disasters between 2002 and 2012. Additionally, by the year 2020, the urban population of the world is expected to rise by 50 percent, which is an absolute growth in numbers of around 500 million people (UNISDR, 2013). This growing population and changing climate exerts pressure on the existing resources and forces people to settle in marginal areas, marshy areas and low lying areas contributing to increased risk from disasters. This increasing risk from disasters calls for immediate measures to safeguard people from damage and loss from future disasters.

Recent disasters have highlighted the non-existent disaster management chain of command and a lack of clear, integrated and sustainable development approach. Developing the collective capacities of communities and institutions with the necessary skills and resources will put them in a better position to provide support in time of disasters. In the context of disaster management, capacities refer to institutional, technological, economic and social capacities to plan and implement programs of change that could reduce the vulnerabilities and increase the capacities of communities.

Local institutions handling disasters can demonstrate efficient disaster preparedness and response delivery to reduce the vulnerability of people through timely measures for effective flood risk reduction. There is a need to empower such institutions to avail greater decision-making power especially at the local level as well as provide opportunities for localised solutions. Such institutions can help in mediating between local people, communities and national authorities for changes in policy as per relevant development measures. It can further help to attain a collective consensus to resolve disconnect between needs, knowledge and perceptions.

## **The Way Forward:**

### ***Strengthening Institutional Arrangements:***

Regulatory mechanisms should limit any construction activity in hazard prone areas. Policies should provide involvement of community level groups to act as a focal point for rapport building, creating acceptability and ownership towards DRR initiatives. DM Act needs to provide clearly specified roles and functions of district and local level bodies in Disaster Management Act to ensure effective response and to avoid overlap of roles and responsibilities.

#### ***1. Effective Policy, Plans and Coordination***

For effective implementation, policy should consist of appropriate rules, and regulations for taking decisions backed by laws. It should provide a well-established channel for frequent communication and sharing of resources such as equipment, facilities, volunteers and contact details of stakeholders involved. For effective coordination, it becomes imminent to have both vertical as well as horizontal coordination amongst the stakeholders involved.

#### ***2. Enhancing Human Abilities:***

Need for proper division and delegation of workload and tasks among employees handling disasters. One way of coping involves developing the capacity for self-organisation by creating community groups and engaging with authorities to reduce the impact of disaster. There is a need for creation of jobs that are permanent in nature for disaster management specialists. Fully dedicated staff can help in addressing disaster related issues and activities more proactively.

#### ***3. Effective Allocation: Financial and Technical Resources***

In developing countries, financial aspects play a critical role in managing disasters (Lassa, 2013). Need to provide adequately designated budget specially with the local institutions to undertake measures on its own without waiting for directions from higher authorities. Online accessibility and availability of updated technology, logistics and inventory of resources would assist in facilitating quick and timely response to disasters.

#### ***4. Effective Awareness Programs/Trainings***

For ease of implementing such programs, local centres (Anganwadi) that share a good rapport with community and help in quick mobilisation of community members should be involved in initiatives being undertaken for risk reduction. Before providing any such program or training it is important to understand the needs and priorities of people as well as their perception about risks to ensuring long term interest and commitment in participating.

#### **Reference**

1. Lassa, J. A. (2013). Public private partnership in disaster reduction in a developing country: Findings from West Sumatra, Indonesia.
2. Lavell, A. (2008). Relationships between Local and Community Disaster Risk Management and Poverty Reduction: A Preliminary Exploration