

# Child Rights Perspective in Response to Natural Disasters in South Asia

*A Retrospective Study*



**Save the Children**



# **Child Rights Perspective in Response to Natural Disasters in South Asia**

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Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children works for:

- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

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# Preface

Save the Children fights for the rights of the child. It bases its work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to achieve lasting benefits for children within the communities in which they live, influencing policy and practice based on hands-on experience and research.

As a pioneering child rights agency, Save the Children has the global mandate and commitment to protect, respect and promote the rights of children in any situation including emergencies. Being a rights based organisation that works from a Child Rights Programming approach, Save the Children is committed to address principles of accountability, non-discrimination and child participation.

Children are perceived as mere victims and therefore, their needs and rights are not adequately addressed in policies and rehabilitation programmes carried out by various state and non-state actors. We need to treat them not only as victims but also as actors in the post disaster scenario. This makes it important to mainstream child rights in disaster mitigation and preparedness programmes as well as to build mechanisms that facilitate adequate child participation.

The research helps in learning from the past so that we are better prepared for the future. It highlights and asserts the belief in working with children as social actors in change. There are some very good examples of how children and community members can work together to respond to and prepare for disasters.

I express my thanks to all the contributors in this key research. Special thanks to Ravi Karkara for bringing forth the need for such a research. I congratulate Bala Raju Nikku, Nepali Sah, Meenakshi Batra and Sibghatullah Ahmed for their hard work and for pulling together this very important piece of work.

Last, but most essentially, I thank all the girls and boys for their partnership in bringing about a change.

**Lisa Lundgren**

Regional Representative

Save the Children Sweden

Regional Office for South and Central Asia





# Foreword

Working from a rights perspective in emergencies implies strengthening the accountability and capacity of all actors such as governments, communities and families to address child protection issues and to re-construct communities. In addition, it implies that all actors must listen to the voices of girls and boys and take actions based on their agenda and priorities and involve them in designing interventions for reconstructions. It also implies that we reach girls and boys from various backgrounds (such as age, caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disabilities) and give them equal possibility to have their voices heard. Further, it implies addressing root causes of rights violations in the reconstruction phase and taking actions to challenge inequalities and discrimination. Furthermore, it is vital to build a large constituency of actors strengthening rights of children and communities.

Opportunities to foster children and young people's understanding, values and experience of democratic participation and active citizenship can occur in families, schools, local and national communities. Children and young people have been involved in activities in diverse geographic and institutional settings at different levels. These include personal and local as well as national, regional and global levels. Children's participation in institutions and processes of their every day reality is more likely to have a deeper and sustainable impact than participation in remote settings. Homes, schools, the street (for children living on the streets), workplaces (for child workers) and children's organisations are all important focus areas for participation work. The strength and experience gained in these arenas enhances children and young people's engagement in policy development.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Claire O'Kane (2003) *Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners for Social Change*, Save the Children Sweden



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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBDM	Community Based Disaster Management
CBDP	Community Based Disaster Preparedness
CDO	Chief District Officer
CMDRR	Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction
CRP	Child Rights Programming
DED	District Education Department
DNDRC	District Natural Disaster Relief Committee
DPP	Disaster Preparedness Plan
DRP	Disaster Response Programmes
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GO	Government Organisation
GSDMA	Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IEC	Information Education and Communication
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MoSJE	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
NDRA	Natural Disaster Relief Act
NDRR	National Disaster Relief Regulations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RCDS	Rural Community Development Service Council
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDMC	Village Disaster Management Committee
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association

## Glossary

<i>Aanganwadi</i>	village ICDS centre
<i>Badi (in Nepali)</i>	floods
<i>Bala samuhas</i>	child clubs
<i>Balmela</i>	children's fair
<i>Neeti (in Nepali)</i>	policy
<i>Rice khitchadi</i>	rice porridge
<i>Taluka</i>	administrative division
<i>Tarai of Nepal</i>	plains of Nepal
<i>Uddhar (in Nepali)</i>	relief



# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

- The occurrence of disasters has increased threefold since the 1970s and it is expected to increase in the coming years. The terrible Asian Tsunami, December 2004 and South Asian earthquake, October 2005 remind us how prone Asia is to natural and human-made disasters.
- Disaster affects both adults and children. However, during and post disasters, children are most affected and vulnerable but less listened to. The current study was conducted with an aim to understand the different approaches that are used by agencies involved in management of disasters in the South Asia region. The focus was whether the approaches and strategies were child centred and recognise children as beneficiaries and actors.

## **Methodology**

- The study focused on the different disasters that struck different South Asian countries at different times. The research focused on and was restricted to floods in Tarai 2004 (Nepal), Tsunami 2004 (India and Sri Lanka), widespread fire in Bangladesh in 2004, earthquake in 2005 (Pakistan and India), Gujarat earthquake in 2001 (India) and Super Cyclone in Orissa (India) in 1999, in the South Asia region.
- Interviews were conducted with children and adults affected by disasters. Key informant interviews were conducted with policy makers, bureaucrats, NGOs, civil society and media persons. In some cases, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was carried out with children and Sangha (community based organisation) members involved and affected by disasters. Some case studies were collected to provide evidence of the situation and interventions, as best practices and learning for the future.

## **Findings and Conclusion**

- The study reveals that in most of the cases organisations focused on rescue and response, which by and large covered survival and development needs of adults and to some extent of children, but most often from an adult perspective. There is little evidence that children's special needs of survival and development are addressed in disaster response and rehabilitation.
- Similarly study findings show that there is little consideration of child protection needs and perspectives included in disaster response and rehabilitation. However, in recent disaster situations there is an increasing consideration of child protection needs and issues.
- The evidences from the field from South Asia region show, that during the disasters, the first priority was to save lives. The victims were hardly consulted about their short and longer- term needs and aspirations.
- The study shows that there is a lack of child participation in situation assessment and decisions for relief and response materials as well as programme interventions. Despite the accumulated experience, children were not often consulted or treated as one of the actors and beneficiaries. The emergency situation and the need for rescue were often stated as reasons for neither adult nor children's participation. To a large extent differences among age groups and gender, children with special needs, did not receive adequate attention in the designing and implementing of relief operations except in some emergency relief and risk reduction activities that showed evidence of child participation. This indicates both lack of capacity among the staff members of organisations, regarding child participation and as well as little consideration of children's evolving capacities.
- The government agencies in different countries have different institutional arrangements regarding disaster preparedness and response. Due to the involvement of many agencies in a single disaster and the lack of co-ordination and clear policies on ways to work with children, child rights perspectives were often talked about, but seldom implemented. Only In the recent years, there is increasing focus on disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. This is most often community based, where community at large and children in particular are participating.



- Government disaster policies in the region are not adequate in terms of protection and promotion of children's rights. Very few organisations and their staff have expertise and experience to ensure child rights during and after disaster situations. Many of the organisations were neither emergency based nor child centred.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations presented in the report are grouped in three sets.

- The *first set* of recommendations is to build capacity of the staff (GO, NGO, INGO and donor agencies) that are involved in disaster management and implementation activities. Capacity building of the staff is crucial for any effective programme since they are the catalytic agent in bringing change and persuading other stakeholders to bring change at a large scale. Capacity building of staff members in relation with children's rights in a disaster context should be given priority. This will ensure sustained change and positive action regarding integration of child participation in disaster response, relief and recovery.
- The *second set* of recommendations is to advocate and lobby for child centred disaster policies, legislations and their implementation. The government agencies in different countries have different institutional arrangements, policies and legislations regarding disaster preparedness and response. Due to the involvement of many agencies in a single disaster and the lack of co-ordination and clear policies on ways to work with children, child rights perspectives are often talked about rather than implemented.
- The *third set* of recommendations explains the importance of child participation and protection in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery stages. There is an urgent need for promoting children's participation in rescue, relief and rehabilitation and preparedness phases of disaster including situation assessment and decision-making. Evidence from the field research has shown that children's participation is possible at all stages and has enriched the quality of response and support and enhanced the ownership and sustainability of the programme. Special attention needs to be given to eliminate fear, trauma, abuse and exploitation and other issues related to protection of children which become rampant and serious but are often not considered important and thus left out. As a result, many of the children suffer much more in the post disaster stage.



# Chapter

# 1

## Introduction

Natural disasters around the world disrupted the lives of millions of children, pushing many into armed conflicts, prostitution, drug trafficking and other dangerous occupations leading to violation of their rights. Disasters cause fear, insecurity and uncertainty among children and adolescents. Depending on a child's level of development he or she may suffer from varied physiological and /or emotional reactions.

A disaster occurs when a threat is combined with vulnerability. 'Few events stretch human capacity and challenge individuals and communities to adapt to rapidly changing environmental conditions like a major disaster. Disaster requires people to cope with chaos and extend themselves and their resources to new limits' (Encyclopaedia of Social Work, 1995, p 761)<sup>2</sup>.

Big disasters such as the chemical disaster in Bhopal and nuclear accident at Chernobyl or major oil spills in Alaska, Spain and elsewhere or recent earthquake in Kashmir have a major and lasting impact on public psyche, health, environment and the social and economic fabric of communities affected.

A single disaster devastates a country's economy. For instance Hurricane Allen in 1980 destroyed 90 per cent of St. Leucia's banana crop and caused total losses equivalent to 89 per cent of the country's gross national product. The Tsunami of 2004 in South Asia cost millions of lives in the region. A total of 12,405 Indians are estimated to have died in the Tsunami, 5,640 to have gone missing and about 6,500,000 people have been displaced. According to a report, 75 per cent of the fatalities in India were women and children<sup>3</sup>. Children were vaccinated and provided with food and recreational materials. Yet, much more remained to be done to bring back normalcy. Restoration of basic services for children and reconstruction of infrastructure have just begun and will take some time<sup>4</sup>. Many families are yet to regain their livelihoods.

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<sup>2</sup> See Stephen A Webster (1995) Disasters and Disaster Aid, *Encyclopaedia of Social Work*, 19th Edition, Washington DC: NASW Press. In this paper, Stephen discussed compound disasters, which occur when one type of hazard triggers a disaster, which in turn sparks another type of disaster. For example, a drought (hazard) may trigger a famine (disaster), which in turn results in civil conflict over water resources, consequently displacing masses of people (disaster).

<sup>3</sup> Due to Tsunami fatalities in India, 787 women become widows and 487 children lost their parents. See Human Rights Law Network, District Andaman: In the High Court of Judicature at Calcutta Constitutional Writ Jurisdiction Appellate Side, Circuit Bench at Port Blair, WP No. Of 2005 Public Interest Litigation, HRLW, Port Blair, 2005 (mimeo). cf Rajani K Murthy and Josephine (2006)

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF has moved out of the relief phase and has begun planning and supporting long-term restoration. The organisation's strategy is to 'build back better', helping to construct upto date schools and health care facilities in the countries affected by the disaster. See UNICEF 2005. *Children and Tsunami, A Year On (ADraft)*, *Summary of What Worked*.

## Approaches to Disaster Management

Historically, approaches to disaster management were technology-centred, top down and isolated from the development process. They relied heavily on outside ‘experts’. However, over the past two decades, increasing emphasis has been placed, on one hand, on community-based approaches, and on the other, pre-emptive approaches that focus on the root causes of vulnerability rather than isolated disaster events (Blaikie et al, 1994). Particular stress has been put on local capacity-building (Alexander, 1997; Benson et al, 2001; Christie and Hanlon, 2000; Rocha and Christoplos, 2001) as a means of increasing resilience to natural hazard events, preventing disaster and adapting to environmental and climatic change (Allen 2005: p 83). The growing evidence is that the top down approaches to disaster management resulted in inequitable, unsustainable and inappropriate results. There is a paradigm shift, with humanitarian agencies moving away the traditional relief and response focus disaster preparedness to a developmental approach incorporating hazard mitigation and vulnerability reduction in their strategies<sup>5</sup>.

Right-based humanitarian approaches to disaster management are based on the belief that the humanitarian imperative comes first and that people affected by conflict and calamity have a right to protection and assistance<sup>6</sup>. They seek to alleviate human suffering without offending the dignity of the affected people or undermining the local capacities. Generally, they apply a rescue-relief-rehabilitation model of interventions. In practice, excepting in few cases, they fail to pay attention to children’s particular needs, women’s personal hygiene and care of people with special needs<sup>7</sup>. The findings of several studies suggest ‘disaster interventions rarely consider children holistically as the UNCRC indicates they should’<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, every new disaster brings renewed demands for a swifter response. However, the danger is that such requests strengthen and centralise power and authority of the technical and sectoral agencies, which in turn strengthen fast-moving, non-participatory practices that undermine the ability of communities to respond.

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<sup>5</sup> See Asian Disaster Management News (1997) *Promoting Community Based Approaches in Disaster Management*, Vol. 3(2)

<sup>6</sup> Source: Handbook Sphere Project (2004) *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*.

<sup>7</sup> See Zahid Hussain (2004) *Humanitarian response in crisis of low intensity caused by natural events in the context of Bangladesh*, A UN published paper.

<sup>8</sup> See Penrose Angela and Mie Takaki (2006) *Children’s rights in emergencies and disasters*, Lancet 367: p 698–99.

## New Approaches

In recent years, there has been a growing discussion and debate on how we think about risk and disasters. Sociologists have debated the definition of a ‘disaster’ and have attempted to classify the variation in responses to hazards. The three distinct perspectives that have emerged are cultural, systemic and individual choice perspectives<sup>9</sup>. Despite the advances in knowledge, important areas have been seriously understudied, including the impact of hazards and disasters on children and youth (Anderson 2005). Anderson in his paper argues that children should be brought into clearer focus in the disaster research that considers:

1. Children’s vulnerability and the outcomes they experience because of their youth.
2. Actions taken by the adult society to reduce the vulnerability of children.
3. Actions children and youths undertake for themselves and others to reduce disasters<sup>10</sup>.

Many development practitioners now support Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) approach. This approach has been discussed, debated and adopted in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in 1994 at Yokohama, Japan.

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) is an approach that seeks to bridge the gap between disaster and development. It refers to a process of reducing disaster risks in which communities actively engage in identifying, analysing, addressing, monitoring and evaluating their disaster risks to reduce their vulnerabilities and to enhance their capacities to overcome a disaster situation<sup>11-12</sup>. Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction paradigm warrants facilitation from the development practitioners. However, currently there is a significant capacity gap that constrains the application of CMDRR in practice<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>The cultural perspective associated with Douglas and Wildavsky, defines risks in terms of shared values that legitimate social choices including such things as efforts to prepare for disasters. The systems perspective associated with Perrow, considers technological risks in terms of the organisational and social properties of technological and ecosystems. The individual choice perspective associated with Kunreuther and his colleagues characterises as individual choices made under uncertainty and with limited information (source: May, Peter J (1989). ‘Social Science Perspectives: Risk and Disaster Preparedness’, *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 7 (3): p 281-303).

<sup>10</sup>See William A Anderson (2005) Bringing Children into focus on the Social Science Disaster Research Agenda’, *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 23(3): p 159-175.

<sup>11</sup> For a critical analysis of the implementation and outcomes of CBDP in practice, see: Katrina M Allen (2006) *Community-based disaster preparedness and climate adaptation: Local capacity building in the Philippines*, *Disasters*, 30(1): 81-101.

<sup>13</sup>Source: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=8157>

Studies on women, minorities and children in disaster would shed light on the role of class, race, gender and age in society, and helping to understand the differential impact of disasters. In addition, it furthers more effective mitigation and preparedness and decision-making. There is a serious need to find a place for children and youth on the disaster research agenda and to advance knowledge about this segment of the population. Such knowledge would provide a more complete understanding of the impact of hazards and disasters on society across the board and result in a firmer basis for policy and practice<sup>14</sup>.

The current study focused on what has been done on behalf of children to make them less vulnerable, and what children did for themselves and others to reduce disaster impacts. In this report we tried to put the field research findings, individual and organisational experiences and lessons together.



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<sup>14</sup> William A Anderson (2005) Bringing Children into Focus on the Social Science Disaster Research Agenda, *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 23(3): p 159-175.

## Child Rights in the context of Natural Disasters

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), was established in 1990, and ratified by all but two countries. The UNCRC guarantees children with absolute rights in all circumstances. These rights are very wide ranging and of particular relevance to children affected by disasters are the following:

### Right to Protection<sup>15</sup>

Every child has the inherent right to life. The Article UNCRC recognises that children, especially young ones, are vulnerable and need special protection and support. The State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development (Article 6). Article 19 and 37 stress on children's right to freedom from abuse and neglect. Likewise, Article 20 guarantees protection of the child without a family. Article 24 ensures state parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and facilitates for treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. Article 34, 35 and 36 are related to freedom from sexual exploitation, freedom from sale, trafficking and abduction and freedom from other forms of exploitation. Article 39 is about receiving rehabilitative care and appropriate treatment for children's recovery and social integration.

### Right to Participation

Girls and boys have the right to be involved in decisions affecting them. Article 12 places an obligation on governments to ensure that girl's and boy's views are sought and considered in all matters that affect their lives. Children have a right to expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Article 13 and Article 14. While working with children, Article 17, the right to information is of special importance. We need to create more and more child and diversity friendly material for children to be able to make decisions that affect their lives and lives of communities. Furthermore, Article 5 has vital importance when working with girls and boys, keeping their evolving capacities in mind.

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<sup>15</sup> Save the Children defines child protection in emergencies as: Actions to prevent or address the abuse of rights of children, directly or indirectly, caused to children's emotional and physical well-being, through the action or inaction of third parties, or 'act of nature', during a conflict and /or emergency. In emergencies, as in all situations, children have the right to live free from Exploitation, Violence, Coercion and Deprivation. Source: Save the Children (2006) *Child Protection in Emergencies*, p 22.

### *Non-discrimination*

Children as constituency are often neglected and excluded in disaster preparedness. One key principle of UNCRC is to promote non-discrimination and inclusion (Article 2). Bringing a gender balance has been the key in this part of the world. Article 23 brings the need to work with children with disabilities and see ways in which duty bearers can create enabling and inclusive environment and address their needs. Many times children belonging to indigenous groups are left out in disaster response and preparedness programmes.

### *Accountability*

We need to work with the government as a primary duty bearer to make national disaster preparedness plan more child centred. We should advocate for increasing budget allocation and quality spending for promoting children's rights in disaster response and preparedness. Additionally, working with parents (Article 18) and other adults is paramount when we work on creating programmes that are more children centred.

### *Right to Education, Leisure, Recreation and Privacy needs*

Article 28 states the right of the child to education and Article 31 is the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities. Article 16 is the right to privacy.

Children are usually treated as beneficiaries during disasters and conflicts. They are the most vulnerable. Hence it is not only their survival rights (as mentioned above), but participation, protection and non-discrimination rights that need

to be ensured. The state and other participating agencies have an obligation to enable these rights of the children. The current research is focused on whether and how these rights are ensured in different disaster situations in the South Asian region.





### Applying a Rights-based Approach to Programming means

- Putting children at the centre, recognising them as rights-holders and social actors.
- Recognising governments as primary duty-bearers, accountable to their citizens – including children – and to the international community.
- Recognising parents and families as primary care-givers, protectors and guides – and supporting them in these roles.
- Giving priority to children and to creating a child friendly environment.
- Being gender sensitive and seeking inclusive solutions that involves a focus on those boys and girls who are at risk and who are discriminated against.
- Addressing unequal power structures (class, sex, ethnicity, age, caste, religion, etc.).
- Holding a holistic vision of the rights of the child while making strategic choices and taking specific actions.
- Setting goals in terms of the fulfilment of rights.
- Aiming at sustainable results for children by focusing not only on the immediate, but also on the root causes of problems.
- Using participatory and empowering approaches, particularly with regard to children.
- Building partnerships and alliances for the promotion of child rights.
- Counting on international co-operation.
- Focusing on those who are most at risk and discriminated against.
- Taking a holistic perspective that requires a multi-sectoral response.
- Providing a long-term goal, which is clearly set out in international legal frameworks that are shared by governments, donors and civil society.
- Encouraging legal and other reforms, such as regular monitoring mechanisms that create a much greater likelihood of sustainable change.

*Source: International Save the Children Alliance (2002) Child Rights Programming: How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches in Programming, A Handbook for International Save the Children Alliance Members*

## Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this retrospective research is to analyse and map the situation of child rights in disaster preparedness and response programmes in South Asia.

### Specific Objectives

- To study child rights situation in specific Disaster Response Programmes (DRP),
- To document best practices related to inclusion of child rights in DRP,
- To recommend child friendly policy guidelines in relation to DRP,
- To prepare advocacy and IEC materials on the basis of research study (as a post study work).

To meet the above research objectives, we have used Child Rights Programming (CRP) as an overarching framework and analysis throughout the research study with a regional focus<sup>16</sup>. The strength of this framework is that it gives us an opportunity to bring together a range of experiences within the region, ideas and concepts and direct field evidences. While using the CRP as framework, we have specially focused on the following UNCRC articles that have a direct relevance in the context of children and disasters. Earlier, we have described UNCRC articles that are most relevant to child protection, participation, education and recreational needs of the children not only in general but also during disasters and emergencies<sup>17</sup>.

## Research Questions

The current research aims to examine child rights in phases of disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation in South Asia region.

*Whether and how children's needs and rights have been addressed by the duty bearers during disaster relief and rehabilitation? Have child rights been incorporated in the programme designs being implemented? What have been the results?*

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<sup>16</sup> Child Rights Programming means using the principles of child rights to plan, manage, implement and monitor programmes with an overall goal of strengthening the rights of the child as defined in International Law (source: Save the Children (2003) *Child Rights Programming: How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches in Programming*- A Handbook for International Save the Children Alliance Members, p 25).

<sup>17</sup> Emergency is defined as a situation whereby life, well-being and dignity of the population concerned are affected by a sudden and sharp crisis in their natural, social and/or political environment. In some cases members of the International Save the Children Alliance claim that an emergency can also be defined as "a state of chronic, ongoing and long-term emergency with cycles of heightened crisis, as is the case with most armed conflicts today". (Source: Save the Children (2006) *Child Protection in Emergencies*, p 12, 22.)

### Sub Research Questions

1. Whether child rights is considered and included in Disaster Preparedness Plan (DPP), and relief and rehabilitation plans by communities, INGOs/NGOs, government and other donors?
2. Whether systems and policies to protect children affected by disasters and their rights are in place and adequate?
3. Whether the officials and bureaucrats of the concerned organisations have child rights perspective in relation to disasters?
4. What are the best practices in relation to child rights and disasters from the research areas?
5. What are the mechanisms for promotion of children participation as effective actors in disaster management process ?

### Research Design and Methodology

From the nature of the study, secondary information, published and unpublished was collected and reviewed. A large amount of web-based literature was collected and analysed. A brief policy literature review was conducted in order to strengthen the research process. The review helped to understand the status and adequacy of policies and rules of governments regarding protection and promotion of child rights in the context of disasters. In addition, personal communication with many people with a rich working experience in disaster sector proved helpful while writing the report.

Further, to supplement the secondary information, an exploratory and descriptive research design was used. The case study method was used because it allows using a variety of sources, types of data and research methods as part of the investigation<sup>18</sup> (Denscombe 1999:31). Research methods like observation, in-depth interview, key informant discussions, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and case study were used. Interviews were conducted with children and adults affected by disasters. Key informant interviews were conducted with policy makers, bureaucrats and NGO/civil society and media persons. In some cases, FGD were carried out with children and *Sangha* (Community Based Organisation) members involved and affected by disasters. Some case studies were collected to provide evidence of the situation and interventions as best practices and learning for the future.

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<sup>18</sup> Denscombe defines a case study as a 'study that focuses on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance' (1999:32). A case study is used to 'paint a portrait of particular social phenomenon' (see Hakim 1987, 1982). Yin (1984: p 23) stresses that a case study is 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'. The case study method gives a unitary character to the data being studied by inter-relating a variety of facts to a single case. It also provides an opportunity for the analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked with other methods.

### Research Coverage

The research focused on and was restricted to earthquakes in Pakistan and India in 2005 and Kuchch, India 2001, Tsunami 2004 (India and Sri Lanka), floods of 2004 in *Tarai*, (Nepal), widespread fire in Bangladesh in 2004, and cyclone in Orissa, 1999 in the South Asia region.

### Limitations

Due to a need for extensive air travel for the principle researcher to cover all the countries, it was decided to use local resource persons to collect the relevant field data. Further, the number of organisations and individuals in the field contacted were limited due to resource and time constraints. Language became another limitation as the study involved multiple countries. Due to lack of time to conduct fieldwork and lack of available secondary sources, snow storms in Afghanistan and drought in Rajasthan, India could not be included in this research report.

This report is not conclusive, it attempts to create a discussion on learning from previous work done on child rights and disasters. The essence is to use the learning to create present and future disaster preparedness programmes that are more child centred and based on Child Rights Programming approach.

### Structure of the report

*Chapter one* describes the background, rationale of the study, objectives and research questions, research methodology, and limitation of the study. *Chapter two* provides the analysis of country specific disasters that were covered under the study. In *Chapter three*, we present case studies highlighting child participation in relation to disasters. *Chapter four* is a concluding chapter. The annexure includes detail information about each disaster situation and response mechanism and approaches; sample checklist and questionnaire used for field research, and list of useful resources on child rights and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).



## Chapter 2

# Analysis of Country Specific Disasters

## 2.1 Child Rights and Floods: Nepal Tarai

### Scale of the floods

Nepal Tarai region is prone to floods, due to accelerated deforestation and the construction of dams on rivers on the Indian side. As such, today a large number of people are exposed to seasonal floods.<sup>19</sup>

The floods and landslides in 2004 have affected the lives of approximately 360,243 persons of 62,357 families in 25 districts of Nepal.<sup>20</sup> The most affected districts were concentrated in Tarai region and few in mid hills.<sup>21</sup>

### Approaches

On the basis of field material collected, the approaches can be divided into two broad categories; first, the government's approach to flood management which is very top down; and second, the NGOs approach which has some participatory or child friendly elements.<sup>22</sup>

#### Government's Approach

The government activities were focused only on disaster relief and often directed by the Chief District Officer (CDO), who heads the District Administration Office.

<sup>19</sup> Source: UNHSP(nd) Nepal and Natural Disaster. For more information contact UN-HABITAT Disaster Post Conflict and Safety Section at: dan.lewis@unhabitat.org.

<sup>20</sup> According to the annual report of Department of Water-Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP), since 1983 an average of 300 people lost their life in flood and landslide each year.

<sup>21</sup> Source: NRCS District Chapters and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), and different media reports. Affected districts are: Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sindhuli, Sarlahi, Rauthat, Bara, Parsa of east Tarai in Nepal and similarly, Arghakhanchi, Palpa, Dhading, Makawanpur, Ramechhap, Kavre, Udayapur, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Terhathum, Kavre in East Hills and Pyuthan, Achham west hills.

<sup>22</sup> Field research was conducted in Dhnausa, Mahottari, Siraha and Saptari in the month of June 2006. In depth interviews were carried out with staff members of Aasaman Nepal (Dhanusha programme team), Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), District Chapter, Dhanusha, Social Development Path (SODEP) and Samaj Uttan Yuva Kendra, Care Nepal and students and teachers at Shree Rashtra Pradamika, Dhol Baja, Kiratpur in Dhanusha District. In Mahottari district interviews were carried with staff members of RCDSC, Red Cross (Mohattari Branch), Seto Gurans Bal Vikas Seva and with CDO of Mohattari District. In Siraha district, interviews were carried out with members of Nepal Red Cross Siraha. In Saptari district interviews were carried out with members of Shreepurraj Community Development Center (SCDC), Shri Masilal Janata Madhyamik Vidhalaya (Kusaha) and Haripur School.

The relief and response materials included food items such as beaten rice, rice, sugar, molasses, dal (pulse) and oil and non-food items such as clothes for adults, temporary shelter (tarpaulin) and in some cases cash compensation for housing construction and funerals. The support was mainly focused on adult members especially selected by National Red Cross Society and Village Development Committees (VDCs) and in some cases local NGOs. During the discussions it was stated that the administration follow the *Natural Disaster Relief Act (NDRA), 1982* while implementing the disaster related activities.<sup>23</sup> The act makes provisions for the disaster relief committees at the central, district and local levels. At the district level, a District Natural Disaster Relief Committee functions under the chairmanship of the CDO and the Local Development Officer as its member secretary. The committee is responsible for policy making and implementation of disaster activities. It was evident from the field material that the Act does not mention children and their rights and hence, there was no special focus on children while delivering the government relief activities.

During an interview the CDO of Mohattari District mentioned that he believes in the concept of *thin government* and hence the government cannot protect interests of all the affected persons. He argued that the role of NGOs should complement the government efforts and should play an important role to protect rights of children and other disadvantaged sections during pre and post disaster activities.

We conclude that the central approach of the government related to flood and disaster management remained or was restricted to using the army and police for emergency operations and sending packages of relief material along with the rescue teams. After the situation has been normalised, there was no clear follow-up action. There are at least six government departments that are involved in disaster related activities. None of them have a child centric plan and co-ordination among them is often missing.<sup>24</sup>

From the field evidence it is clear that due to the lack of co-operation and co-ordination among the government agencies and other agencies involved in disaster management, the disaster victims and families did not receive the necessary help in time. In cases of delayed relief assistance, children and elder citizens were most affected.

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<sup>23</sup> Before the enactment of Natural Disaster Relief Act (NDRA), 1982 there was no well -structured disaster policy. The Act has already been amended twice in 1989 and 1992. However, National Disaster Relief Regulations (NDRR) could not yet be formulated therefore the Act could not be fully effective.

<sup>24</sup> The Natural Disaster and Floods Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs is the central unit responsible for managing/coordinating emergency response. 1. The DWIDP is designated as the lead coordinating agency. 2. The Department of Narcotics and Drugs Control and Natural Disaster Management is the sole agency involved in post-disaster operations. However it does not have physical infrastructures under its command. It has to rely on the district administration to carry out relief and rescue operations. 3. The Department of Hydrology and Meteorology is supposed to provide flood-warning system. As the equipment available with the department is antiquated and insufficient, it has to rely on old system of meteorological forecasting. 4. The Department of Mines and Geology, which is supposed to provide specific resources for landslide and environmental hazard mapping, seemed to be equally unaware. 5. The Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, responsible for providing specific resources commensurate with river training works to manage the upper watershed of the rivers, was also silent. 6. The Department of Health Services is responsible for mobilizing medical teams and medicines to flood-affected areas (source: www.nepalnews.com. cover story dated Vol. 22, No. 06, 02-08 August, 2002)

## NGO Approach to Flood Disaster

During flood disaster management (mainly relief) children were seen as beneficiaries and in some cases as participants. For example, the NRCS - Dhanusha mentioned that their Junior Red Cross Circle members not only receive relief benefits but also participated in data collection and distribution of food and other materials. They consulted children while collecting data during situation assessment.

Partner NGOs of Save the Children (like Aasaman Nepal) are implementing child related projects with a focus on child rights of varying degrees and understanding. However, the NGOs activities were mainly focused on school going children, leaving a large section of non-school going children in the villages. Their focus of relief and rehabilitation materials were on food items such as rice, beaten rice, pulses, sugar and also provision of rice *khitchadi* (rice porridge) especially for children, pregnant mothers and old aged in the temporary shelters. Support was given to school going children with materials like school bags, stationery, uniforms and sanitary packs both for children and schools. First aid medicines and water purifying tablets and medical check up through local sub-health posts was conducted. However, in many cases the NGO activities were time bound and funding based.

Some NGO leaders claimed that though they did not implement their relief activities from a child point of view, but targeting family as a unit. The NGO staff claimed that helping a family means reaching not only to adult men and women but also to children and old age members.

Few local NGOs did implement some activities during the floods that were child focused, but the overall understanding or implementing the activities from a child rights perspective was missing. There was no evidence that the implementing NGOs have had a long-term plan on and understanding of children's rights.

We came across few NGOs that implemented the relief activities as designed by their donors. The NGOs acted as delivery agents by signing contracts with their respective donors. However, the NGO leaders expressed that they did not want to function like contractors. Ultimately they want to help communities in some ways.



### Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDS)

RCDS is registered as an NGO at Mahottari District Administration office in 1997. The organisation has experience in irrigation, safe drinking water and sanitation programmes. The staff members were involved in the flood relief activities of 2004. About 21 VDCs were affected and out of them 13 were most affected by floods. The organisation focused on Dhirapur, Gonarapur and Matihani VDCs as they have other activities that are being implemented in these VDCs.

Oxfam (GB) extended support to the organisation to carry out relief activities. Dr Ajayakant, the Programme Director, RCDS shared that they could not focus on the children especially during the implementation of activities. The members informed us that they carried out a participatory planning exercise to find out the VDCs which were most vulnerable to be affected by disasters like floods, drought, fires, and river erosion. The participants were only VDC representatives and other participants (children, youth and women) were missing.

RCDS is currently implementing a Disaster Preparedness Programme (DPP) with assistance from Oxfam (GB). The activities are focused on youth members

and constructing mitigation centres and formation of relief committees. From the discussions it was clear that children were not consulted in these activities. Children and their role and rights were not evident. The members felt that they had not taken into account the child rights issues though they gained experience from implementing programmes like dalit empowerment.

The learning from the discussion, in addition to other points is that: NGOs implement various programmes but cross learning from and within the NGO members is not taking place explicitly.

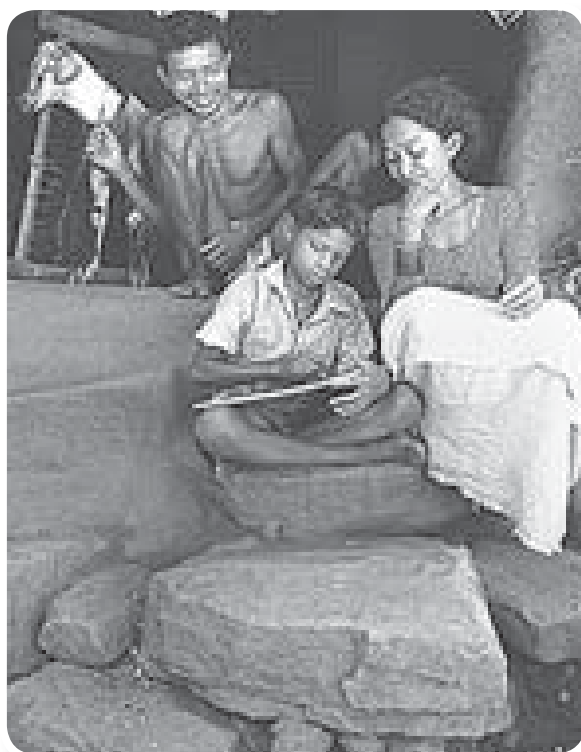




From the field research it was clear that very few NGOs planned and implemented activities related to preparedness especially focusing on first aid, prevention of outbreak of epidemic diseases such as diarrhoea, and other water borne diseases. However, there is much less focus on long-term preparedness plan for disaster and its mitigation.

The school teachers responsible for forming and mobilising child clubs are not aware of rights based perspectives. There is a need for providing opportunities for these staff to learn these concepts so that their work with children could be more child rights centric. There should also be focus on inclusion issues like how to include non-school going children in to the activities of the child clubs (*Bala samuhas*).

In recent years, the relief and rehabilitation materials especially delivered by partners of Save the Children have been more focused on children (e.g. nutritional intervention for young children and pregnant and lactating mothers, health and hygiene materials and support, educational materials support to school going children). However, there is less participation of children in situation assessment and decision making in planning of relief materials.



### Examples of Children's Own Action

#### Role of Junior Red Cross Circle

The research highlighted that members of Junior Red Cross Circle played an important role during floods. Member children participated<sup>25</sup> in situation assessment, surveys and identification of the affected people and their families. They also helped in finding out the real victims. Children's participation resulted in a realistic assessment of the situation. That helped avoiding duplication and over exaggeration of the situation to get more funds to the affected villages. In addition, it helped in avoiding political influence and direct the relief materials to the real victim (in Kathrait, Dhanusha the politicians reported 200 as the number of children affected, whereas women from the community when contacted reported only 50 children and children themselves identified only 16 children as victims who really deserved the support).

#### Bal (Children) Committee Club at Shree Rashtriya Prayhamik, Vidhyalaya Dholbaja, Kiratpur

About 20 households were very severely affected (with complete damage of houses and all properties). The affected families had been provided temporary shelter in Kiratpur School for about a month. Food was arranged with a special provision of *kbichadi* (porridge) for young children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.



This arrangement was done by Asaman Nepal. Educational materials and school uniforms were provided to the children who had lost their materials due to the flood and were unable to manage on their own.

Discussion with *Bal Committee* (Child Committee) members and other students<sup>26</sup> suggest that children were involved in the process of finding out other children and families who were severely affected and needed support. According to the students,

<sup>25</sup>Very recently, community based disaster preparedness programme has been implemented by Care through its partners in three districts (Dhanusha, Mahotari and Sarlahi), where there is a component of school children's participation. However, the results are not visible, since the project has started only three-four months ago.

<sup>26</sup>All together 16 students representing class 3, 4 and 5 were there in the meeting. Ten of them came from Kiratpur, three from Parsahi and two from Dolbhaja, and one from Nayatol. Among them three students (class five) are the Bal Committee members in their school.

the flood level was above their necks. Some of them were protected by the Nepal Army. Some of them lost their house and stayed for about a month in the relief camp located in the same school. Some of them mentioned that they received clothes and a school bag with books and other materials.

#### *Lessons learned on strengthening child rights in DRM*

- The physical and survival needs of children including, safe water, food, shelter, clothing and primary healthcare, to some extent, received a very high priority during the flood disasters. However, other needs and rights, which are also essential for children, like protection from all forms of abuse and harm, education, recreation, and the right to participation in matters that affect them, are too often overlooked.
- Children are neither consulted nor represented in programmes of government and non-government agencies that are involved in disaster management.
- The government disaster policies and programmes are not child centric. Disaster management (from Nepal *Tarai* flood experience) is still based on emergency relief and rescue. The activities of GOs and NGOs seem to be short-term based and focus on temporary rescue and relief work.
- The NGO programmes are also mainly focused on relief and there is a need for training of NGO staff on child rights. The increased understanding on child rights would result in design, lobby and implementation of child centred disaster management activities.
- As the District Natural Disaster Relief Committee (DNDRC) plays an important role at the local level disaster management, there should be representation of children in this committee.



## 2.2 Child Rights and Earthquake Disaster: Bhuj Earthquake - Gujarat, India 2001 and South Asia Earthquake (Pakistan and India) 2005

### Bhuj Earthquake - Gujarat, India 2001

#### Scale of the Earthquake

On January 26, 2001 a massive earthquake with 6.9 on the Richter scale struck the western state of Gujarat, India at 08:46 am local time. The tremors were felt in Delhi, Mumbai and neighbouring Pakistan. The epicentre of the quake was 20 km northeast of the town of Bhuj, the district headquarters of Gujarat's Kutch district<sup>27</sup> while, at the same time, seriously affecting all the area within 100 km range from the epicentre<sup>28</sup>. 7906 villages from 182 blocks from 21 districts were affected, taking death toll to 20,005. About 166,000 people were reportedly injured out of which 20,000 were seriously injured.<sup>29-30</sup>

On 8 October 2005 another powerful earthquake (also known as South Asia earthquake) occurred at 08:50:38 Pakistan Standard Time (09:20:38 Indian Standard Time) with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale) causing widespread damage in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Over 70,000 were killed (about 17,000 students were killed when their schools collapsed) with as many injured and approximately three million were rendered homeless. More than 50 per cent of the homeless were children.<sup>31-32</sup>

#### Approaches

In both the country cases response came from various sources. In addition to governmental efforts, many international organisations especially focusing on children and local NGOs were involved in rescue, relief and rehabilitation activities. Presence of

<sup>27</sup> Kutch district alone reported 18,416 deaths, which was almost 92 per cent of total human loss. This district sustained 90 per cent of the deaths and 78 per cent of the injuries reported overall, and contained 257,000 of the houses damaged or destroyed (source: Gujarat earthquake - Fact sheet at [www.un.org.in/UNDMT/states/gujarat/updates.html](http://www.un.org.in/UNDMT/states/gujarat/updates.html)).

<sup>28</sup> The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has recorded a Richter magnitude of 6.9 with location being north-east of Bhuj, while the United States Geological Survey (USGS) maintains that the magnitude was 7.9, and the epicentre lay north of Bachau in a location 50 km from the IMD site (Source: Rajib Shaw and Ravi Sinha (2001) Preliminary Observations and Aftermath of Gujarat Earthquake, India).

<sup>29</sup> Government of Gujarat (homepage on the internet) A preliminary report on the earthquake damage in Gujarat presented to the Joint Assessment Mission of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. February 2001. Available at <http://www.gujaratindia.com/>

<sup>30</sup> S K Vatsa (2001) *The Bhuj Earthquake district of Kutch*, State of Gujarat (India) January 26, 2001- A Reconnaissance Report, Prepared for World Institute for Disaster Risk Management.

<sup>31</sup> The worst affected districts in Jammu and Kashmir due to impact of the high magnitude earthquake are districts of Poonch, Baramulla, Jammu, Udhampur, Ramban Kathua, Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama and Kupwara. The earthquake caused massive destruction to houses, public buildings and communication network in Balakot, Garhi Habibullah in Maneshra, Muzaffarabad districts.

<sup>32</sup> 1,400 people died in Indian-administered Kashmir and 6,622 were injured while 150,000 lost their homes. Source: <http://www.unisdr.org/disaster-statistics/impact-killed.htm> accessed on 02/08/06.

International Save the Children Alliance, Red Cross and other organisations were visible in both the cases. This section presents an analysis that is primarily based on the study of approaches and strategies used by these organisations from a child rights perspective.

#### *Child based emergency response programme of Save the Children*

As part of the response efforts, Save the Children Alliance organisations worked in Rapar Division, the most remote and underdeveloped areas of Kuchchh in India. Rapar was near the epicentre of the earthquake, and therefore experienced severe damage. Save the Children UK implemented an Emergency Response Programme in Uri (Baramulla), Rafiabab (Baramulla), Tangdar (Kupwara) and Poonch, the earthquake affected places in Pakistan.

Save the Children and Kuchchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan, a network of NGOs, jointly implemented Semi Permanent Shelter (SPS) programme. The objective of the programme was to help substantial number of families selected through a group of NGOs, to build interim shelters while they continue to rebuild their lives and homes and thus enabled them to protect themselves and their children against severe weather conditions before the onset of monsoon in the Western part of India. The SPS programme was conceived as an alternative to both, temporary and permanent shelter programmes<sup>33</sup>.

#### *Child-to-Child Activities*

Child-to-Child groups have been formed by partner NGOs in eleven schools in eight local areas in Rapar Taluka (administrative division). Each group has a support teacher and is comprised of girls and boys in about the same proportion as their school enrolment rates. Since the groups comprise students of middle school, the proportion of girls in both the schools as well as the child-to-child groups is low. With a little support from Save the Children and the NGO partner, these groups have developed an identity, momentum and an agenda of their own and have been able to undertake several difficult tasks such as the cancellation of a transfer order of their school teacher (Fatehgarh village). Exposure visits to Ahmedabad and other NGOs working with children have had a significant impact on child-to-child members, as many of them had never travelled outside their *Taluka* in their lives. Socially relevant activities such as abolition of chewing tobacco (gutka) – a known cause of cancer in India, improved solid waste management in the villages, etc. have been initiated by the children.

The NGO partners have conducted a large number of '*bal melas*' (205 children's fair) each covering about 50 children. Issues of educating girl children were discussed at the melas and through a series of street plays conducted by a group of NGO volunteers. However, the low literacy rate in Kuchchh district has led to a

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<sup>33</sup> The programme initially targeted to provide earthquake safe technology and material assistance to about 22,000 families, which eventually grew to about 24,000 families living in 253 villages of eight out of ten district of Kuchchh district. The programme was implemented by a group of 13 NGOs.

situation where there are about 14,000 vacancies for schoolteachers in the district. A majority of the teachers are from outside the district and do not speak the local dialect nor can they empathise with the local population. Scattered villages, large family sizes, and scarcity of water, fuel and fodder combine to create conditions wherein girl children are deprived of even elementary education. While these aspects have been brought up by the Child Line volunteers, their efforts need to become wide-spread as well as multi institutional support to remedy the situation<sup>34</sup>.

### *Child Line*

After the disaster, a Child Helpline<sup>35</sup> was established in Kuchchh district, which was supported by Save the Children. The telephone based service was supplemented by a set of trained volunteers from six partner agencies who established contact with vulnerable children – orphans, children of single parent, physically and mentally disabled children and established their linkage with other agencies that could provide the necessary support. Information on vulnerable children was collected through a survey of children orphaned by the earthquake commissioned by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and canvassed by NGO volunteers. Child Line initiated a periodic surveillance of such children which helped in identifying their emerging concerns such as non-familial adoptions, need for orthopaedic services, physiotherapy, etc. Allied services were designed and provided in a timely manner such as the conduct of decentralised camps at the *Taluka* level to address the range of problems faced by disabled children.

Child Line partners have prepared a resource directory of services available in the region and in villages. This brought them in contact with several government departments, who were sensitised to the Child Line programme through personal interactions as well as through specific sensitisation programmes. The police, state transport, health, education, water supply and sanitation sectors have been identified as areas where child sensitive approaches should guide policies and activities. *Taluka* and district level advisory boards comprising these officials have been formed. While the board at the *Taluka* level has met on a few occasions, the district level board is yet to meet. Save the Children was the coordinator for the district level advisory group on child protection. It seeks to transfer this mandate to the district level advisory board<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup>Source: Taru Leading Edge Report (nd) Review of the Gujarat Relief and Rehabilitation Programme (GRRP).

<sup>35</sup>Child Line is a programme initiated in Mumbai in 1996 to provide a 24-hour helpline to children in distress. Children can call a toll free number (1098) and are provided online advisory and counselling services. Subsequently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) adopted the programme at a national level although its relevance in the rural context was untested.

<sup>36</sup>Source: Taru Leading Edge Report (nd) Review of the Gujarat Relief and Rehabilitation Programme (GRRP).

### **Key Lessons**

- Communities, if mobilised are the best judges of protection needs of children and vulnerable families. As we see the in case of Pakistan earthquake, Save the Children adapted community mobilisation approach as the implementation strategy for the earthquake response in Pakistan.
- Hand out of relief goods and services to people affected by emergencies and disaster is still practiced by a number of organisations as a priority. At the same time number of organisations believe that these practices often create dependency and weaken the community's coping mechanisms.
- Capacity of the government structures like District Education Departments can be enhanced through government-civil society-community partnerships and by creating structures for maximum community participation leading to ownership.
- Facilities provided by government lack implementation, but if civil society can work with government in strengthening the implementation, these services can bring positive changes in the target population's lives. This was seen when Save the Children UK worked in Gujarat to re-establish the Integrated Child Development Centres (ICDS) centres devastated by Bhuj earthquake and faced ignorance from the government. They reconstructed 113 ICDS centres, 16 health centres and created a close collaboration between the two by providing four months of residential training to the ICDS and Health Centre workers in order to improve the skills gap and strengthen linkages and complementarities between health and ICDS programmes. The result of the intervention strengthened mechanism of addressing early childhood development issues.

The recent independent evaluation of UK's Disaster and Emergencies Committee (DEC) Gujarat earthquake appeal, analyses the impact of the appeal by geographic area, by the caste and religion of those affected, by gender, on the elderly and on people with disabilities – but not children. In fact, the executive summary of the evaluation makes no mention of them at all (DEC 2001).

### South Asia Earthquake (Pakistan and India) 2005

In Pakistan, the programme focus was very similar to the one in Kuchchh. The objective was to bring back normalcy into children's lives, affected by the earthquake and to mobilise families and community support to help children.

The other focus areas have been reconstruction and restarting of government schools, reconstruction of ICDS centres and establishing Adolescent Girls Drop-in Centres (AGDC). Creating safe play areas, formation of cricket clubs and capacitating the teachers and ICDS workers on child rights and child protection issues, have also been on the agenda.

#### Pakistan: Ensuring Right to Education

The impact of the earthquake has been catastrophic in its damage to school infrastructure. To ensure functioning of these seasonal schools<sup>37</sup> and other schools that had collapsed, Save the Children Sweden provided tent materials and mobilised community members to enrol children from the affected communities with a special focus on girl children.



Save the Children Sweden opted to construct transitional class-room structures close to the collapsed schools. Using community mobilisation approaches, communities were prepared to contribute land, timber and unskilled labour for construction of transitional schools. Save the Children Sweden contributed skilled labour, Corrugated Galvanised Iron (CGI) sheets and other construction material.

To formalise the arrangement, Save the Children Sweden signed a partnership deed with communities wherein communities authorised schools to use the land for five years or until reconstruction of existing government school, whichever comes first. On expiry of the lease the transitional structure will automatically be transferred to the name of the land-owner.

While reviving education, it was emphasised that access to education for all the children should be increased. At the end of April 2006, Save the Children Sweden has signed partnership deeds for 80 schools; 30 schools have been completed, 20 are near completion and construction of the rest will start soon.

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<sup>37</sup> People of Kashmir region migrate to higher altitudes during summer and come back to their base at the lower regions during winter. Similarly people of Poonch district migrate to upper regions and stay for five or six months depending upon the magnitude of the low temperature in these regions. These settlements in the upper regions of the Pir Panjal range of mountains are called Dhoks in the local dialect. The schools operating in these Dhoks are called seasonal schools.



Save the Children has also extended its support to District Education Department (DED) to re-establish school management system by providing equipment support including computers, printers and technical inputs to establish a participatory monitoring system to monitor the quality of education. An arrangement has been made with the DED to build the capacity of 300 schoolteachers in making the school environment child friendly. This is to be done by introducing pupil centred teaching techniques, interactive learning, and positive discipline skills. On the request of DED, Save the Children Sweden extended its school revival programme to the whole of District Mansehra in March 2006, with a target to revive 300 government schools and set up Parent Teachers Associations to ensure community participation in monitoring and management of schools. By the middle of May 2006, about 250 schools have been revived bringing approximately 15,000 children back to school.<sup>38</sup>

In the Indian side of Kashmir, Save the Children UK realised that education must be restored as soon as possible in the affected areas. However, since the school buildings were largely damaged they started winter schools for children and distributed educational kits. This initiative helped in terms of bringing back normalcy into children's life by recreating the school routine at the earliest phase of intervention. Further, this initiative helped in addressing the big issue of child protection.



<sup>38</sup> This section is taken from an internal report titled 'Community Based Child Protection in Emergencies: Learning from initial phase of Save the Children Sweden response to earthquake in Pakistan'. Also see Qadri Ghulam (2006) *Rising from the Rubble: Communities Lead the Earthquake Response*, Save the Children Sweden, Pakistan programme, p 33.

## 2.3: Child Rights and Cyclones: Orissa, India 1999

### Scale of the Cyclone

Orissa witnessed a series of major natural disasters in 1999. There was a severe drought in the summers followed by floods in August, which affected seven coastal districts. Then, in October, within a span of just eleven days, fourteen districts in the state were devastated by two cyclones.

The first cyclone, which lasted overnight from 17 to 18 October, was classified as a very severe cyclonic storm, with wind speeds reaching 200 km per hour. The second cyclone, from 29 to 30 October 1999, was a rare cyclone of catastrophic intensity, with wind speeds of 300 km per hour and was accompanied by torrential rains ranging from 400 mm to 867 mm (continuously for three days). It swept the entire Orissa coast, affecting 12 districts and parts of neighbouring West Bengal, devastating a 250 km stretch of eastern coast of Orissa.<sup>39</sup>

In total, 14 out of 30 districts were affected. Communication networks and power supplies were completely shattered. According to the white paper issued by the Government on 6 December, there were 9,885 deaths due to the super cyclone.<sup>40</sup> Almost 14,901 primary school, 3,425 high school buildings and 66 colleges were damaged. 12,000 km roads and 1,447 bridges were damaged. Electricity supply to most villages was disrupted. There was extensive saline incursion in agricultural fields. Crop loss was estimated at around 17.5 million.<sup>41</sup>

### Approaches

From the secondary sources, it is evident that organisations like International Red Cross Society, Action Aid, YMCA and UNICEF have participated in cyclone relief activities. They have used different approaches while implementing their activities.<sup>42</sup>

### Right to Survival and Protection

A feeding programme was implemented in six villages catering to eight hundred and fifty two children, two hundred and seventy eight women and destitute people. This programme was supported by the Swiss Red Cross and the Bavarian branch of the German Red Cross.

<sup>39</sup> Anil Kumar Sinha, Senior Technical Advisor (1999) *Report on Recovery and Reconstruction following the Orissa Super Cyclone in October 1999*, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre.

<sup>40</sup> The non-governmental assessment of the damage estimated the death toll at 22,000 considering the fact that there was a substantial migrant population (who are largely not represented in official statistics) of fisherman in the coastal areas (Source: CARE India, Orissa Super Cyclone-Natural Resource Based Livelihood Project 2000-2002, Documentation of Process and Outcomes).

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.actionaidindia.org/emr\\_ori\\_cyclone.htm](http://www.actionaidindia.org/emr_ori_cyclone.htm) Viewed on 1/08/06.

<sup>42</sup> The main limitation of this chapter was time and lack of documented evidence. As the Orissa Cyclone disaster was struck way back in 1999, there was a loss of memory.

Action Aid, the international development agency, launched its programme for the community care of destitute women and children, termed the Sneha Abhiyan Campaign, literally the Campaign of Love in November 1999. Between December 1999 and July 2000, hundreds of women and children were rehabilitated in temporary shelters called *Mamta Grubas*. Under Sneha Abhiyan, 801 orphaned children and children at risk, 638 widows and single women at risk and 209 aged persons were identified and taken care of. The programme also planned for longer-term rehabilitation through education and livelihood-generation. Educational support was provided to 360 children. A sum of Rs 476,000 was provided to restore the livelihoods of 170 families. Credit was provided to 99 families.

YMCA built cyclone resistant houses, particularly in two villages, Olatpur and Jojala. The beneficiaries were selected through Community Management Groups, formed by all sections of the community. The cyclone-resistant houses were designed and constructed with people's participation. The rehabilitation process included the preservation of people's livelihood, through the supply of agricultural tools, seeds and livestock.

### **Education**

YMCA constructed two schools, a book bank and provided scholarships for students. Under the Integrated Health Promotion Project, a daily clinic was started at Olatpur and children in the age group of six months to two years regularly received milk mixed with high protein mix. In addition, five tube wells were installed in the two villages.

UNICEF with DFID funds supplied textbooks printed by the Government of Orissa to schools. The textbooks are part of the book bank scheme of the schools.

### **Health**

UNICEF mounted a door-to-door campaign in conjunction with other agencies in which volunteers walked from village to village in an attempt to identify lost, injured or orphaned children. UNICEF laid out immediate, medium and long-term interventions based on the "Five-R Strategy" - Rescue, Relief, Restoration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction – enumerated by the Government of Orissa.<sup>43</sup>

### **Training**

Under the Orissa Disaster Mitigation Programme, supported bilaterally by the German Red Cross, village level volunteers and task force members were trained in disaster preparedness, first aid, search and rescue, home nursing and vocational training (to strengthen self-help groups) and health awareness. Between April and September

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<sup>43</sup>According to UNICEF estimates more than 3.3 million children were affected by the cyclone and an undetermined number had been separated from their families, orphaned or seriously injured

2001, 489 volunteers were trained in disaster preparedness and management, 321 volunteers in first aid, 312 in search and rescue and 239 in home nursing.

*Key Learning*

- Co-ordination among the implementing organisation was not visible.
- Many of the relief activities are short-term and not focused on the special needs of the children.
- Facilitating community participation and ownership was neither encouraged and nor treated as a pre-condition to implement activities.



## 2.4: Child Rights and Fire Disaster in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is criss-crossed by over 230 rivers. The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna pass through the country, flooding the country almost every year. Bangladesh is a low-lying delta region in the northeast of the Indian sub-continent with a population of 125 million people. A UNICEF report published in September 1999 has found that more than 6.3 million children under 14 years are working in Bangladesh. Children are labouring as maids and servants, in garment factories and engineering workshops, in the construction sector, as bus or tempo (three-wheeler transport) helpers, in the beedi (a kind of hand-made cigarette) factories, as roadside restaurant workers and street vendors, and in tea plantations and other agricultural sectors.<sup>44</sup> In addition, with increased number of children in hazardous work places<sup>45</sup> the number of children affected by disasters is on the rise in the country.<sup>46</sup>

### Scale of Fire Disasters

Fires like floods are a recurring phenomenon in Bangladesh. The country earns more than USD 5 billion a year from garment exports. The sector employs about two million workers, most of who are women.<sup>47</sup> Lax safety standards and poor wiring cause several fatal factory fires every year in Bangladesh.<sup>48</sup> Women and children are the worst sufferers in these disasters.

<sup>44</sup> According to UNICEF's Asian Child Labour Report (1999), there are some 40 industries in Bangladesh which use child labour, often under hazardous conditions with little regard for health and safety. Source: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/nov1999/bang-n03.shtml>

<sup>45</sup> A study by Professor A J Weeramunda of the University of Colombo found that virtually all of the 300 leather tanneries in Dhaka employed young boys. The study noted, "Children endure appalling conditions including exposure to corrosive chemicals and bacterial contamination from hides."

<sup>46</sup> According to the United Nation's Human Development Report of 1999, an average of 10,928 people are killed in Bangladesh by so-called natural disasters each year. The flood disasters are not natural but caused by deforestation in the Himalayas and cultivation methods, in Bangladesh and those countries bordering it, that increase sedimentation and the silting up of river beds. The 1998 monsoon season produced the worst flooding in Bangladesh's 27-year history with 70 per cent of the country submerged in floodwaters, and one million hectares of cropland destroyed. Between 30 to 40 million of the population of 126 million were affected. Floodwaters inundated most of the country for more than two months, destroying schools, government offices and countless homes and bringing diseases like diarrhoea and hepatitis. Over 1,000 people were killed and millions left homeless without food or shelter. Source: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/oct1999/bang-o20.shtml>.

<sup>47</sup> Source: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4154595.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4154595.stm)

<sup>48</sup> The Hindu newspaper dated 08 January 2005 reported "At least 23 people were killed and 100 injured in separate incidents of fire, one in a garment factory and other in a slum, near Dhaka on Friday, officials said. Fire Brigade officials said nearly 400 workers were inside the factory at nearby Narayanganj district when the blaze started. While 22 workers were killed, 50 people, including fire brigade personnel, were injured. Source: <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2005/01/08/stories/2005010813201400.htm>. Another such event in 2001: The Mirpur Factory where the 08 August 2001 tragedy took place is situated at Industrial Plot No. M-2, Main Road No.1, Sec. 14, Mirpur, Dhaka City, Bangladesh. The disaster led to death of 24 garment workers (Source: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/01-10-29-1.htm>).

Recurrent fire calamities occur in garment factories and in slums of Bangladesh. On 27 July 2004, a devastating fire broke out in a section of the Bihari Camps called 'Muslim and Madrasa Camp' at Mirpur area of Dhaka City. It was estimated that 1,350 people lost their homes and many others suffered serious losses as a result of the fire. In all, 250 homes were totally destroyed, of which 100 were owned by the house dwellers. One young man died and at least 50 had severe injuries.<sup>49</sup>

A devastating fire swept through a densely populated slum area of Dhaka city on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006. *Peoples Daily Online* reported on 2 February, 2006 that the fire originated from a shanty of Mohajan slum in the capital, and later spread to adjacent Pabna slum, destroying about 700 huts and leaving 3,000 people home-less.

On 23 January 2005, the Press Trust of India (PTI) based in Dhaka, reported that one girl was killed and some 7,000 people left homeless after a fire raged through a slum in south-western Bangladesh during Eid al Adha holiday. The fire officials, speaking by telephone from Khulna city, confirmed that a girl was trapped inside her tin-and-bamboo home and killed as the fire raged through the huge slum yesterday. "Possibly the fire started from a kerosene stove and quickly spread," one fire fighter told reporters. Some reports said two girls were killed, but the fire fighters confirmed that there was only one death. Local officials said some 7,000 people were left homeless and had taken shelter on a river embankment.<sup>50</sup>

On 4 March 2004, a fire devastated Korail Bowbazar slum in Dhaka that housed about 10,000 people (4,000 estimated children). The blaze destroyed almost all the homes.

On 27 November 2000, ICFTU Online, Dhaka reported that 47 workers died and hundreds of others were injured in a fire that swept through the Chowdhury Knitwear and Garments Ltd. Factory in Shibpur, in the Narsingdi district (Bangladesh). Of the forty- six victims, four were burnt to death; others were electrocuted or asphyxiated by the smoke. Most of those who died were young women, under 25 years of age (85 per cent of textile workers in Bangladesh are women), and at least eight were children. The list of victims posted at the entrance of a hospital close to the factory gives the names of five workers aged between ten and twelve and three aged fourteen. "The employer, Ali Akbar Chowdhury, broke the law on at least three counts" says Z M Kamrul Anam, the President of the Bangladesh Textile Workers' League. Badruddoza Nizam, General Secretary of the Garment Tailors Workers' League adds, "He employed children under 14 years, he paid wages below the legal minimum of Tk. 930 and he locked his factory's doors". Eight of the dead workers were between ten and fifteen years old. Child labour is illegal in Bangladesh, but authorities turn a blind eye allowing widespread use of underage workers, even in the countryside.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Communication with MD Atiq Uz Zaman, Programme Coordinator – Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking, Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, Bangladesh

<sup>50</sup> Source: Dhaka, PTI (2005) <http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/jan232005/i14.asp>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.maquilasolidarity.org/resources/maquilas/bangfire2000.htm>

### Approaches to Response

The responses to the above documented fires were different by different organisations that were involved. For example, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRC) and the Federation Delegation closely monitored the fire disaster that occurred in Mohajan slum. A four- member joint assessment team of Bangladesh Red Crescent and Federation was deployed on 2 February. Based on the assessment team's report, 500 families in the community centre were assisted immediately, with each receiving a family kit and two blankets. The family kits include basic kitchen and cooking utensils and men's and women's clothing.<sup>52</sup> The statement released by the BRC did not mention whether children needs were addressed even in terms of clothing.

### SEEP

An NGO, Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP) was involved in emergency relief operation of the fire that occurred in a section of the Bihari camps on 27 July 2006. The SEEP implemented a project 'Emergency Response to Fires in Mirpur Camp 2006' of 21 days duration, starting from 3 to 24 August 2006, with a total approved budget of Tk. 508,791 from Save the Children Sweden-Denmark. While listing beneficiaries, SEEP gave priority to pregnant women. With the co-operation of a child activist group and members of Community Youth Volunteers Group, SEEP distributed bread, biscuits and bananas to the affected people, including children.

### Child Brigade (A children's organisation in Bangladesh)

In 2004, a fire devastated a slum that housed about 10,000 people, of which 4,000 were estimated to be children. The blaze destroyed almost all the homes. When members of Child Brigade arrived on the scene, the fire had been burning for about an hour but no effort had been organised to put it out or rescue people. Surviving children who had been left locked in their homes by working parents were running around in distress, trying to flee the flaming slum. Child Brigade members recognised that these children could become lost, abducted, abused and harder to trace. Therefore, they organised a nearby meeting place under a tree and divided themselves; some went to retrieve children who were fleeing and to inform adults and families of the location where children were being held, while some stayed



<sup>52</sup>p 2, Source: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/rpts06/BDfr03020601.pdf>

at the location to supervise the children there. In the hours immediately following, Child Brigade members successfully pressed NGOs and INGOs for water, medical attention and food for the children. By nightfall, they had many children whose families had not come to claim them. So they extended their work.

### CHILD BRIGADE (Bangladesh)<sup>53</sup>

Child Brigade<sup>54</sup> is an organisation of working street children that was established in Dhaka in 2005. Through a child-to-child approach they reach out to children living and working on the streets of Dhaka. Child Brigade was formed to create a bold presence of the street-working children in Dhaka in order for such children to meet, discuss and address issues concerning them. This child led organisation has been supported by Save the Children Sweden Denmark.

Child Brigade has a core group of 10 members, who are elected by the general members of the Brigade, who are mostly boys. However, there are now some girls as part of the 'shadow group' who learn how to take on the responsibilities of a core member. Child Brigade is in contact with a group of girls who are involved with 'sex work' in a park. Child Brigade is working with boys to make them aware of the costs and consequences of sexual abuse and exploitation so that they can protect themselves better and restrain from being a party to any such acts. The same process of discussion is taking place with girls.

Child Brigade members have made linkages with many other children's groups, NGOs, INGOs, media professionals and with human rights activists. For example, Child Brigade has joined hands with Adhikar, an adult human rights organisation that includes lawyers, and with sensitised journalists, to start a Monitoring Cell. Through this Cell, Brigade members can obtain immediate, free, legal assistance when children come into conflict with the law and/or face abusive situations. The voluntary co-operation of the journalists enables them to sensitise the wider public about abuse and exploitation of children.



<sup>53</sup> Source: Claire O'Kane (2003) *Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners for Social Change*, Save the Children Sweden

<sup>54</sup> In November 1994 an animator, already highly experienced with street working children, was employed by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark as a consultant to take this idea forward. By spending time in a park, the animator gradually gathered around him a small group of waste collectors, boys aged ten to fourteen years who roamed the streets with sacks looking for rubbish which they could sell. Several of them knew each other already. They all came from the same part of Dhaka, famous for its major rail station, Kamalapur. They were accompanied, initially by one boy, who had been involved with NGOs before, and knew the animator from that time, but the main group had no previous NGO experience. These became the founder members of Child Brigade. Source: [http://www.rb.se/NR/rdonlyres/C86B2C44-1DC2-4537-885B-36D85C84077E/0/Childbrigade street workingchildreninBangladesh.pdf](http://www.rb.se/NR/rdonlyres/C86B2C44-1DC2-4537-885B-36D85C84077E/0/Childbrigade%20street%20working%20children%20in%20Bangladesh.pdf)



The children were kept in a politically neutral mosque where children stayed for a few nights. The members grouped the children by age and gender, who were accompanied by Brigade members through the night. They engaged the children in activities like games, singing and story telling to help them feel safe and relieve some of their stress of not finding their families and the trauma of the fire. Over the next month, Child Brigade members provided medical care, distributed food, located rescued children's families, made needs assessments for the children and other residents affected by the fire. They liaised between the people in need and those with resources such as the NGOs, INGOs, politicians and other community members. They continued to run their protection centre until all the children were taken into homes.<sup>55</sup>

### Conclusion

From the case studies, it is clear that Child Brigade, as a child led organisation, successfully responded to the needs of the children during the fire disaster. Its work was neither political nor fund centric. Child Brigade's disaster relief work sent a message that children/child led organisations are capable of designing and implementing disaster programmes. It resulted in further confidence building of the members of the Child Brigade.



<sup>55</sup> Naomi Alfini, Becky Marshall and Ravi Karkara (2005) *Strengthening Participation of Girls and Boys in Tsunami Response Programme: A Workshop Report*, Save the Children

## 2.5: Children's Right and the Tsunami: Indian Ocean Tsunami - South India and Sri Lanka 2004

### Scale of the Tsunami

A massive underwater earthquake with magnitude 9.0 on the Richter scale, struck the Indian Ocean near Sumatra at 06:28:53 am, Indian Standard Time (IST) on 26 December, 2004. It triggered a series of lethal tsunamis that spread throughout the Indian Ocean, killing large number of people and devastating coastal communities in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Maldives. The result was catastrophic with 186,983 people dead, 42,883 missing, 125,000 injured and almost 1.68 million displaced.<sup>56</sup> More than 500,000 houses were totally or partially damaged. Road and railway networks were torn apart in large parts of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and in some parts of India (Andaman Islands). The direct damage caused by this earthquake was more than USD 7 billion.

In *India* 12,405 people died, 1,089 villages were affected, 235,377 houses were damaged and more than 2.7 million people were affected in the coastal areas of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The most affected areas were Great Nicobar and Car Nicobar islands, Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts in Tamil Nadu and Kollum district in Kerala. Property worth USD 1.6 billion was damaged. The infrastructure of the Andaman and Nicobar chain of islands was badly affected and some of the islands were not accessible for a long time. Communication and power supply was severely damaged in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and in two districts in Kerala.

In *Sri Lanka*, nearly 40,000 deaths and more than 500,000 people were displaced, devastating 14 out of 28 districts of Sri Lanka. The waves wrapped Sri Lanka's coastline to the south and north, hitting areas as far as the country's west coast near the capital city of Colombo. Hardest hit was the eastern coast, which has undergone twenty years of civil conflict. Entire neighbourhoods were washed away, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries as well as widespread destruction of infrastructure. The flooding and contamination of water sources created a high risk for widespread water-borne and vector-borne disease outbreaks. Coupled with a lack of functional healthcare facilities, international health experts feared the worst.

### Approaches to Response

In *India*, the State government provided immediate relief support very quickly. The government's support was mainly focused on food and non-food items, clearing of debris, setting up temporary shelters and providing assistance to the families

<sup>56</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_earthquake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake)

who lost their family members. INGOs and NGOs also did provide support to meet the gap. The focus of the INGOs relief support, for example, Save the Children, was to meet the survival, developmental and protection needs and requirements of children along with their family members. It supported with foods including high energy foods for infants, pregnant and lactating women, cooking utensils, clothing for women, men and children, sleeping mats, medical and hygiene kits, notebooks and pencils, toys and other play materials and play areas.

In Sri Lanka, the government and development sector, has been involved in relief, rehabilitation and preparedness programme for the Tsunami affected population. Since some of the regions have been severely affected by the government-LTTE war, many organisations have also been involved in relief and rehabilitation programmes there. Further, some organisations have already integrated issues of child rights and child protection in their long- term development plan, such as Save the Children in Sri Lanka. The organisation has integrated Tsunami rehabilitation and preparedness programme in their 2006-2010 country strategy.

Rescue, relief and rehabilitation are the major approaches in response to the Tsunami affected communities in the country. However, many organisations have begun paying attention to disaster preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Organisations (such as Save the Children in Sri Lanka, World Vision Sri Lanka) have integrated a long-term plan on disaster preparedness and DRR, focusing on community based awareness raising and preparedness. They also work to influence policies on the issue.

### *Child Rights Perspectives in Preparedness, Response and Rehabilitation*

**Response** - From interviews and discussions with the staff from organisations in Sri Lanka and India, it seemed there was high consideration of children's rights and perspectives, in relation to survival and development. As part of their immediate response, organisations provided relief materials to the community. Materials related to children's health and education such as school bags, dress, textbooks, notebooks, toys, first aid and meals for children was provided. Children's protection issues such as protection from trafficking were taken into consideration.

Save the Children in India included high-energy foods for infants, pregnant and lactating women while distributing food



items in the community. Similarly, medical and hygiene kits were also included in the relief package. The immediate response focused on the immediate need of students who were taking examinations, educational and clothing material, temporary shelter and play areas, construction of temporary ICDS centres, drinking water facility, provision of shelter and protection issues.

However, children's participation was given less consideration in the situation analysis, determining the support materials. There was less focus on children apart from the general support package, which included cooking utensils, housing materials and clothing in both Sri Lanka and India. For example, Save the Children carried out an initial assessment by its staff, but it does not clearly show the level of children's consultation and participation. The package of the support materials were mostly decided based on consultation and discussion with the adult members of the community and staff members of the organisation. Similarly, the issue of non-discrimination was less considered, for instance, there was evidence of lack of provision of support materials focusing on children who were physically challenged.

**Rehabilitation** - Majority of the organisations consulted have considered the principles of child rights in their rehabilitation and development works related to the Tsunami affected communities. Children's issue related to survival with focus on livelihood interventions, development with emphasis on education and early childhood development, ICDS, protection from different kind of abuses and exploitation such as sexual abuse, violence, trafficking, physical punishment as well as psychosocial counselling and consideration of play spaces and materials (to get children rid of the fear of the waves) are well considered. However, there was less prominent consideration of child participation in determining those interventions initially. Although gradually it has increased in the later phase of the Tsunami rehabilitation programmes. This is especially been achieved through formation and functioning of child protection committees and child clubs in the community. There is evidence of consultation with adults and children but a more systematic approach to children's participation is in an emergent need especially in Save the Children.

**Preparedness** - There was almost no existence of emergency preparedness plan, in the organisations consulted, before the Tsunami. After entering into the rehabilitation and developmental phase of post-Tsunami, most of the organisations have considered preparedness as one of the major interventions and have integrated it as a strategic objective in their plan. Save the Children in both countries have initiated community-based child-led DRR and disaster preparedness which would help the communities to cope with disasters in the future. It would also minimise hazards by increasing awareness of the people and children, which will ultimately reduce their vulnerability.

**Policy** - Sri Lanka banned adoption of children orphaned by the Tsunami, which is a firm step to protect children from sexual exploitation and trafficking. Department of Rehabilitation, Relief and Disaster Management has been recently formed, but is not sufficiently equipped with knowledge and skills on child rights and child participation. A National Disaster Management Act (2005) exists in Sri Lanka, while there is a Disaster Management Council responsible for policy formulation. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Disaster Management Centre. The issues of gender and disability are covered in the policy, but child rights and child participation are lacking. There is also a lack of consistency in the policy, for instance there are five types of policy on buffer zone in coastal areas. This is mainly due to lack of knowledge and awareness on this subject both in the government and among the development sector, which could have played some role in sensitising and pressurising the government body. Further, the government bureaucracy, political instability and lack of advocacy from the INGOs and NGOs are other factors affecting this.

*In India*, the Tamil Nadu State Government announced a policy on education relief, requesting school authorities to waive fees for children in the Tsunami affected districts. This helped to revive the damaged schools and ICDS centres, thus helping children to get back to school. This enabled the children to go back to school. However, there are shortcomings in the policies related to inclusion of some groups of children (Ranjani, 2006). The development sector has to sensitise the bureaucrats and the politicians and put pressure on the government to formulate child friendly policies on disaster response and rehabilitation. For example, the relief codes of most states do not adequately provide even for children's basic needs such as child sized clothing or child specific food especially for younger children. Basic needs, such as sanitary items for adolescent girls and menstruating women are often not included in general relief packages for families.



### *Conclusion*

Overall, the Tsunami response and rehabilitation programme has taken into consideration children's survival, development and protection issues and rights in their relief and rehabilitation programme. The relief and rehabilitation package distributed by Save the Children and some other child rights organisations have done and are doing much better in terms of child rights and their perspectives in relief and rehabilitation. However, there is still further need to consider children's perspectives and their participation in needs assessment and identifying the relief and rehabilitation items. Child participation is almost completely lacking in the needs assessment and designing the intervention in the initial stage.

Capacity building of the INGO and NGO staff members, sensitisation and awareness raising of the government and politicians on child rights and Child Rights Programming is required to bring substantial changes in the conventional method of disaster relief and response.

One of the challenge, is when short-term emergency staff have to come into an area (both national and international) and are unfamiliar with the working environments, partners or, in some cases, languages used in the affected areas. Both national and international staff, who initially responded to the emergency in Tamil Nadu did not speak the local language, Tamil and this hindered the ability to speak directly with children.

Further, there had been little attention on preparedness aspects by any of the organisations before the Tsunami, except the establishment of coastal warning systems in some places. However, in the later phase, there has been increasing consideration of community based disaster preparedness and risk reduction by most of the humanitarian organisations, not just in terms of Tsunami preparedness (which after all will be a fairly rare occurrence) but for cyclones, backwater flooding and other smaller but devastating emergencies to the affected communities. Child participation has been given central place in those preparedness interventions.

### *Lessons Learned*

Capacity building of the staff members of the organisations (on child rights and Child Rights Programming, child participation) who are involved in disaster management and community development, needs to be given priority. This should be considered by all organisations that are working in disaster prone areas and have a mandate of being involved in disaster relief and rehabilitation.

Organisations should consider participation of children from the very beginning of the rescue and relief stage. In most of the cases many organisations determine the relief and response package by themselves or some organisations consult the adults from some communities but forget the children, giving the reason of time constraints.

There is a need of advocacy to integrate the perspectives of children's rights and their participation in the policy and legislation formulated by the government. INGOs and NGOs convinced on the importance of child rights and their participation in DRR by demonstrating some concrete work, should start national level advocacy to sensitise the government officials and other key stakeholders. This would create an impact at the policy level.

Documentation of the initiatives focusing on child rights and children's participation in DRR should be given priority so that we can bring out the lessons learned and challenges faced.



## Chapter 3

### Child Participation in Disasters

The relief and rehabilitation programmes are likely to fall short of their aims to reach children if they do not have a child rights approach. Further, the absence of a rights based approach can expose children to exploitation in ways well-intentioned adults do not expect. Children's participation is an ongoing process of children's active involvement in decisions that affect their lives. It requires information sharing and dialogue between children and adults as well as among children themselves, based on mutual respect and power sharing. *Genuine participation gives children the power to shape both the process and outcome of the intervention.* There are many examples of working with children as partners that have resulted in positive outcomes in South Asia. These examples point to key learnings for empowering both children and adults, who are working together for realisation of child rights.<sup>57</sup>

In this chapter, we present few more case studies (in addition to cases that are presented in the earlier chapters) that highlight different aspects of child participation in disasters. The case examples provide insights into the various strategies used by the children and child-led organisations in their response to disasters in the South Asia region. The aim is to capture good practices for working with and for children in disasters. We hope that these case studies shed further light on how child participation can be assured in preparedness, relief and recovery phases of a disaster.

#### Case 1: Nepal: Children's Solidarity

*The Kathmandu Post*, 1 August, 2002 reports that a number of school children were involved in raising funds in support of flood and landslide victims in Khotang and Makwanpur districts.

*"No food to eat, no clothes to wear, no place to stay. One never knows nature's fury, so there is no reason to live. The rains have destroyed the houses and fields and means of sustenance are gone. Why to live in this huge world? For everything has been lost".* This is a fragment of the tragic song that students of a private school sang in the capital while raising funds to help

<sup>57</sup> Source: Ravi Karkara. accessed from [http://www.ispcan.org/documents/VID/Child\\_Participation\\_RK.pdf](http://www.ispcan.org/documents/VID/Child_Participation_RK.pdf)



the flood and landslide-affected people of Makawanpur and Khotang districts on early Wednesday. The song was written by Suprasanna Bhattarai, a seventh grade student of Bouddha Secondary School and sang by her schoolmates, who were joined by their teachers, as they went door-to-door asking for donations to help fellow Nepalese in trouble. Around 150 students took part in the event, taking to the streets of Jorpati and Bouddha, on the outskirts of the capital. As the students crowded the streets, vehicles stopped to offer money, while others threw money and clothes from the balconies. They seemed proud to help the children, who employed innovative methods to raise funds.

“If a Nepali doesn’t help a Nepali in need then who will?” questioned Krishna Basnet, a ninth grader. “The people who are victims of floods and landslides need us and it is our duty to help our brothers and sisters. This was the first time I was involved in fund-raising and I hope to do more in the future,” added Basnet. The principal of the school, Devi Ghimire, was pleased to see the creativity and energy of the students to raise funds for those in need. “We were able to raise Rs 51,000 in cash and Rs 100,000 worth of clothes in just a few hours,” she claimed. “What is even more interesting is that the students raised more funds than the adults,” said Ghimire. “Apart from the Rs 51,000 raised today”, she added, “the children, parents and teachers have raised additional Rs 10,000”.

“We plan to directly deliver the clothes and basic necessities, brought from the money raised, to the flood and landslide affected areas of Makawanpur and Khotang,” said Ghimire. The school will continue the fund-raising event for a week. According to the principal, Gyanodaya Balbatika School, through the efforts of the students, raised Rs 30,000.

On the other side of the city, at Shankhamul, students of Pacific Academy School, too, raised funds to help victims of floods and landslides. With their own initiative and guidance by the teachers, the students raised over Rs 4,000 and 11 bagfuls of clothes for the flood and landslide victims. “Helping the flood-affected people of Nepal is our responsibility,” said Sharmila Chalajain, Class 9, “When the Rotary Club visited our school we decided we had to do something to help.” Dharma Ratna Silpakar of the Rotary Club of Yala, Patan has been impressed by the response from the children at school level in helping the victims. “Around three schools in Patan are also organising campaigns to raise funds,” said Silpakar.

“The children are taking keen interest in social service which is a good sign for the future of Nepal,” Silpakar said.



## Case 2: Children's Neighbourhood Parliaments and the Tsunami: India<sup>58</sup>

The Voluntary Health Association of Kanyakumari (VHAK) founded by Fr Edwin started children's neighbourhood parliaments based on the concept of convergent community action. Neighbourhood parliaments aim at organising children not only to help themselves but also to motivate the elders to address civic rights, community issues and personal problems and in the process get empowered. The territorially organised mini-wards are federated through representative structures at the levels of the village, panchayat block and the district. Each of these structures has their own

office bearers and its ministers for concerns that are relevant at the localities and levels concerned. The children are in the ages of six to eighteen years.



Virgin Rose of Pallam, Kanyakumari district, the Chief Minister of the village federation of the neighbourhood parliaments was rolled over by the waves during the Tsunami. When on her feet, she saw children dazed and in danger of being pulled into the sea and nobody around to help, she quickly gathered her courage and wit and collected twenty children. She led them to a bus, informed the parish and the police and took them out of danger and ensured that miscreants did not take advantage of

the situation and exploit them. Thus saving and protecting 20 children around her.

In the post Tsunami scenario, neighbourhood parliaments worked not only as forums to provide relief, provide additional nutrition support and psychosocial care to children but also to get children to take charge of children's rights. Children conducted their own participatory healing sessions in these communities using prepared modules of laughter therapy, game therapy, fun therapy and peer counselling. In addition, they did a child rights mapping and child rights specific Participatory Learning Action (PLA).

Later, these groups continued and contributed to the community based child protection mechanisms, raising child protection issues through the village protection or watch-dog committees.

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<sup>58</sup>Source: *Best Practices in Child Participation in Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation* – Prepared for the Plan International workshop on Best practices on 15 February, 2006. Collated by Anuradha .V, Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre, Chennai. VHAK is supported by Save the Children.

### **Case 3: Children Based Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response: Rapar, Kuchchh, India**

In the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake, Save the Children UK started its intervention in Gujarat's Kuchchh region. The main focus was to ensure the delivery of all required support and services for effective Early Childhood Care and Development. The extended focus included issues like quality education, positive discipline and emergency preparedness.

Save the Children UK approached the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) with a proposal of initiating an Emergency Preparedness Programme with its 84 children's groups in Rapar block of Kuchchh district. GSDMA is also implementing the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) programme with United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) state office. One of the major deliverables of DRM programme is the state level disaster management plan culled out of district level disaster management plans, which in turn are consolidated plans of village level disaster management plans. Save the Children UK along with GSDMA-UNDP team has now designed the project 'Children Based Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response'. GSDMA provided the technical inputs, UNDP provided the subject experts and Save the Children UK provided field coordination, human resource and funds.

#### **Trainings**

The first step was to orient the partner NGOs and field staff on Earthquake Preparedness aspects as well as the project design. Second, the field workers were formed into groups to start orientation meetings with the children's groups.

The trainings on themes like first aid, search and rescue, early warning, communication, psychological care and trauma were organised on four topics for each group. Trainings were scheduled in a way that each village had at least two children trained in each of the topic. The resource persons were provided by UNDP and modules were developed in collaboration with Save the Children UK. The training methodology adopted interactive modes such as lectures, demonstrations, role plays, posters, activity and practices, video show, group activities, sensitisation, subjective games, material distribution and experience sharing.



### *Village Mapping*

After the trainings were over for each village, the trained children along with other children met and shared their learnings. The field staff took the lead in this component and conducted PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) of village mapping with all children. The village maps were documented on paper and in digital format.

### *Emergency Response Action Plan*

The resource persons from UNDP facilitated marking of safe evacuation routes, unsafe buildings, safe areas, pathways to evacuate villages, places to gather in case of an emergency and strategies to bring all children together. This was done so that no children were displaced or lost. For this, children made a list of all the village children with names of their parents. This needs to be kept updated. These action plans were then documented and drawn on the walls of Aanganwadi (village ICDS centres) along with the names of children who participated in the training.

### *Mock Drills*

In order to check the feasibility of the action plans, mock drills were conducted with the help of UNDP experts. Situations were created to which the children had to apply the Emergency Response Action Plan. Beginning from early warning to psychosocial care and ending with children collecting at one place, the mock drills gave children hands on experience.

### *The Final Step*

Under the DRM programme, each village has a Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC). The committee comprises of panchayat members, teachers, village elders and other nominees. The VDMC is recognised in the State Policy and the Act of Disaster Management. It is also provided with the power to enter any premises in case of an emergency. Its responsibilities are also well laid in the Act. The copy of the plan was duly submitted to the VDMC along with the key tool kit. This tool kit comprises of ropes and flags to mark the access routes, first aid requirements including splints, material for making a stretcher and other essentials. This tool kit has been placed in the Aanganwadi centre. Children's group and VDMC members have jointly taken responsibility of keeping it updated.

These children based emergency preparedness and response plans have now been included as an integral part of the village level action plan.<sup>59</sup>

#### **Case 4: Preparing children for disasters in Andhra Pradesh, India<sup>60</sup>**

“Willing to stay back after school?” “Yes,” says Satish shyly, a glint in his big eyes. His friends explain, “We have lots of games to play and get chocolates and biscuits!”

Boiled sweets and a liberal dose of ‘learn while you play’ is incentive enough for the children to remain in school 40 minutes after the last bell has gone. We are in Yellayyapeta village in Thondangi mandal of East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, in front of the tiled single-room school.

Radhika, a bright confident young woman in her 20s working with the local NGO ACTION, fills in the blanks. The children are being taught to protect themselves and others during cyclones. Nine districts in coastal Andhra Pradesh experience severe cyclones. High winds, torrential rain and floods completely devastate the lives and livelihoods of the people here. This early training forms part of the Community-Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) programme being carried out by a network of 20 local NGOs involved in disaster management, Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts (CADME) with support from Oxfam Great Britain (Oxfam GB).

“Children are part of the society and should know about the disasters and the distress (cyclones cause),” explains Radhika. “Right now they are kids, but as they grow up they will be able to use this knowledge and help others.”

The first lesson is about the importance of thinking straight and acting immediately after a cyclone warning has been broadcast on local radio. Safety pointers are discussed. For example: do not set out to sea if the sea is rough, first take care of the elderly, pregnant women, small children and the disabled, evacuate low-lying areas and attend to the animals.

The following week it’s time to form a warning and evacuation group. A team of eight or ten older students are chosen and trained. It is this group’s responsibility to broadcast cyclone warnings and news of impending danger to the surrounding villages. In addition, they have to instruct and guide people to move into cyclone shelters. Cyclone shelters are thick circular buildings built to withstand cyclones. One shelter can easily accommodate people from three to four villages, but it’s a tight squeeze as people bring along most of their belongings, sometimes even their cattle.

The next lesson is on first-aid. There’s a crowd of smiling bandaged faces, arms and legs. This is a favourite class too. How else can you get back at your friend if not by swathing him or her in bandages right from the chin bandage, cup-and-collar bandage,

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<sup>59</sup>Source: Nupur Pande, 2006.

<sup>60</sup>Source: <http://infochangeindia.org/index.jsp>. For further information, contact: Manager, CADME (Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts), Rajahmundry - 533106 andhra Pradesh, E-mail: cadmeindia@rediffmail.com, cadmeindia@sify.com

head bandage, chest bandage, long-arm sling, knee bandage and leg bandage? The children also learn to treat burns, fractures and scorpion bites for which they use local material like tamarind and salt.

The last class involves teaching children how to perform artificial respiration. “This takes time for the children to grasp,” explains Radhika. “Girls and boys hesitate to act in front of each other. So we make the girls do it to girls and the boys to boys”.

Finally, it’s time for the ‘disaster drill’. The children are let loose on the beach and they simulate a cyclone situation where some children need to be rescued from the sea, some are stuck in flooded areas and others are screaming out from make-believe houses. It is action time as well as fun time. The children divide themselves into their respective teams to warn, build floating devices, rescue, treat the injured and get others safely into cyclone shelters.



### Case 5: School Mapping in Sri Lanka<sup>61</sup>

School mapping exercise was found to be a useful and effective tool of child participation in DRR activities. First students draw a school map on a chart paper. Then they identify the possible areas where a disaster or accident can happen. They then identify safe areas or safe routes of evacuation. After this, the areas identified as risk areas are physically marked by a danger sign. As a third step, child-to-child activities are conducted in which girls and boys explain with the help of chart paper about the risk areas, safe areas and evacuation routes. The children then visit the physical sites identified as risk area and safe areas. An evacuation mock drill is conducted for all the children as part of the mapping exercise.

Hetti Aracchchige Ravindra Laxman Kumar is a 13-year-old Sinhala community boy studying in 8 grade in Mederipitiya Kanishta Vidyalaya in Matara District of Sri Lanka. He lost his house in the 2003 floods. He still recalls how the waters destroyed two essential parts of his life, the house and the school.

Ravindra was involved in the school mapping exercise being conducted in his school by Save the Children. He was involved in conducting a detailed school mapping exercise for his classmates, seniors, juniors and teachers. When consulted, Ravindra explained with pride “By doing this I am serving the large children community and my society. Through this many people can save lives and be better prepared to face floods”. For the question why it is important for children to be part of disaster preparedness, Ravindra replied “if children are taught disaster preparedness, they will bring a revolutionary change in the society as they are the future keepers of the villages and schools. Children of today will be parents of tomorrow and ensure that they pass this knowledge to their children and this will make disaster preparedness a societal practice which will keep on passing from generation to generation”.

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<sup>61</sup>Source Sibghatullah Ahmed and Ravi Karkara (2006) *Promoting Child Friendly and Child Centred Disaster Risks Reduction in Sri Lanka*, Save the Children

## Chapter 4

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The field evidences from South Asian region show that during the disasters the first priority was to save lives. The victims were hardly consulted about their short and longer-term needs and aspirations, while the assistance (national and international) focused on the rescue and relief (with good intentions).

During the disasters, survival needs of the children have been given a high priority, but from an adult's perspective. This is because the disaster activities focus on rescue and relief rather than special needs of the children such as health, education and recreational needs. Child protection and children's right to participation in decisions that affect their lives, often did not receive enough attention. This study appeals to all those concerned with disaster management to listen to children and recognise their capacities while designing and implementing programmes for them.

The most important element while working with and for children is to listen to them and create formal spaces for children's participation in decision-making structures. As this study shows, children have valuable insights about their situations to share with adults and duty bearers. By listening to the children and acting upon it, we are not only making them participate but also honouring their most neglected right i.e. the right to make decisions to gain control over their own lives.

The pattern of disaster activities and their implementation suggest that there is a lack of coordination between the implementing agencies GOs, NGOs, INGOs and donors, leading to unnecessary delays.

Government disaster policies in the region are not adequate in terms of protection and promotion of children's rights. Very few organisations and their staff have the expertise and experience to ensure child rights during and after disaster situations. Many of the organisations were neither emergency based nor child centred. For example, PLAN is not an emergency agency but works with children, like wise, Red Cross is not primarily a child- focused organisation, but emergency based.

With time, there have been changes in approaches and strategies used by the agencies that are involved in disasters. Although many organisations are working on disaster management, there are few efforts at documentation, mainly because they do not have the strategic mandate of working on it, Moreover, once the response and rehabilitation is completed, they forget about it. This also caused some difficulty in finding adequate information on some disaster cases such as snowstorms in Afghanistan.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

### Capacity Building

1. *Staff Capacity building:* Capacity building of the staff members is crucial for any effective programme since they are the catalytic agents in bringing change and persuading other stakeholders to bring change at a large scale. Hence staff capacity building should be given importance to bring sustained change and positive action towards consideration and integration of child rights and child participation in disaster response and rehabilitation and DRR.
2. *Integration in development work by organisations:* Disaster is reoccurring in nature but many organisations working in some areas have not integrated disaster response and preparedness and DDR with their regular development work. Since it is not preventable, experience from the field has shown that integration with development work is more sustainable and effective for reducing the risk and hazard if disaster occurs.
3. *Enlisting adult support and accountability for child rights and child participation:* In a situation where adults need to be continuously engaged in discussing child rights issues, they can play a vital role in encouraging children's involvement by sharing information in child friendly methods, modelling participatory behaviour, developing the skills needed for participation and creating safe environments for children to practice participation. This will help in applying innovative child centred and child friendly methodologies and techniques that promote child participation.
4. *Need of more research and studies from child rights perspectives and documentation:* The study shows lack of research and studies on natural disaster from child rights perspectives. Similarly, there is a severe lack of documentation of lessons learned from the previous episodes of disaster response and rehabilitation work. Hence, there needs to be focused on these aspects for future improvement.

### Child Participation and Protection

5. *Children's Protection:* Special attention needs to be given to fear, trauma, abuse and exploitation and other issues related to protection of children, which become rampant and serious but are often not considered important and thus left out. As a result, many of the children suffer much more in the post disaster stage due to these.
6. *Need to consider children's participation:* There is acute need to consider children's participation in rescue, relief and rehabilitation and preparedness phases of disaster including situation assessment and decision-making. Evidence from the field has shown that children's participation is possible in all stages and has enriched the quality of response and support and enhanced the ownership and sustainability of the programme.
7. *Priority on child initiated and led DRR:* The learnings and evidence from the work reveals the need of preparedness and DRR work to be children initiated and child led. Evidence from the field shows initiation of some small-scale projects through child clubs, child groups and schools. With the integration of school, educational and recreational activities, we can reach out to many children and

through them to their parents. Children serve as change agents both for the present as well as the future and make the change sustainable in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

8. *Working with children on child led indicators:* It is important that a system for monitoring and evaluation is in place while working on child friendly and child sensitive DRR. Children can be involved in identifying child led indicators. Children are best able to recognise changes in their lives and communities. Boys and girls from various backgrounds should be involved in evaluating the impact of DRR programmes.



### Policies and Legislations

9. *Need of child focused and child sensitive policies:* Policies related to natural disaster preparedness, relief and response are adult focused. There is much less consideration of children's needs and rights. Hence, children who are most vulnerable in disasters are always left behind and suffer a lot. Therefore, such policies and guidelines need to be child focused and sensitive. The specific survival, development and protection needs of children need to be addressed in emergency response, rehabilitation and preparedness.
10. *Need for advocacy and integration in curricula:* Learnings and best practices need to be documented and disseminated. NGOs who have pioneered child rights focused disaster preparedness and response programme need to design and implement systematic programmes for advocacy to bring changes in national level policy and practices (various level – grassroots, sub-national, national and regional) as well as integration of disaster preparedness in curricula.



## Annexure I

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## Annexure 2

### Checklist for interviews with policy makers, implementers, NGO and donor representatives on child rights and disasters

*The overall objective of this research is to analyse the status of child rights in disaster preparedness and response programmes in South Asia.*

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- To study child rights practice in specific Disaster Response Programmes (DRP)
- To document best practices related to inclusion of child rights in DRP.

#### **Main Research Question**

*Whether and how children's rights have been addressed by the duty bearers during disaster relief and rehabilitation? Whether child rights has been incorporated in the programme (design) being implemented, what have been the results and impact on children's lives?*

Date:

Name:

Designation:

Office:

Contact Details:

### Section I

Main objective of the study is to analyse the status of child rights in disaster preparedness and response programmes in South Asia.

1. Could you explain about your experience and involvement in disaster management?

What was the scale of loss and destruction?

2. Could you give examples of the role played by the government, non-governmental agencies and the community in disaster prevention, preparedness and rehabilitation activities?
3. What are the relevant policy and legislations related to disasters?<sup>62</sup>
4. Did having a positive policy framework help in programme development?
5. Who are the key actors in disaster prevention, preparedness, relief and rehabilitation?
6. What approaches did you use to do assessment at the community level?
7. What approaches did you follow to reach out to the poorest and most marginalised section of the society?
8. What approaches did you follow to reach out to the children – both girls and boys?
9. Could you comment on the efficacy and implementation of these policies and programmes? Please share what went well and what did not go so well; what were the areas of failure and shortcomings.
10. Could you describe best practices and examples of disaster management, if any?

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<sup>62</sup> In case of Nepal: Natural Disaster Rehabilitation Act of 1982 (*Davi Prokosh (Uddar) Ain 2039*)



**Section 2:**

The focus is to find out whether and how child rights have been recognised during pre and post disaster activities.

**2A. Prevention and Preparedness**

11. Are there special provisions in the policy or legislations (both government, INGO and NGO) regarding child protection and their participation in disaster preparedness policies and management plans?
12. Are there any special schemes designed for children? Were children consulted in the process?
13. Is there any material on disaster preparedness made available to children in local languages?  
  
Are those materials and schemes child friendly? If yes, could you explain or give examples?
14. Do disaster plans and activities (preparedness and relief) address the specific needs of children of different age groups, gender, caste and abilities?  
  
If not, what do you suggest regarding children's participation in disaster management?
15. Is there any role played by the Bal/Kishori samaha/sanghas (child clubs)? If yes, could you explain and provide contacts.
16. Do you think there is a role that children could play in disaster prevention and preparedness? If yes, could you explain? If no, why do you think so?
17. If your organisation had a preparedness programme, how did it help address the needs when the disaster happened?
18. If you did not have a preparedness programme, do you have plans to develop one? If yes, when and what approaches are you following? Please refer to issues of systems, logistics, human resources, etc.

**2B. Relief and Rehabilitation**

19. What are the relief and rehabilitation activities? Have the children participated or been consulted during designing of these programmes?
20. Were children's needs were addressed? If yes, how? Could you give some examples?

21. Is there any material on relief and rehabilitation made available to children in local languages?
22. Do you think there is a role that children could play in relief and rehabilitation? If yes, could you explain? If not, why do you think so?
23. If your organisation had a relief and rehabilitation programme, how did it help address the needs when the disaster happened?
24. If you did not have a relief and rehabilitation programme, do you have plans to develop one? If yes, when and what approaches are you following? Please refer to issues of systems, logistics, HR, etc.

**2C: Knowledge, Attitude and Capacity**

25. Based on your experience of responding to different disasters over a period of time, do you think the organisation made adequate efforts to internalise learnings from past experiences?
26. How and what would you have done differently with regard to disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation, from a child rights perspective, in the programme that you have implemented?
27. What specific knowledge and skills came handy in responding to the disaster?
28. What were the specific gaps in knowledge and skills that hampered the pace and quality of the programmes?
29. What kind of capacities do you have internally to support work on child rights in disasters? What are the capacities gaps and do you have plans to address those gaps?
30. How would you upscale and mainstream best practices on child rights and disasters?
31. How can children's participation in disaster management be facilitated?
32. Are you aware of any other examples of children's participation in disasters in other countries in South Asia?
33. In your view what is the present status of the disaster prone or affected community (children, youth, women and disabled) and their lives after the disaster?
34. Could you suggest any other person, institution or NGO for further discussions on the issue of child rights and disasters? Are there any other material or websites that can be useful for this study?
35. Comments/Observations

## Annexure 3

# Annotated Bibliography

### I. INDIA

#### *National Disaster Management Division (2004) Disaster Management in India: A Status Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, p 86*

This report discusses the various legal policy frameworks of the Government of India, which deals with disaster. It describes the disaster prevention and mitigation programmes undertaken in India. The 'preparedness' section describes the different types of preparedness measures taken.

The report was published in August 2004 and is divided in five sections i.e. Introduction, Institutional and Policy Framework, Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness and Conclusion.

The annexure in the report includes important material on:

- National Disaster Management Framework
- Tenth Plan - Chapter on Disaster Management
- Guidelines to State Governments

#### **Nature, scale and types of Disasters**

Section one reports that in India, about 60 per cent of the landmass is prone to earthquakes of various intensities, over 40 million hectare is prone to floods, about 8 per cent of the total area is prone to cyclones and 68 per cent of the area is susceptible to drought. In the decade 1990-2000, an average of about 4,344 people lost their lives and about 30 million people were affected by disasters every year (p 1). The Bhuj earthquake accounted for 13,805 deaths and super cyclone in Orissa accounted for 9,885 deaths. The Government is of the view that if appropriate mitigation measures had been taken, these casualties could have been reduced significantly (p 41).

#### **Approach**

The super cyclone in Orissa in October 1999 and the Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat in January 2001 underscored the need to adopt a multidimensional endeavour, involving diverse scientific, engineering, financial and social process, with a multi-sectoral approach and the incorporation of risk reduction in developmental plans and strategies (p 1).

The report mentioned that “the new policy emanates from the belief that investments in mitigation are much more cost effective than expenditure on relief and rehabilitation” (p 2).

The new approach adopted by the government has been translated into a National Disaster Framework (a road map) covering institutional mechanisms, disaster prevention strategy, early warning system, disaster mitigation, preparedness and response and human resource development.

After the Bhuj earthquake, a review conducted led to the decision that Disaster Management should be transferred from Ministry of Agriculture to Ministry of Home Affairs (excluding drought and epidemics and those emergencies and disasters which were specially allotted to other Ministries).

### **Capacity Building/Training**

Disaster management as a subject in social sciences has been introduced in the school curriculum for class 8 and 9 in schools run under CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) system. The State Governments have been advised to take similar steps vis-à-vis their school boards.

Chapter seven in this report describes disaster management and the development perspective. Section 7.38 (b) describes “an appropriate component of disaster awareness at the school level will help increase awareness among children and, in many cases, parents and other family members through these children”.

### **Conclusion**

The institutional and policy mechanisms for carrying out relief and rehabilitation activities in relation to disasters are laid and carried out since independence. The changed or the new policy approach of the government not only gave importance to post disaster aspects but also gave priority to pre disaster aspects of preparedness, prevention and mitigation.

The new policy or framework and the document included in the Tenth Five year Plan does not explicitly describe, acknowledge or recognise the disaster management from child rights perspective. The government documents do not illustrate the role children could play through their participation in disaster mitigation and rehabilitation activities. This could be due to lack of recognition of children’s role in the government approach to disaster management itself.

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Also refer to: National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) [www.nidm.net](http://www.nidm.net)  
Disaster Management Institute, Bhopal, [www.dmibpl.org](http://www.dmibpl.org)  
Centre for Disaster Management, Yeshwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Pune, [www.yashada.org](http://www.yashada.org)  
Centre for Disaster Mitigation and Management, Anna University, Chennai

***Government of India (GOI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (nd) Disaster Risk Management Programme (2002-2007): Community Based Disaster Reduction and Recovery through Participation of Communities and Local Self Governments, Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI and UNDP, p 27***

A useful document to understand GOI-UNDP initiated Disaster Risk Management Programme. The programme aims to contribute towards the social and economic development goals of the Government of India and enabling 12 selected State Governments to minimise losses of development gains from disasters and reduce vulnerability.

The programme at the national level seeks to provide support to the Ministry of Home Affairs to set up an institutional framework for disaster preparedness, response, prevention and mitigation and would be used as a platform to launch initiatives envisaged in the National Disaster Management Framework. The programme will help boost capacities at all levels with special emphasis on women, to address disasters through an integrated approach for reducing socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities (p 1).

Though the programme is designed to reduce vulnerability of different groups, it mentions women but not children as an important group. In the same report (p 16) under gender equity in disaster preparedness and mitigation, it mentions children as vulnerable but does not mention children's representation in disaster management committees and teams. The conclusion is that children are often seen as vulnerable (or recipients) but not as participants in disaster related planning and activities.

***Central Board of Secondary Education (2005) Together Towards a Safer India (Part 1): An introduction to disaster management for Class 8, Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi***

This book is a part of the curriculum of class 8 students. It provides a general understanding of disaster management. This book contains six chapters, namely, Being Prepared, Earthquakes, Cyclones, Floods, Drought and Manmade Disasters. Emphasis is given to make students understand the terminologies used in disaster management. The book is useful in helping a student to know the nature of disasters and mitigation and protection measures to be taken.

**Central Board of Secondary Education (2005) Together Towards a Safer India (Part II): A textbook on disaster management for Class 9, Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi**

This book is a part of the curriculum of class 9. It provides the students information on various types of disasters like earthquake, cyclone, Tsunami and floods. It explains the basic terms and concept of disaster. To become a disaster manager, understanding disaster mitigation, preventing common manmade disasters and preventing community based manmade disasters are the components of this book.

In addition to the present content, it should have been helpful for students if the book described the role of children in disaster management. Examples of children and their role, contribution in disasters (rescue, relief and distribution, passing information) if included, would have been motivating for the students.

**Central Board of Secondary Education (2005) Together towards a Safer India (Part III): A textbook on disaster management for Class 10, Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi**

This book is a part of the curriculum of class 10. It provides the students information on various types of disasters like earthquake, cyclone, Tsunami and floods. The contents in the book have emphases on survival skills during such incidents, along with providing basic information about natural calamities. The alternate communication systems, safe construction practices, sharing responsibilities during the disasters and planning ahead for possible disasters are some of the main features of this book.

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**Reflections**

*It is appreciable that CBSE has introduced the subject on Disaster Management as a frontline curriculum in Social Science for class 8 in the year 2003, for class 9 and 10 in 2005. The content is rich and well researched. The emphasis is on awareness and sensitisation of students and teachers on various hazards and disasters and preventive and precautionary measures to be taken to address hazards. It would have been much richer and action based if the content was approached from a child rights perspective while presenting the material. However, important lessons can be learnt from CBSE's initiative for introducing similar curriculum in schools in multi hazard prone countries such as Nepal.*

**National Disaster Management Division (nd) School Safety (version 1.0),  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India**

This is a handbook for education offices, school teachers and principals, administrators and emergency officials. This publication highlights the need for preparation of safe school environment. A description of School Safety Programme is provided in this book. In addition, it provides strategies for a school safety programme to be implemented in each school in the disaster prone areas.

A framework for school safety Advisory Committee provides a structure for the management of school safety. This publication includes information on demonstrating disaster risk management. This book is a useful tool to introduce school safety. However, there is no clear mention of ways students can play an active role.

As part of the model school safety Advisory Committee, the report mentions that there is a need for Disaster Club in the school, in addition to other committees like School Management Committee, Parent Teachers Association, Trained teachers and Volunteers and District-wise school safety Advisory Committee. The focus is on the management structure rather than the process. For example, there is no mention of the need for consultation with students while making plans. The roles of children not only as beneficiaries but also as equal participants in the school safety and/or disaster management activities need to be adopted by the government.

## **2. PUBLICATIONS by PLAN**

**PLAN (2005) Little Green Disaster Book, Plan Asia**

The book aims to offer PLAN's frontline staff and country offices some guidelines to help them be more prepared to deal with disasters. The book is a good resource to design child centred disaster response activities.

The *Little Green Disaster Book* draws on principles of international law, human rights and child rights. For this book, *disaster is considered to be rapid-onset, larger scale event or set of events (natural and man-made) resulting in damage and destruction that outstrips a society's capacity to cope with its results.*

The first phase of this book explains the activities to be done by PLAN's staff members when disaster strikes. It instructs the readers to first think of oneself and ones family. This should be followed by informing the rest of the organisation about the incident. Mobilisation of staff, assessment of the situation and decision of the

response to the calamity should be done immediately after insuring ones safety. The staff members are advised to follow the instructions provided in this book to carry out the rest of the relief activities.

The following is an overview of the typical Plan response to a disaster:

**Be prepared before disaster strikes**

- Help children in disaster prone areas be aware.
- Help community develop disaster-preparedness plan.
- Ensure that staff members are sufficiently trained in basic disaster relief.
- Integrate disaster preparedness in regular project design.

**During the emergency and relief stage**

- Mobilise internal human resource.
- Seek out and rely on local community capacities and resources.
- Establish regular contact with children and ensure that their voices are heard.
- Support effort to track the history and situation of individual children.
- Find reliable caretakers for unaccompanied children.
- Establish children's education as a priority.
- Use the disaster-recovery situation to influence and change the perceptions of adults about the needs and views of children.

This book also contains Do's and Don'ts in a disaster zone. The roles and responsibility of PLAN offices in preparation, emergency and relief phases of the disaster are explained.

Effective relief intervention depends on good assessments and quick and flexible decision- making. It suggests that PLAN offices be prepared to make assessment by providing a sample assessment form. It also suggests that the places have baseline information in case of disaster be pre-identified. Similarly, instructions for emergency phase and relief phase are also provided.

The media and communication unit is responsible for mobilising public response to disaster and promoting public understanding. This book, *Little Green Disaster Book*, has provided instructions on how to make the best use of communications tools during preparation, emergency and relief phases of disaster.



The second phase of this book provides guidance for carrying out programmes. The participation and mobilisation of children and young people have been given importance. It states, “*Children and young people, especially adolescents should be among the leading participants in all stages of disaster preparedness, relief, recovery and reconstruction*”. Likewise, recommendations for preparedness, emergency and relief phase, while carrying out important programmes like water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, non-food items, shelter and community re-establishment, health, psychological support, education, livelihood, registration, civil documentation and support have been provided.

Operation is the heart of relief programme. The book *Little Green Disaster Book* provides guidelines for undertaking operation works. It provides guidelines for organising the office to meet the challenges of disaster. The other component of this book provides guidelines for fundraising. It advises the Plan offices to have a proposal ready and gives preference to local non-affected communities to respond to disaster. Coordinating with other NGO’s and fundraising fund are suggestions made by this book.

Overall, this book is an important effort of Plan to prepare its offices and staffs to respond to the disaster that may strike their place of work.

#### ***PLAN (2005) Searching for “Punchi”, Plan Sri Lanka***

This is an informative story on the Tsunami and the ways to save oneself. Sunil, a resident of Southern coast of Sri Lanka loses his kitten, Punchi during the Tsunami. Fortunately, he is able to survive the Tsunami. Later during the relief operations, he happens to learn about the Tsunami. At the end, Sunil does not find his kitten, Punchi but another kitten, which he adopts.

This book provides information about the Tsunami. . In addition, it explains ways to survive the Tsunami through the story- “Sunil learned that often before a Tsunami, water from the shore of the sea get pulled away... don’t wait, instead run and climb up a hill or on a roof or the highest floor of the building you can find.” This book will be useful for informing the children on Tsunami.

#### ***PLAN (2005) Worldwide Annual Review***

This report presents the work done by Plan during the year 2005. The report shows that the income of Plan has grown to USD 501 million from USD 430 million. The report documents that “Child centred community development is the foundation of Plan’s approach”. This report gives an overview of the expenditure incurred in different components. The ‘Children Building the World’ and ‘Communities Building Their World’ are sections that describe important and successful project undertaken by Plan.

### 3. SAVE THE CHILDREN

#### *Save the Children (nd) Rising above the Big Wave: Tsunami One Year Report, Save the Children in Sri Lanka*

The Tsunami was the biggest natural disaster Sri Lanka has ever faced, affecting much of the island's coastline. More than 230,000 families were directly affected. Save the Children has been working in Sri Lanka for 30 years. This report provides information on the programmes carried out by Save the Children in Sri Lanka.

Child protection was one of the programmes undertaken. With the Ministry of Social Welfare, Save the Children set up child protection committees in 60 villages to improve coordination and implementation of child protection services. It also funded the construction of 60 social development centres. Furthermore, Save the Children helped in rehabilitation of 21 schools that were used as shelters benefiting about 15,000 children. Save the Children worked to replace boats registered as lost and built 1,500 transitional shelters.

The work done in the area of disaster preparedness, livelihood and shelter is explained in this report. Disaster preparedness focuses to a large extent, on community perceptions, behaviours and practices and a major one was to establish 'best practices' as societal norms.

#### *Save the Children (2004) From Strength to Strength, Save the Children South and Central Asia*

This book is an outcome of interaction between children from 14 child-led organisations in South and Central Asia, who met for a workshop in January 2004. All these children belong to organisations that are working with children. During the workshop they discussed and shared experiences of their initiatives. In addition, the publication includes the skills taught to the participants.

#### *Lansdown Gerison (2005) The Evolving Capacities of the Child, Save the Children and UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, p 62*

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and Save the Children have commenced this study to better understand the evolving capacities of the children and the implications of these capacities for the enjoyment of children's rights. This study identifies three separate but inter-linked strands, crucial to understanding the concept of evolving capacities of the child.

The report is divided into two parts. Part One has three sections. Section One describes the concept of evolving capacities of the child. Section Two highlights child development and the evolving capacities of the child. Section Three includes implications of children's evolving capacities for the realisation of their rights. Part Two is divided in two sections. Section One discusses the developing legal frameworks

and Section Two discusses creating environments to promote, respect and protect children's evolving capacities.

First, it analyses the development dimension of the Conventions. Second, it analyses the participation dimension and makes efforts to find the capacities of the child to exercise rights for themselves. Finally, the study examines evolving capacities as a protective concept.

#### **4. NEPAL**

##### ***NSET-Nepal and GHI (nd) Earthquake Scenario***

This document describes the possible physical damage and social impact of an earthquake, similar to that which occurred in 1934 in the Kathmandu valley. While describing the possible condition after the earthquake, *Earthquake Scenario* provides the readers with necessary information on best practices during the earthquake with cartoons on each page.

The story of Bhaicha is another component of this book. Bhaicha is a lower middle-class man who works as a clerk in a finance company. This book explains the consequences of the earthquake through Bhaicha's life. The conditions of different phases during the earthquake are described through the story.

## Annexure 4

### Country Case Studies

#### 3.1 Disasters in Nepal (with a special focus on floods)

##### Introduction

Geographically, Nepal a mountainous country is divided into five different regions i.e. High Himalayas, Himalayas, Mahabharat, Chure and Tarai. Of the total, 83 per cent of the land is hills and only 17 per cent is plain Tarai. Of the total population, the mid hills and Chure hills carry 45.5 per cent of the population, whereas Tarai takes a load of 47 per cent. Every year, landslides cause huge losses in Mahabharat and Churia, allowing heavy sediments to flow along with rainwater causing flash flood in inner Tarai and depositing the sediment in Tarai during floods. It has been estimated that floods cause a loss of about 30 per cent of revenue in Tarai and 2 per cent in the hills river beds. Some Tarai rivers are rising at an annual rate of 15-30 cm, due to high sedimentation. (New Era)

Nepal is highly affected by disasters such as floods and landslides every year. In 1993, the number of people dying from flood was 1,336. The same happened in 2003. The floods and landslides affected 62 districts out of 75 districts. The disaster killed 300 people and 353 were injured, 59 persons were reported missing, 10,474 families were badly affected and 2,198 families were displaced. 1,578 houses were completely destroyed and 4,318 houses were destroyed partially. (Nepal Red Cross Society)

The disaster reported between 4 July and 25 July in 2004, indicates that the floods and landslides affected the lives of approximately 360,243 persons in 62,357 families in 25 districts (NRCS and MOHA). The affected districts are: Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sindhuli, Sarlahi, Rauthat, Bara, Parsa of east Tarai in Nepal and similarly, Arghakhanchi, Palpa, Dhading, Makawanpur, Ramechhap, Kabhre, Udayapur, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Terhathum, Kabhre in East Hills and Pyuthan, Achham west hills in Nepal.

Nepal Disaster Situation Summary, as of July 25 2004

No. of district affected	25
No. of VDCs affected	450 VDC and 8 Municipalities
Total population affected	0.4 million
Total area affected	Not available (na)
Total crop area affected	na
Loss of lives	173 (as on 25/7/2004)
Seriously Injured population	305
People Missing	35
Families Displaced / Families Affected	28,555 and 62,357 HHs
Loss of livestock	na
Houses damaged	15,563 fully and 345,563 partially
Physical infrastructure affected (road, tube well, ponds, embankments, etc.)	Major bridge, highway, Limited data available
Loss due to the flood	50 Crores
Relief Camps	DNDRC at District level, NRCS, INGOs, NGOs, Civil Society Organisation and local units of political parties at the local level

Source: NRCS and News Media

**Policies for Disaster Management**

**Natural Disaster Relief Act, 1982**

Before 1981, there were no organised relief and rehabilitation activities for natural disasters in Nepal. It was done, based on social welfare activities of local institution and individuals. It was in 1982 that Natural Disaster Relief Act (NDRA), 1982 in enforced.

National Disaster Relief Regulations (NDRR) is yet to be formulated. This is very essential, as due to its lack, the Act cannot be fully effective. Duties and responsibilities of various other disaster management agencies are to be reflected in NDRR. NDRA, 1982 does not describe the duties and responsibilities of all the disaster management related agencies other than the Ministry of Home Affairs. Furthermore, the provision of a Relief and Treatment Sub-Committee, Supply, Shelter and Rehabilitation Sub-Committee, Regional Natural Disaster Relief Committees (NDRC) and Local NDRC have been made in the NDRA, 1982, but they are not made active enough. At present, only Community NDRC and District NDRC are very active. Besides, as the NDRA, 1982 does not describe the functions and duties of all district disaster management related agencies, the problem of cooperation, coordination and mutual understanding between various district management related agencies are seen. The act was amended twice in 1989 and 1992

### **Disaster Policy Nepal in the Tenth Five Year Plan**

The objective of the Tenth Plan is to make disaster management more systematic and effective so as to contribute to making the construction and development projects of the country durable, sustainable and highly result-oriented.

#### *a. Strategies*

1. At the time of formulating plans and policies relating to disaster management, emphasis should be given to the use and development of technology that reduces the effects of natural disaster and its environmental impacts to the minimum. .
2. The rescue and relief provided by the state to the families suffering from natural disaster should be made transparent.
3. A hazard map of earthquakes, floods and landslides should be prepared.

#### *b. Policy*

1. A long-term disaster management action plan should be made, co-ordination between donors, the government, NGOs and the private sector must be established and the formulation and implementation of sectoral programmes based on the action plan should be made more effective.
2. The study of environmental impact and disaster evaluation study of infrastructure construction projects should be made compulsory.
3. Public awareness programmes must be launched to increase people's participation in the management of natural disasters including floods, landslides and earthquakes.

4. The institutional strengthening of organisations involved in disaster management should be emphasised and Disaster Management Department be developed as the central co-ordinating unit.
5. In order to manage water induced disasters and to enhance the capacity of organisations involved in the formulation of its policy, action plan and programme, the participation of the people in watershed management and river control should be enlisted.
6. A hazard map of flood, landslide, silt flow and glaciers will be prepared through the collection, exchange, storage and flow of information relating to water induced disasters and disaster prone areas must be classified.

### *Effectiveness of the policy and legal means*

Local Governance Act is silent on natural disaster management and relief. It has created a vacuum in effective implementation of relief activities at the local level. Most of the time, the clear instruction on responsibilities of different departments and coordination among them is lacking in Regulation and ways to operationalise legal policy document (based on the Act, 1982.) The act and policy document is silent on many dimension i.e. children, women, caste and class.

### *Organisational Response for Disaster Management*

#### **1. Home Ministry and Department for Natural Disaster Management**

As per Natural Disaster Relief Act 1992, Home Ministry and Department for Disaster Management are responsible for relief activities, whereas Ministry of Physical Planning and Housing is responsible to implement a long-term solution for the displaced. Central, regional, district and local relief committees are formed to channelise the implementation of relief activities. The central committee is chaired by the Home Minister and is responsible to disburse the budgeted amount for relief activities. The District Committee is responsible to monitor the relief activities, whereas local relief committees are responsible for field implementation.

#### **2. District Natural Disaster Relief Committee**

The Committee is chaired by the Chief District Officer (CDO). A victim of natural disaster should apply to CDO to receive the relief support. The Committee is responsible to coordinate relief activities with the support from line agencies i.e. Police, Red Cross, Army, civil society.

*Loophole:* The amount of fund related to relief activities is disbursed equally to each district. However, prioritising the urgency of support is lacking. For example, Action Aid report quotes CDO of Baglung district, “we have lot of fund for relief activities this year”. The fund was under utilized in that year, as the hazard did not take place. However, the other district that was in need of more fund than allocated is deprived of the support.

***Organisations involved in relief activities (other than Nepal government for financial and technical help)***

**1. Nepal Red Cross Society**

Nepal Red Cross has been implementing Community Based Disaster Preparedness programme since 1997. To date, it has covered twenty-four districts. Among them, the programme has been completed in two districts and rest of the districts are still implementing the programmes. The programme has covered 247 communities in these districts giving direct benefit to around 1,785 families.

By this programme, the community is made capable to respond to disasters having proper preparedness and mitigation on time. Under the programme, communities identify local hazards, risk and vulnerability and prepare a disaster preparedness plan (DP Plan). They are made aware and conscious on disaster management. They are provided with basic trainings on disaster management and first aid. With these information and skills, the community's capacity is increased and they can better manage local disasters. Nepal Red Cross has also made stocks of necessary relief materials available at 27 different depots and warehouses located at strategic parts in the country.

**2. UNDP Disaster Management Group**

This group within UNDP was established since 1993 to respond to the flood relief programme in Tarai.

**3. Other organisations**

JICA, ICIMOD, USAID, Save the Children, Action Aid, Care Nepal, GTZ, King Mehendra Trust and World Food Programme

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### 3.2 South Asia Earthquake 2005 (Pakistan and Kashmir)

#### Introduction

A 7.6 magnitude earthquake, centred 95 km northeast of Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, struck at 08:50 local time (03:50 GMT) on 8 October 2005. Its tremors could be felt across the region from the Afghan capital of Kabul to the Indian capital of New Delhi. According to Pakistan's Federal Relief Commission, 73,338 people lost their lives and 128,309 were injured in the disaster. More than 3.5 million people have also been left homeless. Some 2,153 primary schools were damaged or destroyed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, while another 2,734 primary schools were damaged or destroyed in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). An estimated 853 teachers and 18,095 students were killed and over 70 per cent of the health facilities were damaged or destroyed in both regions. Children make up half the population of the affected areas and are particularly vulnerable. It is estimated 50,000 children have either been orphaned or separated from their parents. Both domestic and international adoptions are uncommon in Pakistan because of religious beliefs that prohibit non-relative adoptions and a lack of legal provisions for the practice. As a result, the United Nations Children's Fund has urged the Pakistani Parliament to pass a comprehensive child-protection bill. Improved access to healthcare, including mobile health units and psychosocial support and the reconstruction of schools are key aspects of the recovery effort. The loss of livelihood and productive assets has left families in an extremely vulnerable position. One of the main challenges in the near and medium term will be enabling people to return to their normal lives by helping them restore their communities and get back to work.

The earthquake had adverse impact on Pakistan's overall economy, at least in the short run. It is true that the affected region accounts for a fairly small fraction of the country's output. Pakistan's main economic infrastructure (factories, ports, financial centres) was mostly unaffected. Similarly, Pakistan's main crops: cotton and wheat are mostly

grown in other parts of the country. Still, with economic activity having been virtually wiped out in the directly hit areas, there will be some dampening impact on growth.

This earthquake highlighted the urgent need for Pakistan to improve its ability to monitor seismic activity. Large areas of Pakistan fall within the Himalayan arc, a region prone to movements of the tectonic plates covering the Earth's surface. Yet, academics there say the authorities have so far paid little attention to the need to study and record earthquakes. "Utterly unsatisfactory," responds Iqbal Mohsin, vice-chancellor of the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology (FUUAST), when asked to describe the country's earthquake monitoring network. "We have just two seismology centres of any use in the country, which is totally inadequate. "Pakistan should have at least fifty centres with seismometers, especially because we now know exactly how vulnerable we are to seismic activity," says Mohsin.

The international community is offering a huge financial assistance in response to the earthquake. The US government supported USD 510 million in earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts to assist the people of Pakistan and to support Pakistani government's relief efforts. The Government of Australia, through the Australian Agency for International

Development (AusAID), has made an Australian USD 20 million contribution to Asia Development Bank's Pakistan Earthquake Fund (PEF). The Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission – known as ECHO – which has been working with UNICEF as part of a special emergency response programme, contributed USD 500,000 to the effort. Much of this funding has been in the form of charter flights to Pakistan bringing life-saving supplies for children and women. As of 22 March 2006, the American Red Cross collected USD 16.2 million for relief and recovery programmes for the survivors of the South Asia earthquake. In addition to the relief programmes, technical support plays important role in reviving and further preventing natural disasters like earthquakes. Japan offered USD 20 million in aid to Pakistan following the powerful earthquake. In addition to these aids, Japan should be able to do more as a country that has survived frequent earthquakes. Japan should provide not only immediate relief aid, but also long-term restoration assistance to Pakistan. For example, Japan, a country often struck by earthquakes, is good at making long-term plans for post-earthquake reconstruction. Excellent quake-resistant engineering technology this country has developed will be very helpful in reconstructing buildings and other infrastructure. Japan could play a major role in international assistance for Pakistan.

### *Cases of Support Received*

#### **Noor Handicap Children Welfare Organisation**

Direct Relief announced in April a grant of USD 3,000 to support health services needed by physically handicapped children in the earthquake-devastated region of Gujarat, Pakistan. The Noor Handicap children Welfare Organisation will use the funds to cover

the cost of medicines to treat blind children, along with other earthquake victims. The organisation works out of two Hashim Welfare Hospitals in Pindi Hashim and Sesar – rural villages that have seen few relief services, despite hosting large numbers of refugees since the 8 October 2005 earthquake.

In March, the National Rural Support Programme attended to 7,000 patients, an increase of nearly 2,000 patients from the previous month. Pneumonia patients comprised 25 per cent of the patients seen in March. .

After the earthquake, NRSP called upon their long-standing network of community organisations to formulate a plan to reconstruct the devastated healthcare facilities. There were already doctors available to work at the facilities, so all that was needed was equipment, medicines, supplies and tents.

Direct Relief provided financial assistance to equip the six facilities with laboratories, X-ray machines, a prefabricated shelter and an array of basic medicines. These facilities will multiply the diagnostic and treatment capacity of the NRSP medical personnel and alleviate the need of patients, in outlying areas of Muzafarabad, Bagh and Poonch, to travel long distances for medical care.

The organisation is absorbing all administrative costs associated with the earthquake response efforts, as part of its policy to dedicate 100 per cent of all contributions for the earthquake, only to relief and recovery efforts.

### **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

The International Federation committed millions of Swiss francs to relief, shelter and medical care for earthquake survivors. On 17 October alone, it ordered 16,000 winterised tents, at a cost of 12 million Swiss francs. Although destroyed or badly damaged roads, as well as poor weather conditions, posed enormous logistical difficulties, relief aid was reaching earthquake victims. Local and foreign helicopters made flights to bring in relief supplies and evacuate the severely injured. To speed up the relief operation, the Federation set up a logistics and operations base in Mansehra, 125 kilometres north of Islamabad. The base was used to deploy emergency teams specialised in health care as well as in water and sanitation to the affected parts of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier provinces as well as to coordinate distributions of emergency relief. In response to harsh winter weather in Pakistan, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), urgently scaled-up its relief efforts to help earthquake survivors. The emergency relief programme extended to assist an additional 35,000 people. Distributions were specially focused on the villages in the Allai Valley and Kohistan where little aid had arrived because of access problems. Torrential rains and heavy snowstorms hamper the relief efforts, as the main roads regularly become inaccessible due to frequent landslides. Illnesses exacerbated by the cold, such as flu and pneumonia was on the rise. Heavy rain and snowfalls were making relief operations difficult.

### **Pakistan Red Crescent Societies**

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is part of a 'Movement' that consists of The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and The National Societies.

In the aftermath of 8 October 2005, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society with the support of its movement partners was involved in a massive operation in the earthquake-affected areas. This was both in terms of urgent relief distribution and provision of medical services to the needy. The geographical spread of the area, harsh winters and difficult terrain conditions posed a special challenge to the relief efforts. The PRCS along with its Movement Partners dispatched more than 3000 trucks, containing more than 78,000 tents, 317,000 CGI Sheets, 790,000 blankets and distributed over 5,000 tons of food items in the affected areas.

### **Association for the Development of Pakistan (ADP)**

Soon after the earthquake, ADP was with a unique grassroots effort that had emerged. Sarah was part of the Relief Shelter Drive (RSD), a group of Pakistanis who came together to focus on the immediate shelter needs of the millions of homeless victims. RSD fund on our website raised over USD 90,000. RSD proved to be very resourceful and effective. Leveraging close relationships with local NGOs, it identified villages in need of aid and procured and delivered cost-effective shelters. RSD helped provide shelters to over 1,000 families in the form of tents, corrugated tin-roof houses and sandbag igloos.

### **Pakistan Earthquake Fund (PEF)**

The PEF's objective is to pool and deliver emergency grant financing promptly and effectively to Pakistan for investment projects to support immediate reconstruction, urgent rehabilitation and associated development activities. Priority is given to activities that address immediate requirements.

### **Kashmir International Relief Fund (KIRF)**

This is the largest charity and NGO in Kashmir – the region most affected by the devastating earthquake on 8 October 2005. As a registered UK charity, KIRF has been at the forefront in providing humanitarian relief, welfare and development to the people of Kashmir since 1992. Since the earthquake in the Kashmir region on 8 October 2005, KIRF has been working round the clock to help the survivors.

KIRF has received funds and support from private, corporate, religious and educational donors from around the world. In addition, a number of NGO's and international aid agencies have donated tents, blankets and other relief supplies.

### **Earthquake in Kashmir, 2005: A Case**

#### **A race for shelter against winter**

Shelter kits developed by Oxfam are being distributed in quake-hit villages in Uri and Tangdhar, but many hurdles have to be overcome to provide these to everyone before the weather turns bitterly cold. Kanchi Kohli finds hopeful but worried villagers and relief workers fighting the odds and the elements.

23 December 2005 - "When the earthquake struck, I never thought we would be able to stand on our own feet and rebuild our lost homes. Now, with God's grace help has come and it is possible", says Mohammed Nazir, from Chakra village in Uri tehsil, Jammu and Kashmir. Nazir is one of the victims of the intense earthquake that struck India and Pakistan on 8 October 2005. The epicentre of the earthquake was near Muzaffarabad in Pakistan; in India, the most affected areas were in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in Uri and Keran tehsils in Baramullah district and Tangdhar tehsil of Kupwara district.

The villages in these areas suffered loss of life as well as property. The survivors have composed themselves and are trying to rebuild their homes. However, the smiles on their faces cannot hide the despair and anxiety in their eyes. And how can it? Nazir's daughter was holding her infant son in her arms when a wall of her house fell on her and her baby. She could only barely manage to pull herself out of the debris. Her son remained crushed underneath. One cannot even begin to imagine grief of this magnitude, but for the people of Tangdhar and Uri this kind of experience during the earthquake is still very fresh in their memories.

Already a scene of political conflict, Jammu and Kashmir was unprepared for the scale of destruction that followed the earthquake; the tremor threw up great challenges for relief organisations and aid agencies to be able to plan their response. Both Uri and Tangdhar are regions close to the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan. So, when disaster struck, innovative strategies were needed to provide relief to the most needy people swiftly without compromising security operations.

#### **Zareefa, Sudpura village**

Zareefa is a young widow in Tangdhar, who is one of the beneficiaries of the prototype shelter. Her husband died while he was out cutting grass and a rock fell on him. She has three children, two daughters and a son; the eldest is a 12-year-old daughter. After her husband died, her family sent one son and one daughter to an orphanage and the other daughter stays with her. Her husband's family has abandoned her and her parents who live in distant village are looking after her food and shelter requirements.

When her house was destroyed, Zareefa had no support to reconstruct it. Being widowed, Zareefa was identified as a beneficiary for a prototype shelter. Today, though she is happy to have a shelter in her own name and the security of a home, however,

she continues to be dependant on her parents for food. As she says with a smile, but worry on her face, “there are little livelihood options for women in this area. I don’t have anyone to tell me what to do. I keep thinking of what I will do next, but can’t see any way out”.

One of the agencies engaged in the relief work in Kashmir is Oxfam (India) Trust. Oxfam began its response efforts almost immediately after the quake, with the first assessment of damage and relief needs conducted on 10 October 2005. By 13 October 2005, Oxfam had reached Baramullah and had undertaken the distribution of blankets and plastic sheets, with the help of local NGOs and other groups working in the region. Distributing blankets and sheets, or even tents, was not enough; with the harsh winter fast approaching, the urgent need was to find safe shelter for many people. Therefore, from November 2005, Oxfam’s work focused on providing temporary winterised emergency shelters to the affected people.

Once it was decided that Oxfam would focus on distributing shelters, it was important to arrive quickly at the best possible shelter package. According to Vrinda Dar, Project Coordinator, “A rapid visual survey was done in Uri and Tangdhar to see how houses are traditionally made and what their designs are, what construction materials and what kind of heating is used. The assessment team realized that villagers had received a lot of tents but that it would not suffice to carry them through over the winter months. There was an immediate need for winterised shelters.” It was further decided that the shelter package would be developed within the larger framework of ‘retrieve and rebuild’. As Savio Carvalho, Programme Manager of Oxfam’s Kashmir Earthquake Response Programme, points out, “the shelter kits help households to rebuild their homes. Oxfam has also provided tools to the villagers, which they can use to retrieve their belongings from the houses that have been destroyed in the earthquake. These belongings and other material like doors, window panes, wooden poles can be used in the construction of the shelter”.

A model prototype shelter was designed with dimensions of eight feet and sixteen feet, for a family of five persons. The shelter package that was designed and which is being distributed to the beneficiary families had the following components: twenty three CGI sheets (ten feet by three feet and twenty four grams); ten CGI sheets (eight feet by three feet and twenty four grams); sixteen plywood sheets; non-woven flooring (ten feet by twelve feet); foam sheet (ten feet by twelve feet); one tool kit (crow bar, shovel, chisel, saw, hammer, clamps, nails, rope, level pipe, tape, tin cutter); sanitation unit (toilet base, water tank). A model prototype was built in Srinagar to assess how much time and material would be required to put up the shelters. It was assessed that assistance would be required from local carpenters to build these shelters in the villages.

Assessments were carried out in a public and transparent manner in each village to select beneficiary families for shelter kits. At the same time, special criteria were adopted to recognise the vulnerable groups in both Uri and Tangdhar. The criteria included women-headed households, disabled people, orphans and old people who had no one to help rebuild their homes. In these cases, Oxfam has been supporting the construction of the shelters, where shelter engineers are regularly coordinating with carpenters and monitoring the construction.

While providing the shelter kits to the beneficiary families, the Oxfam team suggested the prototype design to them. However, families were encouraged to be flexible in the use of materials and modify the design of their houses. According to Zubin, who is coordinating the relief work for Oxfam in Tangdhar, “some people in the villages have not wanted to use the prototype design and have wanted modifications of the roof and other components, to suit the local needs. Sometimes these modifications have resulted in good and better structures. People have added kitchens within the shelters”.

#### **Mohd. Shareef Sheikh, Chakra village**

Mohd. Shareef Sheikh is a 60-year-old man recognised as a vulnerable person for whom Oxfam agreed to build a prototype shelter. He has a son who works in Uri and his brother’s daughter lived with him. He did not have the capacity to rebuild his house on his own, since apart from being old, he also suffers from asthma. He had a house with six rooms, which was completely destroyed during the earthquake.

Shareef spent Rs. 800 to bring up the material from Red Bridge all the way on a pony. Since Chakra village is at an elevation, it is difficult to carry the CGI sheets, wooden poles and plywood up a steep climb. “There was no other way”, he said. For many like him the space available in the prototype shelter model as a basic minimum requirement was not enough. He paid the carpenters additional money to include a kitchen and a bedroom space and use the material given in relief as well as that, which could be retrieved.

When asked if he will build a permanent house when the winter is over, he shook his head and was completely unsure. He said, “Don’t know when I will be able to do that. One feels aftershocks of the earthquake every second day. I wonder what will happen even if we do construct houses. This is a real fear”.

In Uri, since the villagers were used to living in larger houses with more than one room, they combined the material of two or more shelter kits to build temporary houses. There were instances when villagers modified the prototype design to build an attic, where they could store material for future use.

The relief work in Tangdhar and Uri adopted different strategies. This was critical as the socio-political environment, accessibility; levels of communication, limited time frame and terrain were different. Tangdhar is physically further away from

Srinagar; the main town is located about 180 kilometres from the capital. However, the distance seems much longer than what the kilometres suggest, as the road access to Tangdhar is tedious and through difficult terrain. Accessing these villages required the Oxfam team and the truckloads of material to travel one and half to two hours from Tangdhar town, each way to the villages. The terrain makes the villages very inaccessible and the travel extremely risky.

Uri, on the other hand, is closer, about 100 kilometres from Srinagar. However, the villages in Uri were spread out, unlike those in Tangdhar. Each of these villages had a number of hamlets and reaching them required anything from a fifteen-minute to a four-hour trek on foot. To enable distribution of the shelter kits, the team set up distribution points as close to the villages as possible. For villages that were very remote, material needed to be transferred to the closest hamlet, from where the villagers carried it themselves, or sometimes with the help of ponies.

However, in both Tangdhar and Uri one common factor in the construction was the coming together of the entire village community for the construction of shelters. Families brought together their material to build larger shelters and it was good to see them bounce back and rebuild lives with an inspiring resilience. People were noticeably proud of what they were building and backed by a certain conviction.

However, the task is far from complete. The next three to four months of winter will bring the most challenging conditions for the people of Uri and Tangdhar. Some villagers are worried. There are just not enough carpenters to help construct shelters. Health is also a worrisome issue, as winter will bring with it respiratory ailments. People here are used to harsh weather conditions and coping with issues related to living in inaccessible environs. This winter, the context is different. It is soon after their earth shook them hard and its impact continues to give them aftershocks - including psychological ones as they race against time to rebuild their lives - almost everyday.

*(Source: Kanchi Kohli, 23 December 2005, India Together on 30 May 2006)*

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- Adoption Institute's Policy: <http://www.adoptioninstitute.org>
- UNICEF : [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)
- Kashmir International Relief Fund: email: [info@kirf.org](mailto:info@kirf.org), [www.kirf.org](http://www.kirf.org)



### 3.3 Disaster Management in Sri Lanka

#### Description of Crisis

Natural disasters in Sri Lanka are mainly hydro-meteorological phenomena such as floods, landslides, cyclones, tidal waves and droughts. Floods and landslides are more localised and seasonal, while droughts are more widespread and cyclones occasional.

Sri Lanka was one of the few countries in the South-East Asia region, which was struck by the devastating Tsunami on the morning of 26 December 2004, leaving behind widespread destruction, killing over 31,000 people, destroying over 99,000 homes and damaging natural ecosystems, coastal infrastructure and several health infrastructures.

Besides the natural disasters, the county is currently experiencing civil strife in specific pockets and an increasing numbers of accidents. Industrial, mining accidents and environmental degradation could be considered as the other potential hazards in the country.

#### Legal framework of disaster management in Sri Lanka.<sup>63</sup>

The Government of Sri Lanka has recently finalised the legal framework to handle the disaster situation in the country, duly approved by the parliament and is still in a phase of implementation.

Disaster Management Centre (DMC) has been established under the Presidential Secretariat in accordance with the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2005 and passed by the Parliament of Sri Lanka in May 2005. The Disaster Management Centre is the primary agency mandated by the Government of Sri Lanka for Disaster Risk Management activities in Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Refugees is the nodal ministry to address issues relating to the conflict in the North and East.

National Disaster Management Council is the statutory institution responsible for disaster management in Sri Lanka. The functions are co-ordination and management of relief activities pertaining to natural and man made disasters, co-ordinating awareness programmes on natural disasters, early warning systems and administration of Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No: 13 of 2005.

<sup>63</sup>The source of this section is [www.searo.who.int/en/Section23/Section1108/Section1418\\_10547.htm](http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section23/Section1108/Section1418_10547.htm)

## **Tsunami 2004**

### **Background**

A great earthquake occurred at 06:28:53 am, Indian Standard Time (IST), on Sunday, 26 December 2004. The magnitude 9.0 event was located off the west coast of Northern Sumatra. This is the fourth largest earthquake in the world since 1900. The earthquake triggered massive tsunamis that affected several countries throughout South and Southeast Asia. Tsunamis are seismic sea waves caused by earthquakes. The Tsunami crossed into the Pacific Ocean and was recorded along the west coast of South and North America. In Sri Lanka, the south eastern coastline was the worst hit. In this densely populated area many villages along the ocean were washed off the map. Galle was a scene of total catastrophe. Almost the entire seafront was obliterated, with no buildings within 100 meters of the waterfront escaping undamaged. While rush to bury mass numbers of decomposing bodies amidst hot weather conditions, fears that disease outbreaks could unleash a second wave of tragedy increased as aid workers attempted to supply clean water and sanitation. With the focus turning from rescuing to caring for millions of homeless, international aid agencies were faced with the obstacles of coordinating and assessing such a massive and unprecedented humanitarian relief effort. Furthermore, as relief operations continued, the possibility of anti-foreign resistance, especially in rebel occupied areas, may prevent the delivery of aid and assistance.

Scientists knew in advance that southern Asia was going to be hit by a Tsunami, but attempts to raise the alarm were hampered by the absence of early-warning systems in the region. Within 15 minutes of Sunday's earthquake, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii had sent an alert to 26 countries, including Thailand and Indonesia, but struggled to reach the right people. Television and radio alerts were not issued in Thailand until nine am local time - nearly an hour after the waves had hit.

With nearly 40,000 deaths and more than 500,000 people displaced, devastating 14 out of 28 districts, Sri Lanka was deeply affected by the Tsunami. The waves wrapped around Sri Lanka's coastline to the south and north, hitting areas as far as the country's west coast near the capital city of Colombo. Hardest hit was the eastern coast, which has undergone twenty years of civil conflict. Entire neighbourhoods were washed away, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries as well as widespread destruction of infrastructure. The flooding and contamination of water sources created a high risk for widespread water-borne and vector-borne disease outbreaks. Coupled with a lack of functional healthcare facilities, international health experts feared the worst.

The prompt action of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health, along with local non-profit health organisations and international NGOs, curbed the occurrence of disease on an

epidemic scale. However, the emergency medical needs of the affected population were vast. In the weeks and months after the disaster, Direct Relief worked closely with the Ministry of Health and a number of Sri Lankan and US-based NGOs, to provide thousands of pounds of critically needed medical goods including endotracheal tubes to treat victims of saltwater aspiration, wound dressings and surgical instruments to care for acute traumatic injuries, anti-infective and anti-fungal agents to address bacterial and fungal infections and oral- rehydration salts to fight dehydration. Over the past year, Direct Relief provided 56,897 lbs. of medicines and supplies with a total wholesale value of over USD 4.4 million to public health facilities and outreach programs, Sri Lankan non-profit healthcare and social service organisations and US-based relief organisations conducting mobile medical camps in displaced persons camps and affected communities.

Direct Relief also has provided over USD 2.4 million of targeted aid in the form of cash grants, supporting the provision of medical services, reconstruction of healthcare facilities, psychological counselling initiatives, water and sanitation improvements and the rebuilding of healthcare workers' homes. In addition, Direct Relief has focused on preventive health, including the procurement of 143,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets for use in relief camps and affected neighbourhoods.<sup>64</sup>

### **Damage and Loss**

In the affected areas, 90 per cent of working men and women lost their sources of livelihood. (Source: ILO Sri Lanka, June 2005) Nearly 23,449 acres of cultivated land were affected, including 9,000 acres of paddy, 645 acres of other crop fields, 27,710 home garden units, 559 acres of vegetable farms and 317 acres of fruit trees. It also destroyed 65,275 houses completely and 38,561 houses were partially damaged but still habitable. In the coastal areas fishing is the main source of livelihood, but unfortunately this source of living was greatly affected by the killer waves, 16,919 fishing boats were damaged or destroyed, representing approximately 75 per cent of the total fishing fleet. (Source: Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, FAO Sri Lanka). Naturally, nature does not distinguish, the Tsunami destroyed some 100 hospitals and dispensaries, Ministry of Health offices and health centres were completely or partially damaged. A total of 195 educational facilities including universities and vocational training centres were damaged with 59 schools totally destroyed and 117 partially damaged. (Source: TAFREN, August 2005) It was a reminder of the famous Napoleon saying "water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink", more than 60,000 wells were contaminated or destroyed leaving the land full of water but hardly any fit for consumption. (Source: World Bank/Asian Development Bank/ Japan Bank of International Cooperation, Joint Needs Assessment) The Tsunami thus created a total damages worth USD 1.5 billion. Total estimated needs for long-term recovery is USD 2.15 billion.

<sup>64</sup> Source: [http://www.directrelief.org/sections/information\\_center/newsletter/Tsunami\\_oneyear.pdf](http://www.directrelief.org/sections/information_center/newsletter/Tsunami_oneyear.pdf)

**Tsunami Reconstruction**

Nature observes no ethnic boundaries and Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala coastal communities alike suffered the horrors of the Tsunami. There are many who dare to hope that, out of the

tragedy in which 31,000 lives were lost, a new spirit of reconciliation will prevail and unite the country. For a fleeting few weeks in June 2005, such hopes seemed to have come to fruition in the signing by both government and LTTE of the Tsunami Joint Mechanism.

**Tsunami affected families by Province**

Province District	Affected Families	Displaced Families	Displaced Persons		Deaths	Injured	Missing	Damaged Houses			
				In Welfare Centres				With Relatives and Friends	Total	Completely	
Northern	Jaffna	13.652	12.631	12.301	27.632	39.933	2.640	1.647	540	6.084	1.114
	Killinochchi	2.295	318	305	1.298	1.603	560	670	1	1.250	4.250
	Mullaitivu		6.007	11.993	10.564	22.557	3.000	2.590	552	3.400	600
Eastern	Trincomalee		27.746	19.559	62.084	81.643	1.078		337	5.974	10.394
	Batticaloa	63.717	12.494	27.491	31.509	59.000	2.840	2.375	1.033	15.939	5.665
	Ampara	38.624		75.492		75.492	10.436	120	876	29.077	
Southern	Hambantota	16.994	3.334	214	17.168	17.382	4.500	361	963	2.303	1.744
	Matara	20.675	3.268	4.067	9.254	13.321	1.342	6.652	613	2.362	5.659
	Galle	23.174	1.562	5.504		5.504	4.216	313	554	5.525	5.966
Western	Kalutara	6.064	6.105	3.785	19.756	23.541	256	400	148	2.572	2.930
	Colombo	9.647	5.290	6.077	24.575	30.652	79	64	12	3.398	2.210
	Gampaha	6.827	5.258	911	20.443	21.354	6	3	5	292	307
North Western	Puttlam	232	18	66		66	4	1	3	23	72

This laid down procedures for joint administration of aid funds, thereby overcoming donor reservations about dealing directly with the LTTE, which is labelled in some countries as a terrorist organisation. However, signing the agreement had been highly controversial and it was eventually declared unconstitutional by the Sri Lankan High Court. A massive USD 3 billion of reconstruction funds were hanging on the deal. Of the countries affected by the Tsunami, Sri Lanka suffers the ignominy of being the slowest to implement essential rebuilding programmes.

Apart from LTTE sensitivities, the government has appeared bureaucratic and top-down in its approach, whilst there has been duplication among international NGOs. Well-meaning policies, such as the 100- metre buffer zone to ensure that buildings would no longer be too close to the sea, have not been adequately thought through. Caught in this political mayhem are innocent people who have not benefited from the financial commitments to rebuild the country. The relocation of fishing communities is one of several issues Sri Lanka is confronting as it struggles to rebuild.

Concerns are also rising over whether the government will follow through on its promises and whether aid will flow to the right people. Authorities in Sri Lanka have tried many times to move fishing communities by building them houses inland. “Every time they’ve returned,” said P Saravanamuttu, Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives. “Often they just rent out the home they were given and go back to the beach”. ([www.lankalibrary.com](http://www.lankalibrary.com)) Schools and medical facilities have not yet been replaced. Agricultural land and water wells have been put out of action by salt intrusion.

### *Children and the Tsunami*

This chaos was an opportunity for many to protect their interests. An American with felony convictions for drug trafficking, sexual assault and check fraud surfaced to run an orphanage in Sri Lanka for more than two months. The man, Daniel Curry, aged 37 years, is actually Daniel Wooley, aged 41 years and is also known as Daniel Taze — a registered sex offender in California. He used the name Fogg while serving time in a Mexican prison for drug trafficking. Somewhere along the way, presumably after his release from prison in March 2003 he linked up with Michelle Curry, a computer professional in San Diego and started using her surname. The man raised tens of thousands of dollars at the children’s facility before fleeing the country in the face of an investigation.

Sri Lanka banned the adoption of children orphaned by the Tsunami. This move is in response to unconfirmed reports of child trafficking. Sri Lankan people say that orphans in these extreme cases are, in general, better off being raised by relatives or members of the local community. This is especially true, they say, for children above age three or four years who are cognisant of the disaster that took their parents. Sri Lankan officials have estimated several hundred to one thousand children were orphaned by the Tsunami. “We are concerned with the movement of children as commodities and so we do not support systems that allow orphans to be essentially sold,” says Martin Dawes, a South Asian expert with UNICEF.

The Tsunami victims, for who until now the basic issue was how to survive, have started to think how to get the family together again. Many Sri Lankan mothers choose to be sterilised after their second or third child, normally through tubal ligations. The surgery involves cutting a woman’s fallopian tubes, then tying or closing them to prevent pregnancies. In the reversal surgery, the tubes are reconnected. The surgery to reconnect the tubes is expensive by Sri Lankan standards - about Rs 50,000, the equivalent of USD 500 and success is far from guaranteed. The Sri

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Lankan government says it will help families pay for surgery to reverse sterilisations. Some private hospitals, including Nawaloka, say they will perform them at reduced or no cost. While no statistics are available on how many women want to have the reversal surgery, doctors and officials say the number has grown since the Tsunami. ([www.lankalibrary.com](http://www.lankalibrary.com)).

**Number of schools damaged by the Tsunami**

No	District & Zone	Total No. Of		Number of Schools			No of students in affected schools	No of teachers in affected schools
		Schools	Students	Fully Destroyed	Partially Damaged	Total		
1	Hambantota	311	129,874	01	05	06	5,541	224
2	Matara	375	165,411	05	06	11	7,810	448
3	Galle	435	217,136	10	14	24	15,861	691
4	Kalutara	415	192,052	02	04	06	6,987	260
5	Gampaha	537	319,485	-	02	02	3,115	103
6	Batticaloa	314	117,197	15	18	33	11,513	462
	Batticaloa Zone			04	09	13		
	Paddirippu Zone			07	04	11		
	Kalkuda Zone			04	05	09		
7	Ampara	388	153,408	25	13	38	17,927	680
	Kalmunai Zone			15	0	15		
	Akkaraipattu Zone			10	13	23		
8	Trincomalee	259	94,236	05	14	19	4,091	167
	Trincomalee Zone			-	04	04		
	Muthur Zone			03	10	13		
	Kantalai Zone			02	0	02		
9	Mullaitivu	102	26,965	0	12	12	3,595	119
	Mullaitivu Zone			-	11	11		
10	Kilinochchi			No Damage				
11	Jaffna	411	134,960	07	05	12	2,576	109
	Vadamarchchi Zone			07	05	12		
	Total	3,547	1,550,724	70	93	163	79,016	3,263

Source: Ministry of Education from ([www.lankalibrary.com](http://www.lankalibrary.com))

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*For more information, refer to:*

Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights

383, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka, Tel: +94-11-2390895, 2384116

### 3.4 INDIA: Background and Perspectives<sup>65</sup>

India is the worst-affected theatre of disaster in the South Asian region. Drought, floods, earthquakes and cyclones devastate the country with grim regularity. Ten thousand were killed in the Orissa super cyclone of 1999 and 16,000 died in the earthquake that hit Kuchchh in January 2001. Are these natural disasters caused by nature's fury? Or are they man-made in large measure? Is the country equipped to manage the disasters that affect 25 million people every year?

#### *A country prone to natural calamities*

The Asia-Pacific region experiences nearly 60 per cent of the world's natural disasters. India, on account of its geographical position, climate and geological setting, is the worst affected theatre of disaster in the South Asian region. Drought and floods, earthquakes and cyclones devastate the country with grim regularity year after year. They are spiralling out of control, increasing in frequency, causing more and more injury, disability, disease and death, adding to the health, economic and social burden of an already impoverished nation.

#### **The statistics are alarming:**

- Of the 32 states and union territories, 22 are disaster-prone.
- Between 1988 and 1997, disasters claimed 5,116 lives and affected a colossal 24.79 million people every year.
- In 1998, 9,846 people died and 34.11 million were affected by disasters.

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<sup>65</sup>By Vinod C Menon and Shirish Kavadi (source: [www.infochangeindia.org](http://www.infochangeindia.org))

- In the Orissa super cyclone of 1999, over 10,000 people were killed and thousands left homeless.
- In January 2001, over 16,000 lives were lost in the earthquake that struck Kuchchh and other areas in the state of Gujarat. Thousands are still homeless. Thousands more have lost their precarious means of livelihood.
- Twenty-eight per cent of the country's total cultivable area is drought-prone.
- Fifty-seven per cent of India is earthquake-prone. The fragile Himalayan mountain ranges are extremely vulnerable to earthquakes (and landslides and avalanches). Western and Central India are equally unsafe.
- Seventy-six lakh hectares of land are flooded every year. Over 1,300 lives are lost to floods every year. Worse, the areas affected by flood are rapidly extending beyond the basins of the Himalayan rivers to other parts of the country as well.
- India is the worst cyclone-affected part of the world. Five to six tropical cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea every year, of which two or three are severe and lash the densely populated coastal areas of India, causing indescribable damage.

### *The cost and consequences of disasters*

The cost of natural disasters in India, in terms of human life, loss of property and assets and loss of shelter and livelihoods, is immense.

Between 1980 and 1999 the total number of people killed in disasters was 110,131. Between 1988-1997 disasters affected 24.79 million every year in India. In 1998, 9,846 people died and 34.11 million people were affected by disasters. Between 1985-95, disasters caused an annual economic loss of around USD 1,883.93 million.

Experience and studies show that the actual figures greatly exceed the documented ones.

The average damage to crop, houses and public utilities from floods during the period 1953-95 was estimated at Rs 972 crore every year, while the maximum damage was Rs 4,630 crore in 1988.

In 1998, floods inundated 37 per cent of the country.

In 1987, one of the worst droughts of the century affected 285 million people and 58-60 per cent of cropped area. In India, with its large tribal and rural population and people still engaged in traditional occupations such as agriculture, this is a major calamity.



In 2000, floods took a toll of 1,262 lives in West Bengal, 400 lives in Uttar Pradesh and 258 lives in Bihar. And drought affected 94 lakh people in Chattisgarh, 291 lakh in Gujarat, 127 lakh in Madhya Pradesh and 119 lakh in Orissa, where almost 30 starvation deaths have been reported since August 2001.

Most injuries such as lacerations in cyclones or fractures in earthquakes occur during or immediately after the catastrophe. In developing countries, the number of injured are estimated only by the number admitted in hospital; but there are hundreds more who never get to a hospital and many thousands more suffering psycho-social and post-traumatic stress disorders which go completely unrecorded and untreated.

Further, the death or disability of a family's earning member during a disaster could mean a lifetime of loss of income and possible destitution for the entire family. The death of a family's livestock or the loss of capital or the tools of trade can likewise lead to a complete devastation of earning capacity. During floods, salt-water contamination of land can lead to the loss of not one, but several, harvests. For an already malnourished people, this could mean a rise in mortality as a secondary result of disasters.

Epidemics resulting from disasters are also a major worry in South Asia, where poor sanitation and the prevalence of many communicable diseases keep disease rates inordinately high. Typhoid, malaria and gastrointestinal diseases are constant threats in disaster-hit zones where even clean drinking water can become unavailable for days or even weeks, as was the case after the Orissa super cyclone. The sardine-can population density in urban areas and certain coastal regions multiplies the number of disaster victims.

### *The poor are worst affected*

The worst affected and vulnerable are the poor and marginalised sections and communities of India. They suffer the most in terms of human and property loss. Unfortunately, poverty is most widespread in areas that are more vulnerable to natural disasters - the flood-prone regions of north Bihar, east Uttar Pradesh and north Bengal and the drought-prone regions of Rajasthan, Marathwada in Maharashtra and north Karnataka.

Not only are the poor the worst hit, but their capacity to recover from a disaster is also limited by their social, economic and political situation. In India, the vulnerabilities are inextricably linked to certain processes of marginalisation that protect the interests of particular groups and areas at the cost of others. The nature and direction of economic development followed over the past 50 years has been unsuccessful in expanding, or even distributing, social opportunity across the country.

The basic needs of a large population are not satisfied. Nearly one-third of India's people live in poverty, one-third of adult males and two-thirds of adult females are illiterate and two-thirds of India's children aged 0-4 years are malnourished.

Women are particularly vulnerable by virtue of their lower economic, social and political status. Reports reveal that even when women have had access to cyclone (or community) shelters, men occupy these with self-centred alacrity while female householders are slowed down by their responsibilities for essential cyclone preparedness activities. Their special health needs, especially those of pregnant and lactating women, are ignored.

During floods, an inordinately large number of drowning deaths tend to occur amongst women and children. During cyclones women are often put at risk when their long hair gets entangled in bushes and flotsam and their sarees restrict their movements. A full 80 per cent of the deaths in the 1991 cyclone were those of women and children. In the Marathwada earthquake, more women than men died, largely because they, in line with patriarchal conventions, were sleeping indoors.

### *The scale of disasters in India*

Natural calamities have a more devastating impact in India because of inadequate policies relating to disaster management and no institutional support systems.

The 1993 Marathwada earthquake in Maharashtra, India, killed over 10,000 and destroyed the houses and properties of nearly 200,000 households. However, the much more powerful Los Angeles earthquake of 1971 killed just 55 people. The 1996 cyclone along the east coast of Andhra Pradesh in south India killed 1,077 people and damaged public buildings worth over USD 139 million. In contrast, the powerful Hurricane Andrew that struck Southern Florida in 1992 killed 41 people and caused damage worth USD 20 million.

Effective rehabilitation is part of good disaster management. However, in India while the Marathwada earthquake resulted in a rehabilitation policy, the same was not true of the Uttarkashi (Uttar Pradesh, 1991) or the Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh, 1997) earthquakes. It showed up the dismal inadequacy of administrative response to a natural disaster.

In 1996, flash floods intruded into the desert state of Rajasthan in western India. The floods killed about 100 people. In subsequent months more than 1,000 lives were lost due to a malaria epidemic, as the flood-accumulated waters became an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Amplified by a systemic failure, the epidemic took a heavy toll, far more than the flood itself, in a region not known for water-borne diseases.

The other major problem is the nature of development and development policies.

The actual reason for the flooding in Rajasthan was not the quantum of rainfall, but the way in which civic structures had come up, violating basic laws, in the past two decades. Experts blamed the floods on faulty development planning.

In drought-affected pockets of Orissa, hunger deaths have occurred this year because of acute food shortage and malnutrition despite a relatively good harvest and buffer stocks of 60 million tonnes of food grain in the Food Corporation of India godowns. The food shortages have a lot to do with the nature of people's interaction with the market and exploitative work conditions. Perhaps it has a lot more to do with the inadequacies of the public distribution system, the corruption in the system, the exploitation of an illiterate population, political indifference and red-tapism.

### *Development and natural disasters*

'Natural' disasters are often described as the wrath of God. In fact, they are the wrath of nature. Increasingly, it is the wrath of nature that has been tampered with. Thus, 'natural' disasters are human-made to a startling degree.

Recurring floods and droughts are precipitated by the unrestricted felling of forests, serious damage to mountain ecology, overuse of groundwater and the changing patterns of cultivation. When forests are destroyed, rainwater runs off, causing floods and diminishing the recharging of groundwater. The spate of landslides in the Himalayas in recent years can be directly traced to the rampant deforestation and network of roads that have been indiscriminately laid in the name of development.

It is by now a well-established fact that human-made structures, including canals, dams and embankments, have worsened the flood situation in the country.

Big dams also pose a seismic threat. Despite this, numerous dams, vulnerable to seismic activity, are being built in the Himalayan foothills. (The proposed Tehri dam is being opposed because of its seismic handicap that could cause havoc in Hardwar, Rishikesh and other mountain towns). India has learnt no lessons from the world's most devastating reservoir-induced earthquake on 10 December 1967, measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale, which struck Koynagar in Maharashtra, killing 200 people and injuring 1,500. The epicentre and aftershocks all occurred near the 103m-high dam or under its reservoir.

Land degradation, which today affects 175 million of India's 329 million hectares, is also increasing because of human intervention. Natural grasslands are disappearing because of overgrazing. Water logging, salinisation, over fertilisation and mining are degrading huge tracts of land. The effect of this on people's lives can be seen in western Orissa where deforestation, mining and the decline of traditional irrigation and agricultural systems have caused land degradation on a large scale, leading to

one of the worst drought conditions in the country. This, in turn leads to large-scale seasonal and permanent migration to urban slums. Adding to the 30 million people who have already been displaced by ‘development projects’ in India, a figure that is a third higher than the number of conflict-induced Internally Displaced People worldwide.

### *Natural Disaster in India*

#### **Floods**

Nearly 75 per cent of the total rainfall is concentrated over a short monsoon season of four months (June-September). As a result the rivers witness a heavy discharge during these months, leading to widespread floods.

Floods are a regular feature of Eastern India where the Himalayan rivers inundate large parts of its catchment areas, uprooting houses, disrupting livelihoods and damaging infrastructure. The fragility of the settlements in the Himalayan mountain ranges are a continuing source of concern for their high vulnerability to earthquakes, landslides, floods and avalanches. The flood hazard is compounded by the problems of sediment deposition, drainage congestion and synchronisation of river floods with storm surges in the coastal plains. The rivers originating in the Himalayas carry a lot of sediment and cause erosion of the banks in the upper reaches and over-topping in the lower segments. The most flood-prone areas are the Brahmaputra and Gangetic basins in the Indo-Gangetic plains. The other flood-prone areas are the northwest region with the rivers Narmada and Tapi, the Central India and Deccan region with rivers like Mahanadi, Krishna and Kauveri. While the area liable to floods is forty million hectares, the average area affected by floods annually is about eight million hectares. The annual average cropped area affected is approximately 3.7 million hectares.

Notwithstanding flood policy and flood control schemes, flood damage is increasing, with larger populations subjected to distress in increasing flood-prone areas. The locus has shifted away from the Gangetic belt. The distribution of damage is widespread, with the worst hit being Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west, Uttar Pradesh in the north and Bihar and West Bengal in the east.

#### **Drought**

The heavy concentration of rainfall within a span of three months in most areas causes heavy run-off and high floods. Non-availability of moisture over most parts of the year, particularly in the arid and semi-arid regions, renders 68 per cent of the landmass vulnerable to drought.

In 2001, more than eight states suffered the impact of severe drought. Analysis of rainfall behaviour for the past 100 years reveals that the frequency of occurrence of below-normal rainfall in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas is 54 to 57 per cent, while severe and rare droughts occur once every eight to nine years in arid and semi-arid zones. In semi-arid and arid zones, about 50 per cent of the severe droughts cover 76 per cent of the area. In this region, almost every third year was a drought year. The impact of drought varies from year to year in various parts of the country.

The 1987 drought, which was one of the worst droughts of the 20th century, with overall rainfall deficiency of 19 per cent, affected 58-60 per cent of cropped area and a population of 285 million. Over 267 districts and 166 million people were recorded drought-affected.

### **Cyclone**

The states most exposed to cyclone-related hazards, including strong winds, floods and storm surges, are West Bengal, Orissa andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu along the Bay of Bengal. Along the Arabian Sea on the wet coast, the Gujarat and Maharashtra coasts are most vulnerable.

On an average, about five to six tropical cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea every year, of which two to three may be severe. More cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal than in the Arabian Sea: the ratio is 4:1. Cyclones are most deadly when crossing the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal and Bangladesh, mainly because of the serious storm surge problem in this area.

The impact of these cyclones is confined to the coastal districts, the maximum destruction being within 100 km from the centre of the cyclones and on either side of the storm track.

The worst devastation takes place when and where the peak surge occurs at the time of the high tide.

Stretches along the Bay of Bengal coastline have the world's shallowest waters but the relatively dense population and poor economic condition complicate the situation. The population density in some of the coastal districts is as high as 670 persons per square km.

The Orissa super cyclone in October 1999 left the state virtually paralysed with its communication and infrastructure totally wrecked. The cyclone severely affected around 13 million people in 97 blocks and 28 urban areas in 12 districts, including the capital, Bhubaneshwar and Cuttack. Sea waves reaching seven metres rushed fifteen kms inland. Ten thousand died, one-third of the total population of the state was affected.

*Orissa super cyclone, 1999*

On 18 and 19 October 1999, Orissa, located on the eastern coast along the Bay of Bengal, was hit by a severe cyclonic storm. Wind speeds reached 180-200 kms per hour, accompanied by torrential rain measuring 400 mm.

The floods that followed devastated four coastal districts of Orissa - namely Ganjam, Gajapati, Puri and Khurda. Ganjam was the worst affected district. An estimated 205 people died, while more than 400 were injured. Standing crops on 3.32 lakh hectares of land were destroyed while 10,516 animal lives were lost. Extensive damage was caused to public infrastructure and buildings and private properties; 78,213 houses were fully destroyed and 255,661 houses partly damaged.

A super cyclonic storm of much greater intensity followed the devastating cyclone of 18-19 October. On 29 and 30 October, it hit the Orissa coast, ravaging 12 coastal districts. The super cyclone had a wind velocity of 270-300 kmph. The cyclone was followed by torrential rains ranging from 447 to 995 mm leading to severe floods in the Baitarani, Budhabalanga and Salandi basins, which severely affected the districts of Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj. After hitting the Paradeep coast, the cyclonic storm with tidal waves of five to seven metres in height ravaged the coastal districts of Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri, Khurda and Cuttack.

A population of 1.26 crore in 14,000 villages and 28 urban areas across 12 districts - namely Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khurda, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh and Puri - was severely affected. Human casualties were estimated at 9,885, of which 8,119 lives were lost in Jagatsinghpur district alone. The loss of animal lives was also very high with 6.32 lakh animals and 18.83 lakh poultry perishing. A total of 17.33 lakh hectares of agricultural land were affected. As many as 16.50 lakh houses were damaged of which 0.23 lakh were washed away, 7.46 lakh fully collapsed and 8.80 lakh were partly damaged.

The two cyclones have had a devastating effect on the economy and lives of the people in the affected districts. A very large population in these districts has lost its source of livelihood. Public infrastructure suffered extensive damage. The economy of the state has suffered a serious setback. This has had an adverse impact on the development of the state.

### **Earthquakes**

Fifty-six per cent of the country is prone to seismic activity. During the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), India suffered the adverse impact of several earthquakes, the most significant being in Uttarkashi, Latur and Jabalpur.

Some of the most devastating earthquakes which India has faced in the past include the Kuchchh earthquakes of 2001 and 1819, the Shillong earthquake of 1897, the Kangra earthquake of 1905, the Bihar-Nepal earthquake of 1934, the North-East and Assam earthquake of 1950, the Anjar earthquake in Gujarat of 1956, etc. The Seismic Zonation Map of India shows the north-eastern states, Kuchchh region of Gujarat and Uttaranchal as most vulnerable.

The Gujarat earthquake on 26 January 2001 once again underlined the lack of preparedness to respond to a natural disaster of such severity, in spite of the best efforts of the government, voluntary organisations, local communities, neighbouring states, corporate sector, etc.

#### *Gujarat earthquake (January 2001)*

On 26th January 2001 around 8.45 am an earthquake of a great intensity hit the state of Gujarat in Western India. The earthquake was one of the worst to hit India in recent years. It was estimated that around 250 villages and a population of approximately 40 lakh people were affected. Among the worst hit was the Kuchchh region.

The district of Kuchchh occupies 50,000 sq km with a population of 12.85 lakhs (1991 census). It was, however, in the urban centres of Bhuj, the district headquarters of Kuchchh (population 1.35 lakh), Bhachau (population 70,000), Anjar (population 65,000) and Rapar (population 25,000) that the intensity and concentration of devastation of homes, commercial property and life was the greatest.

The number of deaths reported for Kuchchh was 15,000 while the official figure for the whole state was 16,488.

What made the earthquake more tragic was that many parts of the state than was reeling under a drought for the second successive year. The district was facing drinking water and fodder scarcity. Men had migrated for work leaving women and children behind. Thus it was the poorest and most vulnerable that were affected.

The region has a history of earthquakes. Between 1845 and 1956 Kuchchh experienced 66 moderate earthquakes. There are no records of lives lost. Five of the earthquakes were severe and one very severe earthquake occurred on June 19, 1845. In this quake the northern town of Lakhpur was ruined. During its occurrence 66 shocks were counted over a week.

There was, however, one earthquake, which was even more devastating in magnitude. It occurred on June 6, 1819. Its magnitude was estimated 7.7 on the Richter scale and it killed 2,000 people. According to experts this earthquake shaped the future of Kuchchh. The region's desert-like conditions owe its origin to that earthquake. It also

threw up a 100 km ridge and created what is known as the Allah Bund, now in Sind (Pakistan). The bund effectively diverted the course of the Sindhu River, which till then flowed into Kuchchh.

The economic loss from January 2001 earthquake has been huge. According to estimates of the industry and business bodies Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the damage to buildings and construction and related cost was Rs 120,000 to 150,000 million. The loss of infrastructure amounted to Rs 30,000 million. The damage to big factories was valued at Rs 15,000 million.

In the immediate aftermath of the quake most economic activity came to a virtual standstill and production was affected. The loss due to absence of workers at Kandla Port came to Rs 15 million every day. Overall industrial production loss due to lack of workers and thin attendance amounted to Rs 6,000 to 10,000 million every day. Among the prominent industries affected were diamond trade and gem cutting, salt, handicrafts, jewellery and agro-based units. Entire communities of zari and jewellery workers left their workplace.

The Himalayas are considered the world's youngest fold mountain ranges. The subterranean Himalayas are, therefore, geologically very active. Four earthquakes exceeding magnitude 8 have occurred in this region in the last 95 years: the Assam earthquakes of 1987 and 1950, the Kangra earthquake of 1905 and the Bihar-Nepal earthquake of 1935.

The peninsular part of India comprises continental crust regions, which are considered stable as they are far from the tectonic activity of the boundaries. Although these regions were considered seismically least active, an earthquake that occurred in Latur in Maharashtra on September 30, 1993 of magnitude 6.4 on the Richter scale, caused substantial loss of life and damage to infrastructure.

### *Disaster Management in India*

Many international organisations, voluntary agencies and national governments have been working towards reducing the impact of disasters and minimising the loss of life and property on account of man-made and natural disasters. These efforts have been directed at identifying the vulnerability of areas and local communities and developing organisational systems and institutional capacity for risk reduction and disaster response programmes.

Under the Indian Constitution, disaster management is the responsibility of state governments. However, there is a National Crisis Management Group headed by the cabinet secretary to assess the impact of major disasters. This Group consists of various nodal ministries. For natural disasters, the Ministry of Agriculture is the nodal ministry and the other ministries play a supportive role. In the event of a disaster,



a multi-disciplinary central government team, at the invitation of the affected state, carries out disaster assessment and makes the recommendation for assistance from the National Fund for Calamity Reduction and the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Schemes for financing expenditure on relief and rehabilitation in the wake of natural calamities are governed by the recommendations of Finance Commissions appointed by the Government of India after every five years. Under the Tenth Finance Commission, in operation for the period 1995-2000, each state has a corpus of funds called the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), administered by a state level committee, headed by the chief secretary of the state government. The size of the corpus is determined on the basis of the vulnerability of the state to different natural calamities and the magnitude of expenditure normally incurred by the state on relief operations. The corpus is built by annual contributions of the union government and the state governments concerned in the ratio 3:1. The Eleventh Finance Commission has modified the existing financial arrangements and recommended the setting up of a National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is responsible for cyclone tracking and warning to the concerned user agencies. Cyclone tracking is done through the INSAT satellite and ten cyclone detection radars. Warnings are issued to ports, fisheries and aviation departments. The warning system provides for a cyclone alert of 48 hours and a cyclone warning of 24 hours. There is a special Disaster Warning System (DWS) for the dissemination of cyclone warning in local languages through INSAT to designated addresses in isolated places in coastal areas.

A comparison of the Andhra Pradesh cyclones in 1977 and 1990 will illustrate the progress made in the dissemination of cyclone warning. The number of deaths in 1977 was over 10,000 whereas the loss of human lives in 1990 was less than 1,000. Timely warnings issued by the IMD enabled the district administration in the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh to evacuate over half a million people.

To monitor the possibility of floods, the Central Water Commission (CWC) has a flood forecasting system covering 62 major rivers in 13 states. There are 55 hydro-meteorological stations also in the 62 river basins. The CWC monitors the water levels of 60 major reservoirs with weekly reports of reservoir levels and the corresponding capacity for the previous year and the average of the previous ten years. Similar monitoring of smaller reservoirs by the irrigation departments of state governments give advance warnings of hydrological droughts with below-average stream flows, cessation of stream flows and decrease in soil moisture and groundwater levels.

Based on inputs from the IMD and CWC on the rainfall behaviour and water levels in the reservoirs and the crop situation, the National Crop Weather Watch Group monitors drought conditions. Remote sensing techniques are also used to monitor drought conditions based on vegetative and moisture index status. In the event of

severe drought, state governments introduce appropriate policy packages to support vulnerable populations through food for work programmes and other employment-generation and income-generation activities. Most of the food for work programmes will be undertaken to desilt the existing water tanks, deepen the tanks and carry out the construction of water harvesting structures. Sometimes, the state governments may also include the restoration of public utilities and creation of social infrastructure in such food for work programmes in drought-affected districts.

Multi-purpose dams and reservoirs have been built to reduce the impact of floods. Control of premature siltation of multi-purpose reservoirs and checking degradation of catchment areas is attempted through a scheme of soil conservation and river valley projects in the catchments of major rivers. The scheme covers 581 watersheds in 27 catchments spread over 17 states.

During 1960s to 1980s there has been a greater reliance on structural measures. As structural measures alone have not yielded the desired results and flood damage continues to increase, non-structural measures such as flood forecasting, flood plain zoning, flood proofing of the civic amenities of the affected villages, changing the cropping pattern and public participation in flood management works are being given greater emphasis.

The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) is under implementation since 1973 in 149 districts in 14 states and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) is implemented in 36 districts in seven states. Seventy per cent of India's cultivated land is in the rainfed areas, which often suffer a decline in agricultural production in years with low rainfall and face drought conditions.

A programme titled National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR) is under implementation in drought-prone areas. This programme adopts development measures for all the spatial components of watersheds i.e. arable land, non-arable land and drainage lines as one organic geo-hydrological entity. The objective is to achieve conservation of rainwater, control of soil erosion, regeneration of green cover and promotion of dryland farming systems including horticulture, agro-forestry, pasture development and livestock management as well as household production systems.

There are large areas of degraded land of over 100 million hectares in the country that could be reclaimed. Most of the land needs only basic water and soil conservation measures and some amount of plantation and protection work. By protecting, regenerating and restoring the degraded land the pressure on remaining land, forests and pastures can be reduced. A National Wasteland Development Board has been constituted to promote integrated wasteland development.

Natural disasters, particularly droughts, result in huge unemployment and under-employment problems in the rural areas. Providing wage employment to the rural poor

has been an integral part of rural development efforts. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) envisaged for this purpose is the largest such programme in the country. The Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS) are implemented to provide employment opportunities, mostly in drought-prone areas.

Measures such as building cyclone shelters, afforestation in coastal areas, etc have been undertaken to respond to cyclones. Reconstruction projects have been taken up in areas affected by major calamities by designing structural mitigation schemes. The activities consist mainly of housing and public infrastructure, drainage and rural water supply, expansion of road and communication networks and shelterbelt plantations.

Since much loss of life during the past earthquakes in various parts of the country has occurred due to the collapse of non-engineered traditional buildings of clay, stones and bricks, special emphasis is being placed on the repair and strengthening of such buildings through retrofitting, etc in seismically active regions.

India is committed to the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) that was observed from 1990 to 2000. After the completion of the IDNDR decade, the Government of India is continuing the spirit of the decade. The Ministry of Agriculture set up a High power Committee (HPC) under the chairmanship of JC Pant, to prepare disaster management plans at the national, state and district levels.

Despite these measures, the task is very complex in a country of India's size and diversity. Population pressure, environmental degradation, migration, poverty, illiteracy and unplanned urbanisation are some of the major factors contributing to increased risk and vulnerability. Non-structural disaster mitigation efforts need to be accelerated in the country. It is necessary to emphasise the links between disaster mitigation and development plans, the development of effective communication systems, the application of latest information technology, risk reduction and risk transfer options like insurance, extensive public awareness and education campaigns in vulnerability reduction, legal and legislative support, the involvement of the private sector, the strengthening of the institutional framework for disaster response at the national, state and district levels, the applications of remote sensing, geographical information system, etc. Above all, it is important that civil society initiatives be strengthened and supported to ensure that the existing institutional mechanisms deliver the services they are expected to deliver effectively and efficiently.

The losses due to natural disasters reduce the pace of sustained economic development in the already resource-scarce states and often lead to a heavy drain on available resources, diverting them from development activities. It is necessary to move away from the relief mode after a disaster to preparedness, prevention and mitigation, as this will be more cost-effective and sustainable. This will have to be implemented through a massive campaign by mobilising the participation of local communities, voluntary organisations, community-based organisations and the private sector.

*The Gujarat Disaster Management Act 2003 provides - although again generally - for capacity building of groups in local communities to cope with any disaster. However the central feature of the Act is that it establishes the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority - a high powered body comprising the Chief Minister as an ex-officio chairperson and includes two other ministers, the Chief Secretary and the State Relief Commissioner, the Director General of Police of the State and such other officers as may be appointed by the Government. The Authority acts as a central planning, coordinating and monitoring body for disaster management and post disaster rehabilitation, reconstruction and assessment. This seems to be an important legislation, as this scheme at the state level is a definite precursor to the proposed National Disaster Management Authority under the about-to-be-enacted National Disaster Management law. An influential Union Minister of State in a public appearance suggested that the proposed Authority would constitute an Expert Group that will take care of inter-departmental coordination for tackling disasters. If one tries to see through the present legislative ferment, it appears clear that the decision making on disaster management is going to be top heavy and centralised. The people will come in not as an advisory, but at best, in an assisting role at local levels. Note here that the *Gujarat Disaster Management Act makes the citizens duty-bound to assist the Collector or the commissioner in disaster management activities whenever their assistance is demanded.**

*(Source: India Together, 17 May 2006).*

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### **3.5 Disaster Management in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is frequently hit by disasters, particularly cyclones, floods and drought. Its tropical monsoon climate is influenced by the Himalayan, the Assam and the Burmese mountain ranges in the north and northeast and the Bay of Bengal in the south. The strong monsoon rains, coupled with Bangladesh's location in the delta of the world's second largest river basin, make it extremely vulnerable to recurring floods. In addition, the country's approximately 600 kilometres of coastline leave huge tracts of land open to the destructive effects of cyclones and storm surges. Bangladesh has experienced seventeen highly damaging floods in the 20th century. Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has seen floods of a vast magnitude and required external emergency assistance in 1974, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1998 and 2004.<sup>66</sup>

To address the Disaster issues and manage, the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) was created as a professional unit at national level back in 1992, under the then Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. DMB was assigned to perform specialist support functions working in close collaboration with District and Thana and Upazila level; authorities and the concerned line ministries under the overall authority of high level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMDMCC).

The DMB has the additional responsibility to create public awareness on the severity and risks associated with natural and human-induced hazards and to formulate programmes and projects that will better prepare at-risk communities and public officials to mitigate their consequences. As a technical arm to the Ministry of Food and Disaster management, DMB overviews and coordinates all activities related to disaster management from national to the grass-root level. It is also entrusted to maintain an effective liaison with government agencies, donors and NGOs to ensure maximum cooperation and coordination in all aspects of disaster management. As a continuation of the paradigm shift process, the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) has been designed as a long-term programme of the Ministry of Food and Disaster management with multi-agency involvement. The CDMP is funded jointly by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for International Development (DFID) and the programme was launched in November 2003.<sup>67</sup>

In line with the paradigm shift from relief and response to comprehensive disaster management, the erstwhile Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation has been changed to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and in 2003, it was again renamed as the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM). A series of inter-related institutions were developed to ensure that planning and coordination of disaster episodes were performed in accordance with the Standing Order on Disasters (SoD).

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<sup>66</sup>Source: [http://www.usaid.gov/bd/disaster\\_mgt.html](http://www.usaid.gov/bd/disaster_mgt.html)

<sup>67</sup> Source: <http://www.mofdm.gov.bd/>

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has taken a number of significant steps for building up institutional arrangements from national to union levels for effective and systematic disaster management.

1. Naming of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation as the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR)
2. Establishment of Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) in 1993
3. Establishment of Council and Committees at the national, district, upazilla and union levels
4. Establishment of Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

### ***Disaster Management Organisations in Bangladesh***

#### ***Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh***

Ministry of Food and Disaster Management

E-mail: [mof@bttb.net.bd](mailto:mof@bttb.net.bd)

#### ***Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)***

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) offers a range of services to deal with both national and international emergencies. As a National Society within the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the BDRCS has access to the largest voluntary network in the world and is among the oldest humanitarian organisations in the world.

#### **Contact:**

684-686 Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka 1217, Bangladesh.

Tel +88-02-933 0188

Fax +88-02-935 2303

Email: [info@bdracs.org](mailto:info@bdracs.org)

#### ***Action Aid Bangladesh***

The goal of Livelihood Security and Risk Reduction sector is to ensure a more secure livelihood for the poor and marginalised people. Promotion and strengthening of livelihoods, protection from disasters, access to and control over natural resources are the three themes in this sector.

#### **Contact:**

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***CEGIS (The Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services)***

The Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS) is an organisation for integrated environmental analysis using geographic information systems and remote sensing, as well as information technology and databases. Set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and supported by the Government of the Netherlands, it became an independent registered organization after ten years of working as a project. Thus CEGIS, with its services and products relating to consulting, R&D, spatial analysis, information and database and training, came into full operation from 1 July 2002.

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