



Quarterly Newsletter of
SAARC
Disaster Management Centre
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From Editors Desk

Women Leadership: From Risk to Resilience

Long time ago, there was a king, he decided to give a big party to his pupil. King called his minister and directed that everybody should be invited to his party including all the animals living in his Kingdom. King also directed his minister to not to discriminate anybody while sending the invitation. On the party day, almost all the invitees attended. King himself was personally attending the guests, making sure that everybody is eating and enjoying the party. He suddenly saw that there was a Crane and Fox sitting together who were served food in the golden dishes (as it was the rule of the party that every guest should be treated equally, so the Crane and the Fox also got a dish). King approached them and requested personally to Crane to eat more. He could see that the Fox was eating and enjoying the party, whereas the Crane was not. King further requested that Crane to eat more. The king asked why Crane is not eating? The Crane very politely replied that the utensil needed for him is not adequately designed to access food. King suddenly realized that it was his mistake. Crane body make was entirely different that the Fox and his need was not addressed. The King then ordered for different utensils suited for the Crane. Later, then Crane could eat properly and enjoyed the party. The King realized that equal opportunities does not lead to equal outcomes. Different people have differential needs. Hence acknowledgment of the differences, their environment, their responsibilities should be addressed accordingly.

In disaster events that affected the South Asian Region, has left numerous dead and millions affected. Thus to say, the policy and programs designed do not address such issues and does not give desired outcomes. Women have the differential need. They have to observe, different norms, practices and social values then men (although constitutionally they are all equal to men). The vulnerability here was not reduced even after all good initiatives. In the entire group of Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change and Sustainable development, they are still at the margin. SAARC DMC had conducted several Expert Group Meetings and Member States Consultations for drafting the agenda of Post-2015 i.e. HFA-2 for setting regional priorities. Member States emphasized to focus on building capacity of women not only as vulnerable group but their effective engagement in risk reduction process. Women in the region, at many occasions have demonstrated their leadership role in difficulties. Time has come that South Asian Region collectively build their capacity for making development sustainable.

SAARC Regional Training Programme on River Erosion & Embankment Safety in South Asia, Dhaka University, Bangladesh



South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Disaster Management Centre, New Delhi in coordination with the Disaster Research Training Management Centre (DRTMC), The University of Dhaka conducted a regional Training programme on "River Erosion & Embankment Safety Management in South Asia Region" held at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh from 29 March – 04 April, 2014. The Training was intended to create a pool of experts on River erosion embankment safety management in SAARC region who will serve as resource persons when needed. Various aspects of river erosion safety management planning were discussed during the five -day workshop through the facilitation of DRTMC and its trained pool of experts from different institutions and agencies of Government of Bangladesh. 23 participants participated in this event from SAARC Member Countries except Nepal, Maldives and Pakistan. The participants were high-level officials from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India. Participants were engaged in acquiring expertise in field of river erosion, planning and management - from the national platform as well as from supporting ministries such as public works, health, education, and environment.

The main aim of the training was to enhance the capacity of regional participants from South Asia to strengthen technical supports and integrate the knowledge to measure river erosion on the basis of catchment area and altered hydrological characteristics in the context of the impact of climate change. This may serve as a potential platform for the professionals working in the related field to interact and share their experiences on the emerging technologies and best practices in the SAARC member states. The Training resulted in potential cooperation

for several planned activities. Firstly, SAARC DMC intends to facilitate the development of "Regional Framework on River Erosion and Embankment Safety for SAARC" with essential next step of initiating dialogues with member states to develop road map for highlighting various issues like transboundary water management and river system in this region.

SAARC Member States expressed some options on how to take river erosion safety and embankment management planning forward. The options include:

- (i) organizing a Training of Trainers (ToT) at the national level;
- (ii) developing a regional framework, using as reference the consolidated strategic recommendations for River erosion and safety management that came out from the training and
- (iii) initiating specific projects such as pre-disaster agreements or identification of relevant issues for members state in support functions among various ministries (e.g. fast-tracking environmental impact assessments with support from Ministry of Environment in planning and management of present river system and relevant issues in the region) in SAARC member states. Finally, DRTMC and SAARC DMC are discussing future cooperation in providing technical assistance and capacity building collecting and sharing more information on river erosion and safety as well as partnership in programs.

SAARC DMC in 1st ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP) Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 22-24 April, 2014

Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director SAARC DMC attended the 1st ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP) meeting of the year 2014 held during April 22-24, 2014 at Bangkok, Thailand. The fundamental role of the IAP has been a) to support the political leadership of the regional platform through series of ministerial conference and review the programmes/projects at the national and regional level; b) to support the implementation of HFA-1, and c) to improve regional coordination and coherence through regional experiences. Participants of the meeting were mainly from national governments, sub-regional inter-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral donors, UN and International organizations, civil society organizations and media. Nearly 200 participants from different institutions participated in this meeting.

SAARC DMC participated with SAARC Secretariat Representative – Mr. Singye Dorjee, Director, ENB. Director, SAARC DMC attended two technical sessions viz. - Agenda of 6th AMCDRR 2014 and - HFA monitoring and review process cycling 10 years of reflection & Indicator of monitoring and implementation of HFA-1 & HFA-2. UN-ISDR appreciated SAARC DMC for its contributions in earlier IAP Meetings. As 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) took place in the month of June 2014 at Bangkok, Thailand, the discussions on the draft outcome and the background of the IAP meeting in April were shadowed by it. SAARC DMC was invited to participate in the AMCDRR Conference and was asked to organize a Pre-Conference Event on 22nd June, 2014 and also to join with some partners in organizing technical session II on 'Improving Public Investments for Disaster & Climate Risk Management to Protect & Sustain Development Gains'. After the IAP meeting was over, there was a Special Session organized by UN-ISDR on Women Leadership role in DRR in the Asian Region on 24th April, 2014. The meeting was attended by UN-ISDR, UNESCAP, Practical Action, UNDP, other stakeholders who have worked on the Gender Issues in the Region during HFA and also involved in the HFA-2 consultation in the Asia & Pacific. SAARC DMC was requested to attend the session. The Expert Group Meeting requested SAARC DMC to join hands on gender issue with the Expert Committee along with UN-ISDR & UNESCAP. SAARC DMC has given its 'In Principle' consent to undertake the gender research work in partnership as approved by the 8th Governing Board Meeting of SAARC DMC.

SAARC DMC in International Conference on Sharing Experiences and Developing Regional Hazard and Risk Picture, Islamabad, Pakistan, 12-14 May, 2014

Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director SAARC DMC was invited by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Pakistan to participate in the three days deliberations (May 12-14, 2014) to participate in the International Conference on Sharing Experiences and Developing Regional Hazard and Risk Picture for Joint Action Plan for the implementation of Istanbul process. In the concluding session, Draft Islamabad Conference Statement on Istanbul Process of Promoting Stability and Prosperity in the 'Heart of Asia' through Building Conference and Regional Cooperation and the Draft copy of Implementation Plan/Joint Guidelines on Disaster Management-Confidence Building Measure (DM-CBM) were circulated and discussed. SAARC DMC was requested to make presentation on the 'Vulnerability of South Asia in the context of disaster risk and climate change'. Prof. Santosh Kumar made a presentation on the findings on the study commissioned by SAARC DMC entitled "A Comprehensive Study of the policy, Institutional Landscape, and Resource Allocation for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in South Asia" and made certain recommendations according to the lessons learnt from the Istanbul Process as part of the Joint Action Programme. SAARC DMC's presentation was appreciated and some of the recommendations made in the presentation were adopted in the 'Islamabad Conference Statement'.

SAARC DMC in 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in Bangkok, Thailand



The 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) was held at Bangkok, Thailand between 23-26 June 2014. The SAARC DMC delegation comprised of Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director, & Dr. Ashish Kumar Singh, Specialist-HDD. SAARC DMC organized a Pre Conference Consultation Event on the theme "Regional Cooperation for DRR: Attaining Resilience through Responsible Action" on 23rd June 2014 (09:00-12:30 hrs) with specific focus on:

- a) Post 2015 Priorities for action- Integrating DRR, CCA and Sustainable Development Agenda
- b) Knowledge Management –South Asia Disaster Knowledge Network (SADKN) as an effective tool for networking, information sharing and knowledge transfer
- c) Regional Cooperation is inevitable for trans-boundary disasters

The key objectives of the workshop were:

- i) Draw mechanism for the convergence and integration of the Sustainable Development Agenda with Disaster Risk Reduction and the Climate Change Adaptation.
- ii) Effective and efficient networking for knowledge management and technology sharing to attain sustainable development through disaster resilience and enhance regional cooperation and participation on DRR of trans-boundary disasters in South Asia.
- iii) To highlight and hence ensure that sufficient budgetary allocations and investments are made

- on DRR for all our initiatives at various levels.
- iv) Focus on building multi-stakeholder partnerships and effective engagement of the private sector and the CSO's beyond disaster relief and response towards disaster risk reduction, disaster mitigation and business continuity.
 - v) Regional Collaboration: Strengthening the role of IGO for effectively addressing trans-boundary concerns.

Delegation from all the SAARC Member States along with about sixty seven delegates from various stakeholder groups including Ministers, Secretaries, Heads of the Disaster Management Authorities, senior representatives from the various UN agencies, INGO's, NGO's, IGO's CBO's, women's groups, academicians, scientists, disaster management experts and professionals participated in the deliberations and gave their valuable inputs.

The workshop on behalf of the SAARC Member States and key stakeholder groups of South Asia came up with the following key points and recommendations that are of critical importance towards a Disaster Resilient South Asia for consideration by the world community and leadership with respect to the proposed **Bangkok Declaration 2014**. During the event Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director, SAARC DMC had made international collaborations with UN agencies like UNESCAP, UNISDR, UNICEF etc. on the various aspects of Disaster Risk Reduction & Climate Change Adaptation issues.

Landslide in Afghanistan



In the starting of the year, few isolated activities of landslide happened in different provinces of Afghanistan. Tishkan district of northwestern Badakhshan province observed sliding of rocks in the month of January, later on 1st February, 7 people were killed and 19 wounded people in Badakhshan & Bamyan provinces. On 27th March night, a massive slide of mud and rocks triggered by heavy rains hit a village overnight in the Pashtunkot district of northern Faryab province, destroying 80 homes. There were no casualties because residents were quick to take refuge in nearby areas, leaving behind their belongings. On 12th April 2014, after flash floods and a 4.1 magnitude earthquake, there were consequent events of landslides. Early reports said the event was triggered by an earthquake; a huge landslide damaged a hundred homes in two villages in the Rustaq district of northern Takhar province, killing at least four people, with dozens of others missing. Officials said the rains followed by flash floods are believed to be the worst in a decade. The floods also left the key Takhar-Badakhshan highway closed for traffic, multiplying problems for locals. Police said more than 100 houses were damaged when an earthquake jolted the two villages early Saturday, fearing the death toll could rise as many had gone missing after the landslide.

Later in the year, on 2nd May, officials reported more than 2,000 people went missing (later confirmed killed) after a hill collapsed on the village of Hobo Bank. The landslide buried around 300 homes in the area — about a third of all houses there. On 17th May, officials of the National Disaster Management Authority said that part of Koh-e-Safi hillside is feared to slide in central Parwan province. Hence multiple activities of landslide have impacted Afghanistan badly in first half of the year. In the aftermath of the landslide events and the way response and relief work was executed on 4th May, members of Wolesi Jirga (WJ) summoned leaders of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) in order to question them and express grievances about the way aid for victims of Badakhshan's landslide was handled. President of Afghanistan voiced his deep shock over the tragedy and extended his condolences to the victims. He directed the authorities to reach out to the affected families. He announced May 4th as a day of mourning over the landslide tragedy in northeastern Badakhshan province. On 5th May 2014, rescuers stopped searching and digging to find survivors in the double landslide caused by flooding related to ice and snow melt in northern Badakhshan province on 2nd May that killed, an estimated, 2,500 people if not more. From April onwards, many international agencies started pouring in with aids and assistance. Among them were- Church World Service (CWS) UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), UK charities, Save the Children etc. They helped with coordinating local authorities to rescue those still trapped. The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industries (ACCI) on 3rd May announced aid for the victims of a devastating landslide in northeastern Badakhshan province. Food items and other stuff worth 3 million afghanis had been sent to flood-affected people.

Flash Floods in Afghanistan

After the occurrence of avalanche in the first quarter of the year, the second quarter had floods in store. The month of April and May had numerous events of flash floods with 2-3 days gap, but affected the lives and property of people heavily bringing in mortality and house and property loss. The first incidences of flash floods started on 24th April 2014. For this day event the official records put the description for three provinces- Jawzjan, Saripul and Faryab. According to the report submitted to Ministry of public health, Afghanistan detailing the incidences of flood in north Afghanistan provinces, on 24 April 2014 at evening after heavy raining flash floods affected the three districts of Jawzjan province Qushtepa, Khuja dokoh and Darzab districts which destructed houses, blocked the transportation roads and caused mortality. Around 22158 houses were destroyed (758 in Qushtepa, 1150 in Khuja dokoh and 250 in Darzab). So far 57 deaths and 10 missing are reported from Qushtepa. On midnight of 24-25 April 2014 heavy raining occurred followed by flash flood in Sayad, Sozma Qala, Gosfandi district and some areas in the center of Saripul province which resulted in destroyed houses, agricultural lands, bridges and roads and loss of life. Based on updated and available information got from PHD 660 houses were destroyed completely and 1115 houses were destroyed partially, 24 bridges, 87KM roads, 15725 Jereb agricultural land and 53 wells were destroyed. On the night of 24-25 April 2014 at midnight heavy raining occurred and followed by flash flood in Faryab province and destroyed houses, agricultural lands, gardens, bridges and canals, roads and water sources and caused mortality. Based on the updated information 43 deaths have been reported so far, meanwhile 2207 houses, 11484 Jereb agricultural lands, 75 wells and 4 water pool have destroyed. Majority of the destruction and deaths occurred in four districts of the province (Khoja Sabzposh, Dawlatabad, shereen tagab and Pashton kot)

The description/ narrative shows the intensity of the events and the impact. As on 15 May 2014, the flood situation report made by OCHA Afghanistan, heavy rainfall between 24 April and 15 May caused flash floods and landslide in 87 districts of seventeen



northern, northeastern, central, central highland and western provinces. The joint assessment reports indicate that 412 people have lost their lives, 14 people were injured and 4 people are still missing mainly in Faryab, Jowzjan, Badghis, Badakhshan Sar-e-Pol, Farah and Baghlan provinces. Of these, 255 deaths are verified so far in Badakhshan. In addition the flooding has negatively impacted around 16,550 families. Of these 3,656 families (25,592 individuals) have been displaced. The flooding also resulted in the destruction of public facilities, roads, and thousands of hectares of agricultural land and gardens. IOM, in close coordination with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) & Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC) members, mobilized to the affected areas for rapid joint assessments in order to verify the emergency needs of the flood-hit communities. The report of 1 June 2014 is produced by OCHA Afghanistan in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by OCHA Afghanistan. It covers the period from 16 April to 1 June 2014. According to its highlights, the number of flood affected people is about 140,000 in 27 provinces in 132 districts, an increase of about 15,000 since the last report. An estimated 6,000 homes need to be rebuilt. New waves of flooding occurred over the weekend in six villages of Taluqan city in Takhar, leading to the displacement of 500 families; other districts were flooded in Sar-e-Pul, Baghlan and Balkh provinces. In Pashtunkot district, Faryab, initial reports, indicate a significant number of houses completely destroyed/damaged, livestock and agriculture land washed away and destruction of roads and bridges.

Havoc of Nor'wester in Bangladesh



In the month of March (last weeks), May and June before the arrival of monsoon, Nor'wester or short-lived storms locally known as Kalbaishakhi impacted the life of common people. This year too, keeping with the trend, there were several incidences of short storms accompanied by lightening events that had many casualties, damages and losses.

On 27 March, Nor'wester lashed Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Sherpur districts early on 24-25 March 2014 night, damaging over houses and shops. The storm accompanied by rain hit different areas of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila at around 10:00pm and continued for 30 minutes. At least 30 houses, litchi and mango orchards were badly damaged by the storm. The twister also uprooted a number of trees and electric poles, plunging the entire upazila into darkness. On 6th April, there were 3 persons dead due to storms in Patnitola, Shariatpur sadar upazila and Ashashuni upazila. On 10th April, storms lashed Netrakona and Habiganj districts in night, damaging over 400 houses and injuring 30 people. Also, at least three people, including a child, were killed and five others injured by lightning in Haimchar upazila of Chandpur district in the evening. The next day, storm lashed three villages in Gouripur upazila of Mymensingh district, killing a boy and injuring ten others. The storm-hit villages are Teroshira, Kandulia and Pumbail under Ramgopalpur union of the upazila. On 27 April, Nor'wester left 16 people, including four of a family, dead and 85 others injured on late night in four districts. Homes, crops, shops and trees were destroyed and vast areas in several districts were left without power.

Wind gusts of one of the storms were reportedly so powerful that they derailed nine carriages of a train, snapping rail communication between Dhaka and western Bangladesh. Two people were killed and 20 others injured in a nor'easter in Rajshahi city on 01 May 2014 night, while at least 300 trees, including 12 large ones on the both sides of the Paris Road at Rajshahi University, were uprooted. Around 100 houses, 50 shops, 500 trees and a huge amount of crops were destroyed in the district in the 20-minute storm, said witnesses. Nor'wester lashed two upazilas of Pabna and Jhenidah on 6-7 May 2014 night, leaving one killed and damaging at least 570 houses. On 6 May & 8 May, two persons each were killed due to lightening in Faridpur & Habiganj. On 13 May, 6 got killed in Sunamganj & Chapainawabganj districts. Three members of a family were injured, and over 50 houses, around 360 trees and several banana orchards were damaged by a storm at three villages in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur on 22 May night. The one-hour storm between 10:00pm and 11:00pm lashed Deflapara, Kangalkursha and Meghabari.

On 29 May, in Jamalpur, two people were killed and some others 32 injured as the violent storm hit Bakshiganj, Melandah and Islampur upazilas around 10:45am. Over 400 houses also got damaged in the storms. During the storms, a lightning strike killed two people in Madaripur. Thunderbolts killed seven people, two of them women, in Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts on 31 May morning. On 02 June lightning kills eight in Chuadanga, Chapainawabganj, Bagerhat, Jhenidah and Gopalganj districts.

Boat capsizing accidents in Bangladesh



Around 5.0 million people in Bangladesh are directly dependent on waterways for communication, while the livelihood of 15.0 million people is indirectly related to river transportations. At least 4,621 people were killed and 977 others went missing in 571 incidents of launch capsizing over the last 15 years, reveals a study. The study was conducted by the National Committee to Protect Shipping, Road and Railway Sectors (NCPSRR) from 1999 to 2013. Inappropriate designing of marine vessels as well as approval of that faulty designs have been identified as a major cause for river vessel accidents. Issuing registration and annual fitness certificates without scrutinizing structural and technical faults has been another major reason behind the accidents. Recruitment of unskilled drivers and masters, overloading and illegal movement of vessels on waterways are also responsible for the incidents of capsizing, the NCPSRR report added. On 3rd May 2014 afternoon, a launch capsized in the Golachipa River in Patuakhali during a Nor'wester, leaving at least eight people, including a child and four women, dead. Of some 60 passengers aboard the launch, as many as 35 were missing. The others are said to have swum ashore. The launch,

ML Shathil, sank around 2:30pm at Kalagasia while it was going to Patuakhali from Golachipa upazila. A fire service team carried out rescue operation with the help of locals. Coastguards joined around midnight. Rescue operation was suspended at 11:15pm due to inclement weather and tide. Next day divers recovered seven more bodies from the launch that capsized in the Golachipa River in Patuakhali. Coast Guard and Fire Service officials found the bodies inside ML Shathil after the rescue operation resumed around 6:00am. A five-member committee, headed by BIWTA Director was formed to find out the reason behind the mishap.

According to reports, as many as 175 people lost lives in 36 launch capsizing accidents that took place in different parts of Barisal region in the last eight years. At least 17 people drowned and over 100 more were feared missing after a launch heading for Shariatpur from Dhaka went down in the Meghna in Munshiganj on 15th April 2014, the second launch capsizing in two weeks. The double-decker MV Miraj-4 sank with over 200 people on board around 3:30pm at Doulatpur in Gazaria upazila during a Nor'wester.

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