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Scope of Interactions With Government and Non-Government Organizations In Disaster Response: with Special Reference to Uttrakhand Disaster, India

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ABSTRACT

This paper tracks insight of the roles played by the various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in disaster response interventions in Uttarakhand Disasters June 16th 2013. Additionally, the data collected from organizations after action reports and news were analyzed.

Findings and Discursions: The study indicate that there was a scope of increase in interactions of the Government with Non-Governmental Organizations Active participation in Disasters. Next to the Government, the NGOs are the primary first responders during the times when government actors started saving citizen lives and properties. In order to present the Government and NGOs response to disaster, there was an unorganized disaster interventions were taking place in between government and NGOs. Though the NGOs want to work with Government but there were no proper collaboration with Govt. The Govt. and NGOs were mobilized lot of funds from donor agencies to provide services including emergency and sustainable rehabilitation work. There was a duplication of services provided to the affected area. But there was many more affected people who were reached neither by NGO nor by Government.

Conclusion: The major conclusion of the report states that there should have more interactions/collaboration with Government departments and NGOs during the course of disaster interventions. Every disaster have its own uniqueness, but there should be some learning captured from past experience and take necessary actions towards disaster preparedness to minimise the human loss in future. This paper also tracks changes in the NGOs policies with in their organization incorporating interventions in natural calamities as there one of the core objective.

KEYWORDS : disaster response, non-governmental organizations, Government, calamities

Introduction:

India is the 7th largest country in the world by geographical area with an extent of 32,62,263 sq.km and is the second largest populated country in the world. India stands unique in its rich cultural heritage, diversified geographical and climatic conditions, with the Himalayas in the northern side and rain forests in the south, the Indo-Gangetic Plains ,the Deccan Plateau, the major life-giving Rivers which make the areas fertile, deserts on the western side, drought prone areas and long stretches of coastal areas.

India, due to its physio- geographic conditions, land characteristics and climatic conditions, is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, exposed to different kinds of natural hazards. India has witnessed a number of disasters which claimed several thousands of human lives, rendering millions of people homeless and causing immense loss to properties of the people.

Background:

The Northern State of Uttarakhand, India - formerly Uttaranchal - often referred to as the Land of Gods, is known for its natural beauty and presence of a multitude of Hindu pilgrimage spots. The word Uttarakhand is derived from the Sanskrit word uttara meaning north and Khand meaning state.

The recent tsunami in Uttarakhand was a humongous calamity. The disaster struck on the night of June 16, 2013, when a confluence of two weather systems – one of the north westerlies collided with moisture-laden monsoon winds over Uttarakhand leading to a series of cloudbursts which made rivers like Alaknanda, Mandakani and Bhagirathi burst banks, overflow and destroy anything in their path.

The fury of nature was nothing short of a catastrophe with thousands of people reportedly killed and an equal number missing, while around one lakh people were stranded in Uttarakhand with roads washed away. They were stranded on hilltops in difficult terrain amid rain with no supply of food or water for days together.

Affected Population: The scale of devastation left by recent cloudburst and flash floods in Uttarakhand is massive and the final toll is expected to be in several thousands (unofficially more than 30,000), and they are yet to count the missing residents of approximately 200 villages that were completely destroyed on 16th June (Sunday) when flash floods ripped through the Kedarnath-Rudraprayag region (New Indian Express).

According to the Uttarakhand health minister, the 10,000 figure was an estimate as several bodies remained buried under debris.

Uttarakhand is struggling to come to terms with the devastation caused due to heavy rains and flash floods.

It is reported that over 71,000 pilgrims visiting these holy places have been straddled in Rudraprayag and Chamoli and Uttarakasi areas however till now most of the pilgrims have been rescued by the army. But the numbers of people have been died and their bodies are being recovered at various places in Kedarnath, Rudraprayag, Badrinath, Uttarakashi, Gaurikund and other places. Dead bodies are also being recovered in Ganga river at Rishikesh, Haridwar, Bijnor and other places.

Susceptibility of India to Natural Disasters:

Earthquakes: During the last 20 years, India has experienced 10 major earthquakes that have claimed more than 35,000 lives. Almost 58% of our total land mass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity. The Himalayan mountain range is undergoing constant geological changes (crustal movements) resulting in frequent earthquakes and landslides.

Floods: Floods in the Indo-Gangetic – Brahmaputra plains are an annual feature. Several thousands of lives have been lost, millions have been rendered homeless and 8 million hectares of crops are damaged every year. India receives 75% of rains during the monsoon season (June – September). As a result almost all the rivers carry heavy waters during this time resulting in sediment deposition, drainage congestion, invading into the main land. 40 million hectares of land is vulnerable to floods with about 30 million people affected by flood every year. Floods brought severe drought in arid and semi arid areas. About 12% of the total land mass is flood prone.

Cyclones: India has a long coastline running 7,516 km long and the entire coastal stretch is exposed to Tsunami, cyclone, Tidal waves and storm surges. On an average, five to six tropical cyclones strike every year, of which two or three are very severe. More cyclones occur in the

Bay of Bengal than in the Arabian Sea and the ratio is approximately 4:1. Every year the eastern coast is affected by cyclones and Tsunami. The Orissa Super Cyclone (1999) and the India Tsunami 2004 claimed thousands and thousands of human lives devastating agricultural crops and rendering lakhs and lakhs of people homeless.

Drought: The Desert which is located in the western region of the country and the Deccan Plateau face recurring droughts due to acute shortage of rainfall. About 50 million people are affected annually by drought and 40 million hectares of land are prone to scanty or no rain.

Landslides: Landslides are yet another recurrent phenomenon in the hilly regions of India such as Himalayas, North-East India and Eastern and Western Ghat regions. The major Landslide disaster that took place was at Malpa Uttarkhand (UP) in the year 1998 when nearly 380 people were killed when massive landslides washed away the entire village. The 2010 Leh cloudburst led to flash mudslides and flash floods that killed 196 people swept away a number of houses and public buildings.

Cold waves: Cold waves are common and recurrent disaster in North India. During the winter season due to extreme cold climates, hundreds of people die of cold bites and related diseases every year. The impact is more on the urban poor.

Source: Habitat for Humanity India.

India - Disaster Statistics
Data related to human and economic losses from disasters that have occurred between 1980 and 2010.

Natural Disasters from 1980 – 2010 - An Overview	
No of events	431
No of people killed:	143,039
Average killed per year:	4,614
No of people affected:	1,521,726,127
Average affected per year:	49,087,940
Economic Damage (US$ X 1,000):	48,063,830
Economic Damage per year (US$ X 1,000):	1,550,446

Average Disaster Per Year	
Drought:	0.23
Earthquake*:	0.52
Epidemic:	1.81
Extreme temp:	1.23
Flood:	5.94
Insect infestation:	0.03
Mass mov. dry:	0.03
Mass mov. wet:	1.10
Volcano:	...
Storm:	2.97
Wildfire:	0.06

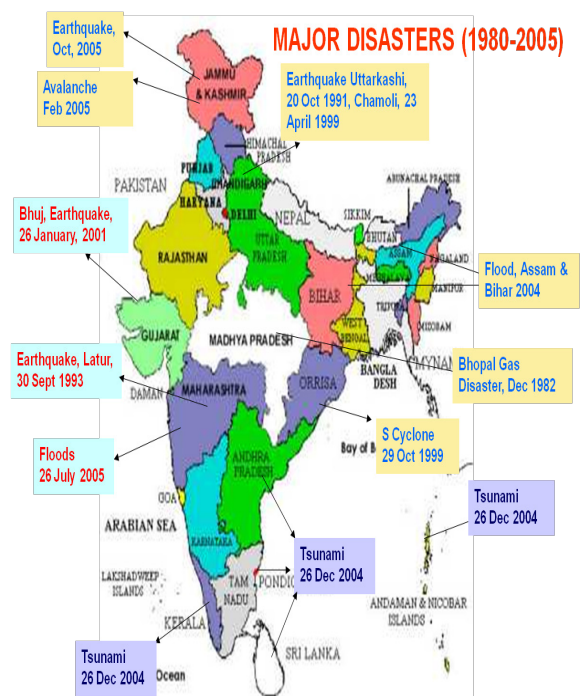
India Disaster Statistics

Statistics by Disasters Type
Percentage of reported people killed by disaster type
Earthquake*: 34.8 %Epidemic: 10.8 %Ext. temp.: 8 %Flood: 28 %Mass mov. wet: 2 %Storm: 16.2 %

Percentage of reported people affected by disaster type
Drought: 49.4 %Earthquake*: 1.8 %Flood: 44.8 %Storm: 3.7 %

Major Disasters that struck the country in the recent decades
1. Uttarkashi Earthquake in 1991
2. Killani Earthquake in 1993
3. Latur Earthquake in Maharashtra in 1993
4. Koyama Earthquake in 1997
5. Chamoli Earthquake in Uttarakhand in 1999
6. Super Cyclone in Orissa in 1999
7. Bhuj Earthquake in 2001
8. Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004
9. Kashmir Earthquake in 2005
10. Barmer Floods in Rajasthan in 2006
11. Kosi Floods in Bihar in 2008
12. Cyclone Aila in West Bengal in 2009
13. Cyclone Laila in Andhra Pradesh in 2009
11. Cloudburst in Leh in 2010
12. Thane Cyclone in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry 2011

Habitat for Humanity



Disaster Response in India 30th August 2010

Some of the NGOs working in DM in India
Aga Khan Developmental Network
Save the Children
Doctors for You
Safety Circle India, Chandigarh
Emmanuel Hospital Association- EHA
Centre for Environment Education (CEE)
Community Action For Rural Development (CARD)
The Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI)
Catholic Relief Services - CRS

Christian Aid
Karuna Social Service Society – KSSS
Life Help Centre for the Handicapped
Peace Trust
caritas India
Red Cross Society
Social Service Sericulture Project Trust
UPKAR
World Vision







Source: Times Foundation and interaction with Other NGOs

Situation after Disaster:
The main source of livelihood of the people of these area are agricultural, livestock rearing, daily wages, and small scale commercial activities during tourist season. At present due to heavy destruction, the people of the area have no option remained for their livelihood and depending largely on the government/NGO initiatives.

The government health services also disturbed due to this natural disaster and the health staff and facilities in these areas are not provided enough due to the growing demand of medical support in the affected area. Most of the government health infrastructure is also damaged due to the heave floods.

Government Reponses:
Never has India seen a natural calamity as devastating as the one that hit Kedarnath and surrounding areas. Hearing the news of the tragic occurrence, the Government of Uttarakhand and government of India rushed into action with Indian Air Force, Army and National Disaster Management Unit. Started rescue operations and relief services, shifted thousands of pilgrims to safe places with the help of helicopters. Due to the continued rain and road blocks relief programs could not carry on speedily and regularly which make the things worse. Even the politicians shift their regional (state) people by their own interest with lot of money they hired flights and trains (Ex: Gujarath and Andhra Pradesh. As on 30 June 2013, 105,606 persons have been evacuated. 4,992 vehicles were provided by Transport department to ferry stranded people. Rs. 2,000 was provided by the State government to every rescued persons (sufficient to get them back home). Free train and bus tickets were given to the rescued people to return to their homes. Special bogies were arranged in trains to ferry passengers. Mobile connectivity was also ensured so stranded people can connect to their homes Government has deputed Government medical professionals from all over the country. So much of Government funds mobilized to address the needs. Also requested donations for the state to recover from the damage.

NGOs Response: Hearing the news of the tragic occurrence, Number of NGOs rushed into action. NGOs helped the Army in rescue operations, provided with first aid, temporary shelters, drinking water, food, cloths, provisions etc., many charity NGOs carried out relief work to the displaced and stranded conducted medical camps, treating injuries and ailments especially seasonal and taking relief measures. Even some of the NGOs mobilized medical professions (as volunteers) from different organizations on rotation basis. NGOs were mobilized lot of funds from donor agencies to provide services including emergency and sustainable rehabilitation works.

Literature Review and Background Information
Non-Governmental Organizations play important roles in solving social problems and responding to the needs in the community. In responding to a disaster of extreme magnitude, NGOs usually have to deal with "the challenge of channelling the desire to help to the right place at the right time".

State and NGOs should overcome their historical differences; see their respective roles as mutually supplementary and not as competing alternatives (John Clark, 1993); and work towards greater establishing greater synergy in efforts for optimal use of resources; - *Regional Workshop on Networking and Collaboration among NGOs of Asian Countries in Disaster Reduction and Response 20-22- February 2002*

Timely response to natural disasters remains a difficult task in South Asian countries, where a majority of people live in dispersed rural settlements with inadequate communication facilities. Involvement of multiple actors, especially NGOs, makes it possible to reach humanitarian aid to marooned victims and initiating restoration work in cut-off zones. However, without coordination, such engagement of multiple actors could result in duplication, over lapping, and confusion. Adequate coordination of efforts made by govt. and NGOs can only ensure proper sharing of responsibility in the disaster response process. *"Government - NGO Collaboration for Disaster Reduction and Response: The India (Orissa) Experience Mr. Aurobindo Behera"*

Absolutely the real work being done by forces and NGOs and the local people – Article in IBN live : Pallavi Ghosh, Jul 01, 2013

A month on, NGOs seek help for Uttarakhand victims - *Times of India, July 23, 2013*

Relief yet to reach Uttarakhand flood victims: NGOs have alleged that there is huge gap between distribution of relief materials and the local population, *Ashna Singh/OneWorld South Asia*, July 9th 2013

Uttarakhand: Can't ignore NGO estimates of 11,600 missing, says disaster management body, Mala Das, July 10th 2013, NDTV.

Methodology
This research focuses on the June 16th, 2013 disaster in Uttrakhand, India. In order to present the Government and NGOs response to disaster, there was a unorganized disaster interventions were taking place in between government and NGOs. Though the NGOs want to work with Government but there were no coordination with Govt. The author personally participated in disaster intervention and also carefully reviewed several reports of the NGOs. Comfortable analyses were used to identi-

fy the major organizations that participated in the relief work.

Comfortable analysis is a useful method of listing both attribute and relational data regarding organizations that have participated in disaster response in the first three weeks after a disaster has occurred.

Disaster Management

Disaster Management means a continuous and integrated process of planning, organising, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for prevention of danger or threat of any disaster; mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences; capacity-building; preparedness to deal with any disaster; prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster; assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster; evacuation, rescue and relief; rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are organizations registered under various Indian laws such as the Societies Registration Act, 1860, Section 25(1) of Companies Act, 1956 meant for non-profit companies, or State-specific Public Charitable Trust Acts. NGOs work on a variety of areas like humanitarian assistance, sectoral development interventions and sustainable development. NGOs play important roles in different stages of the Disaster Management Cycle. (Role of NGOs in DM)

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Management: In India the involvement of NGOs are increased a very high from 2004 tsunami onwards. Many NGOs incorporated disaster intervention as one of their core objectives. The NGOs in the Disaster Interventions provides relief services in the communities. The services include providing the disaster-affected population temporary shelter, food, safe drinking water, first aid, counselling, emotional and spiritual cares, mass care, distribution of emergency relief items, disaster welfare information.

Findings / Scope of convergence - Govt. with NGOs:

There is an emerging need to develop a platform for NGOs to communicate, collaborate, coordinate, and cooperate, with the Government, actual services being provided by the NGOs. Because of the increasing need for the contributions of NGOs in disaster relief, and the growing number, scope and impact of disasters, Government needs to set up a better deal with issues in a more specialized and continual way. In this interventions there are high chances of duplication of services in disasters affected area, knowingly or un-knowingly due to many NGOs are rendering services in the same communities, thought the Government and NGOs are providing services but still there is a chance of not reaching to many people/communities. If the Govt. Coordinates and allocates the areas/locations which could cover among NGOs and communicate with the public in a more effective and coordinated manner through regular meetings. The relief can really reach many areas with more population. The Government response towards disaster relief services will also shared with the NGOs to reduce the focus on relief services and focus on rescue operations/services and other emergencies.

Conclusion

Both the Government and NGOs have an equal, important roles and responsibilities in disaster relief. Next to the Government, the NGOs are the primary first responders during the times when government actors started saving citizen lives and properties. The findings of the study indicate that there should have interactions with Government departments and NGOs during the course of disaster interventions. Since every disaster have its own uniqueness, but there should be some learning captured from past experience and take necessary actions towards disaster preparedness to minimise the human loss in future. This paper also tracks changes in the NGOs policies with in their organization incorporating disaster interventions as there one of the core objectives.

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