

Edited by Amita Singh, Milap Punia,
Nivedita P. Haran and Thiyam Bharat Singh

Development and Disaster Management

A Study of the Northeastern States of India



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Thiyam Bharat Singh
Editors

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FOREWORD



Disasters do not kill, but lack of preparedness, non-compliance to laws and absence of community resilience kill. Making the whole world a safer and better prepared to deal with any disaster is an onerous responsibility. We have to recognize this challenge and the importance of including ‘disaster’ and ‘climate risk management’ as an integral part of developmental planning to realize the global goals of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The region of the Northeast India is highly vulnerable. The geo-spatial and geomorphological mapping reveals that it falls in the high earthquake-prone zone V. Earthquakes on the hills of the Northeast India come with land sliding, mud-flooding and prolonged tremors following

a high-intensity quake. During a short span of 53 years between 1897 and 1950, four great earthquakes in the Himalayan seismic belt (Shillong, 1897; Kangra, 1905; Bihar-Nepal, 1934; and Assam, 1950) exceeding magnitude of 8 on the Richter scale occurred in the region with vast devastation. Studies indicate that enough strains have accumulated to generate earthquakes with magnitude of 8 or more in the Himalayan region. However, when and where such an earthquake would occur is not known.


Disaster management in India has gone through a paradigm shift—from a reactive, relief-based approach to one of proactive disaster risk reduction, meticulous preparedness, effective response and well thought out build-back better programme. The impact of disasters can be reduced to a considerable extent, and loss of life and damage to property can be reduced if the investments in disaster preparedness and management are made prudently and sufficient preparatory work is done. Government of India has understood the importance of investment in disaster preparedness, especially for strengthening early warning system, and made appropriate investments for improving the same.

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister's address at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, New Delhi, last year highlighted the need for developing a network of universities to work on disaster issues. Universities are the biggest platforms for generating sensitivity towards social responsibilities. All educational institutions especially the colleges and the universities in the Northeast India should work towards achieving a disaster-free development in this region.

I am happy to know that the State Disaster Management Authorities of Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram actively participated in the transdisciplinary Disaster Research Programme of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and the State Disaster Management Authority of West Bengal was cooperative to the ongoing research of JNU around the Kalimpong hills which hand hold the north-eastern geomorphology. I congratulate the Central University of Manipur for initiating this collaboration-based disaster research in the north-eastern states. It fills my heart with pride when I read the scholars from this region contributing such original research and grassroot voices for this volume of academic work.

I am confident that the meaningful research that has been presented in the book *Development and Disaster Management: A Study of the*

Northeastern States of India will help us in preventing damages and losses through disasters in the Northeast India.



Kiren Rijju
Minister of State for Home Affairs
Government of India

New Delhi, India
June 2017

PREFACE

SPECIAL CENTRE FOR DISASTER RESEARCH SERIES

This volume is part of a series of books that the Special Centre for Disaster Research, JNU, is planning to publish under Springer Nature's Palgrave imprint. The series editor for these works is Prof. Amita Singh, Chairperson of the Centre.

The transdisciplinary centre has been working upon a social science approach to disaster research and has undertaken three concerns very genuinely—first, the lack of non-western, local and indigenous literature in India and in the Asia; second, the gulf existing due to the language of law which prevents appropriate implementation of DRR laws; and third, an inherently patriarchal and ill-coordinated structures of disaster governance.

The philosophical pretence in a culturing of human beings is much provoked and stimulated from the particularities of relationships in any society. Research which enables the discovery of an idea of responsibility towards nature, which naturalizes laws and streamlines the structures of governance in accordance with the geospatial warnings, has greater possibility to reconnect decision-makers to the ecological processes. Nature and natural processes are beyond human contrivance, but to prepare communities and decision-makers for an eventuality when a natural process turns into a disaster is embedded in a social science perspective of understanding this universe of relationships in a habitat. One such perspective of social sciences called the reconstructive postmodern approach highlights communication, language and discourse generation

as an inherent part of any structure of governance. Is there any possibility that Sendai Framework and its focus on resilience building can ever be achieved with a ‘hazard based’ approach? These approaches of social sciences are fundamental to resilience building yet go completely missing in a hegemonic universe of science and technology. The undertaking of this book series is to create a temporal model of institutional framework and decision-making which could at best be a guideline to those who wish to study disasters beyond existing engineering approaches. The pedagogy of disaster studies would most appropriately focus upon the deontology or the moral rightness of doing one’s duty towards the social system and communitarian traditions which we live in. This series attempts to assemble experience, spawn community initiatives and highlight the gaps in the implementation processes which throw communities into recurrent disasters. Some of the forthcoming volumes in the series starting with the present one are: ‘Development and Disaster Management’, and ‘Rural Communities, Agriculture and Disasters’.

New Delhi, India
New Delhi, India
New Delhi, India
Imphal, India

Amita Singh
Milap Punia
Nivedita P. Haran
Thiyam Bharat Singh

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The editors of this book acknowledge three invincible pillars which provided the direction, pertinacity and continuity required in every social science-based research. First pillar of course is Shri. Kiren Rijiju, the deeply perceptive Hon'ble Minister of State (MoS) at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) who heads the disaster management in India. His commitment to disaster risk reduction is unmatched, and he and his office extended all support to carry forward this daunting task in the vulnerable zones of the north-eastern states over the Himalayan region.

The second illustrious support came from the former Minister in the Manipur State Cabinet Shri. Hemochandra Singh from the Singjamei constituency, who generously threw open his powerful ground support in coordinating local institutions and officials. Many intricacies of approaching the unapproachable terrain and the anthropological demands were discussed at the culturally reinvigorating Vaishnavite community dinner for the whole research team at his residence.

The third empowering initiative was taken by the Vice Chancellor of JNU, Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, who recognized the need for transdisciplinary research in social sciences and also about bridging its gap with natural sciences. One can recollect that providential moment of history when he tabled the proposal and cleared it through the noisy and menacing Academic Council of 2016.

A young scholar in disaster research Ms. Sukhreet Bajwa who is currently steering through the Gujarat Disaster Management Authority at Gandhi Nagar deserves attention and appreciation from all authors in

this book. She found time even during the multifaceted government responsibilities to bring convergence on a common thematic platform through constant communication with demanding editors on one hand and passionate authors on the other. The book could not have inspired so many local authors without her commitment to the cause. She was also supported by others in the Disaster Research Programme's young team such as Priyaanka Jha, Homolata Borah, Binod Kumar and Langthianmung Vualzong to whom the editors gratefully express their appreciation. Lastly, the fly-wheeling at the administrative desks was addressed and resolved by none other than Jhuman Yadav, the sole office attendant at DRP, whose multitasking is much remembered and applauded.

Amita Singh
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Implementation Slippages of the CRZ Laws (EPW February 2016). She received the Bangladesh National Award of ‘Nawab Bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury National Award’ 2014 for women’s empowerment. Prof. Singh is an ardent activist of the ‘Rights of Nonhuman Species’. Her work can be reached at <http://www.jnu.ac.in/Faculty/asingh>.

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Nivedita P. Haran Indian Administrative Service (Rtd.), Former Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala who spearheaded the first Kerala State Disaster Management Authority.

Dr. Haran, a postgraduate in Philosophy from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in 1976 in I Class and a Ph.D. in Sociology from IIT, Delhi, on the topic *Bureaucracy in India*, was selected to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1980. She has more than three decades of rich professional experience with the Indian Administrative Services in India and in the State of Kerala where she served in several senior positions of leadership and decision-making. She held crucially important positions as a District Planning Officer, as a Head of Revenue Administration, Land Administration, Land Records Management, Renewable Energy in Public Offices, coping Climate Change Strategies and post-Tsunami Rehabilitation project. She also held the position of Deputy Secretary in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Government of India, New Delhi. As the Home Secretary, she brought some meaningful innovations such as the digitization of police records, simplification of procedures, bringing transparency and accountability through the use of new cost-effective technological innovations such as video conferencing and other ICT applications. She has also been the Director of The Centre for Innovations in Public Systems at Hyderabad. Her most passionate project with the NAPSIPAG (Network of Asia Pacific Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and Governance, JNU) was the creation of NYSAF (Network of Young Scholars and Administrators Forum) by bringing academic research closer to administrators and enabled them to work together for the country's development.

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