

A young boy with dark hair and a gold watch is smiling while sitting in a blue inflatable ring in a river. The water is clear and reflects the sunlight. The boy is looking towards the camera.

**India and Sustainable
Development Goals through
the perspective of Dalit
Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction:
A Situational Study**



Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF)

About Asia Dalit Rights Forum

Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) is a platform of Dalits and those working with Dalits in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka committed to the empowerment and emancipation of communities subjected to descent and work based (caste based) discrimination and violence (DWD&V). ADRF aims at addressing violations of the rights and entitlements of these communities, in particular their women and children, in the respective countries as well as worldwide. It focus on supporting all the communities subjected to DWD&V and systemic discrimination in any part of the world in their noble aspirations and courageous struggles to establish an inclusive society that is marked by equity and equality, dignity and self governance, justice and freedom. ADRF is committed to collaborating with all national, regional and international agencies- civil society organisations and human right agencies, UN bodies and state institutions espousing the cause of eliminating DWD&V and building an inclusive, peaceful and egalitarian society in Asia and elsewhere in the world.

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India & Sustainable Development Goals through the Perspective of Dalit Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction- **A Situation Report**



Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as 2030 Agenda, are a set of 17 Goals and 169 Targets, adopted by 193 nations in September 2015 at the UN Summit, officially entered force on 1 January 2016. While ambitious and universal in nature, they have, in principle, charted out a path for nations to achieve development that is fair, equitable, inclusive and environmentally friendly. This ambitious set of universal development aspirations, have the intent of 'Leave no one behind' at its core. The SDGs were accompanied by other parallel adoptions namely, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, respectively, in the same year. These three conventions are interdependent and mutually reinforcing vehicles to inclusive, disaster and climate change resilient-sustainable development. The SDGs adopted Climate Action among 17 goals (Goal 13), and mainstreamed Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) across various targets and indicators. DRR includes tackling poverty, ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives, education, sustainable management of water, building resilient infrastructure, resilient cities, climate change and marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Hence, it became universally ac-

knowledged that development that's not disaster resilient and climate adaptive would not be sustainable by itself.

The socially excluded communities, especially the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, disproportionately bear the consequences of climate change. Already residing in the least hospitable environment in urban and rural areas, including forests, they are the first and most severely affected. They are the last to get relief and sometimes are actively prevented from getting relief. Yet, the present institutional mechanisms for disaster management do not recognise caste induced vulnerabilities. Casualties and damage or loss of properties, infrastructure, environment, essential services or means of livelihood on such a scale is beyond the normal capacity of the affected Dalit communities to cope with.

There is a need for proper state support to develop the adaptation mechanism of Dalits and support livelihood diversification strategies. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation need to inform the social protection policy so the poor Dalits and other marginalised sections can be shielded from shocks and risks owing to climate change and their livelihoods protected effectively.

Unlike indigenous communities, the state neither recognises Dalit communities as local minority communities nor acknowledges their contribution to biodiversity conservation. Any policy or programme that does not include Dalit communities among biodiversity-dependent set of communities remains highly subcritical in adopting adaptation and mitigation measures.

India's Vulnerability to Disasters

The Indian subcontinent's high vulnerability to natural disasters mainly results from its geo-climatic positioning. More than 58.6 per cent of the land-mass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity; over 40 million hectares (12%) of its land is prone to floods and river erosion; close to 5,700 km, out of the 7,516 km long coastline is prone to cyclones and tsunamis; 68% of its cultivable area is vulnerable to droughts; and, its hilly areas are at risk from landslides and avalanches. Moreover, India is also vulnerable to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) emergencies and other man-made disasters (National Disaster Management Authority).

While the Indian Government has embarked upon building urban infrastructure across the

country and develop 100 smart cities over the coming years, it is important that cities and infrastructure being built take into account the topography and vulnerability of the area to various hazards. The effect of hazards is further compounded by accompanying socio-economic conditions, unplanned urbanization, development within high-risk zones, environmental degradation, climate change, geological hazards, epidemics and pandemics, affecting marginalised vulnerable communities disproportionately (Ibid).

Disaster and Caste-based Discrimination

It is incontestable that disasters hit the vulnerable sections of the society such as women, persons with disabilities, and groups that are socially excluded and discriminated on the basis of their identity emanating from caste, religion or ethnicity. This has long been established by eye-opening accounts the civil society groups in India that have studied the impact of disasters on communities discriminated based on their caste, the Scheduled Castes (formerly derided as the untouchables) vis-a-vis their pre-existing social, economic and political vulnerabilities. Globally, 260 million Scheduled Castes face discrimination based on work and decent (DWD), and day-to-day

discrimination as well as in disaster responses are highly predictable, where they exist.

As per Sachar Committee report, 90 percent of Buddhists, 9 percent of Christians, 31 percent of Sikhs and 22 percent of Hindus belong to Scheduled Caste category. According to the ArjunSen Gupta Committee Report, Dalits constitute 81 percent of India's vulnerable. Given the vulnerability profile of India is increasing, marginalisation and poverty are feeding into the vicious cycle of disaster vulnerability for the Dalits in the country. The caste system is an internalized and institutionalized system at all levels. While legislation has been enacted to outlaw caste based discrimination, the reality of caste induced inter-generational vulnerabilities cannot be ignored, because it is linked with resilience building, through localised planning. Any failure to recognize the caste system or any active caste discrimination obviously presents a challenge for resilience building in India (Adam Craggs, Resilience and Caste in Orissa, India, 2011).

Whilst the SDGs have dedicated goals on Poverty Reduction (Goal 1) and Reducing Inequality (Goal 10) within and among nations, they failed to recognize caste (decent based discrimination), which was in negotiation for nearly three years, retorted Dalit rights

¹Developing disaster-proof cities, The Indian Express, September 26, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/developing-disaster-proof-cities/>

²<http://www.ndma.gov.in/en/vulnerability-profile.html>

³Sachar, Rajindar (2006). "Minority Report" (PDF). Government of India.



activists across South Asia. This was a critical lapse, and SDGs were doubted to be equipped to deal with exclusion and historic deprivation associated with caste. Discrimination based on work and descent (caste) is an important determinant for the exclusion of a large section of the global population, with 260 million Dalits around the world. Having caste recognized in the list of "indicators", which will be used to monitor the implementation of the SDGs would have ensured actions by nation states in combating it.

Regionally and nationally the no systems or approach exist to monitor the effectiveness of international conventions at local levels. The SDGs and so does the DRR and Climate Change Conventions lack

the approach of human rights and equity. The SDGs do not indicate or seek to establish means by which inclusive disaster risk management would be operationalised and monitored based on the principles of equality of rights and opportunities, the dignity of the individual that together would contribute to resilience for everyone.

‘Discrimination by default’ is as much an issue as discrimination by norm and intent and is prevalent both within civil society and administration. Even in cases where there is no intentional bias against Dalit communities, the lack of knowledge about their vulnerabilities, not mapping their habitations and prevalent norms of operations result in the administration not taking

the cause of Dalit and other marginalized communities in times of disaster. Often this is also co-existent and accentuated with the overt and covert dominant community bias and pressures.

This study is trying to bring forth the need for recognition of caste based discrimination in disasters and the consequences of its non-recognition. The broader aim is to sensitize and educate the international and national communities committed to SDGs to know for themselves what these ambitious universal goals hold for the 260 million Dalit communities globally, when it comes to reducing disaster risks and building resilience to rising disasters and climate change.

⁴Sustainable development summit: No caste in SDGs, Dalits want UN to rectify ‘critical lapse’, The Indian Express, New York, September 28, 2015, Accessible at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/americas/sustainable-development-summit-no-caste-in-sdgs-dalits-want-un-to-rectify-critical-lapse/>

Chapter 1: Background

Who are Dalits?





Dalits, the former untouchables are the people who Constitutionally are termed Scheduled castes, who are not only prevented by their caste from marrying other caste members, but must also keep themselves away from being touched or sighted by the dominant caste members, lest the latter gets defiled. Dalits historically and religiously relegated as spiritually and physically unclean, by birth-assigned menial jobs such as manual scavenging, cleaning toilets, working with leather, removing carcasses of dead animals and so on, deemed unfit and demeaning for dominant caste communities.

It was the cruelties unleashed on them for deviating from the caste code and oppression by dominant caste community that got the Government of India to enact laws such as Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act to penalize caste based discrimination and cruelty against Dalits. Several such targeted policy and legal advances have been ensured, but none challenge or seek to address the systemic causative factors for their marginalisation and backwardness. In modern times, the forms of caste discrimination have undergone a change from physical exclusion (in some cases still persistent) to systemic

exclusion from opportunities to quality education and employment that can enable them to choose their vocation and afford better living conditions and disaster preparedness.

The intersection of Caste vulnerability and Disasters

Resilience by itself pre-requisites availability and access to better living conditions, stable livelihood and assured income, food and healthcare, and hazard-resistant housing and other community infrastructure. These absence or prevalence of these essential services are both a cause and consequence of the caste system, which has systematically and systemically perpetuated inequality, to the extent of denying Dalits the ownership over natural resources or means of development, like land, cascading into other forms of deprivations. This, hence, explains the dependence of Dalits on resource owning dominant caste communities for daily sustenance. In India, most of them are agricultural labourers (hence victims of climate vagaries and natural disasters) and unorganized sector workers with no or poorly implemented social security programmes. This has allowed Dalit to live in a segregated manner, mostly occupying freely available or scantily provided for ghettoized dwell-

⁵ Synthesis of Monitoring studies and Findings post Tsunami 2004, Bihar floods 2007 & 2008, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam floods 2009, Assam Floods, Cyclone Phailin in Odisha 2013, Hudhud Cyclone 2014, Jammu and Kashmir Floods 2014, Gujarat Floods, Tamil Nadu Floods 2015, Vardah Cyclone in Tamil Nadu 2016 and Maharashtra drought 2016. Available at: <http://nationaldalitwatch-ncdhr.blogspot.in/p/synthesis-of-ndw-ncdhr-flood-studies.html>



ings in the low-lying areas.

Marginalisation of Dalits gets magnified in disasters due to historically pre-existing practices of untouchability and notion of pollution and purity. Monitoring studies conducted by National Dalit Watch (NDW) and its state allies during past disasters, have highlighted the degree to which, by virtue of the inherent socio-economic vulnerability, Dalits and women have been systematically excluded from relief and rehabilitation efforts. Studies have revealed that Dalits, with least of assets to lose turn out to be the worst and victims of any disaster for lack of capacity and means to recoup. Besides, they

get further pushed into poverty and debts upon losing daily wage work, in the absence of much-needed recovery programmes tailored to their resilience requirements.

The instances of caste bias in disaster situations predate the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, which triggered the unprecedented response from humanitarian agencies and government in terms of relief assistance to over a million of people who were affected. The news of Dalit discrimination got reportage in the international and national media, and submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - India 2007 . While the general sense

of loss and human sufferings brought all organisations forth for saving lives, claiming to adhere to an agreement on minimum standards, or key principles, there were reports of caste-based discrimination in access to aid, restrictions on movement of people in camps, and forcible resettlement of people who were chased away from the camps, and exploitation and harassment of women at relief camps.

The vulnerabilities faced by Dalits in India is quite peculiar and easily discernible to informed minds. The pre-existing vulnerabilities can be understood as below that impinge on their overall lack of disaster resilience.

⁶CERD alternative report by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights - India 2007

Locational vulnerability

In India, Dalits continue to live in secluded habitations outside the main village thereby having lower access to information, public education, disaster resilient infrastructure or communication for immediate action. Moreover, their habitations are usually located in low lying areas where the stormwater and drainage get collected. With the poor quality of housing, lack of access to drinking water sources and drainage facilities, there are increasing damages to the habitation. Thus, by the very location, they are deemed vulnerable to hazards and diseases. Poverty malnutrition, poor health conditions along with increasing disaster risks, Dalits are pushed from poverty to chronic poverty with lower resistance to illnesses. Combined with these unhealthy living conditions, they are most prone to suffer the outbreak of diseases in times of disaster.

Economic vulnerability

Dalit households, dependent on casual and agricultural labour are particularly vulnerable to hazards as they lose their immediate employment opportunity when a disaster like floods recur. Landlessness and lack of productive assets make them work as sharecroppers and take to cheap manual labour for meeting their im-

mediate survival needs. Being sharecroppers who don't have land titles, they are then systematically denied of any compensation for crop loss and wage loss, after the land gets flooded, while the landlord gets the compensation. This pushes them to distressed interstate migration. Such fragile socio-economic condition often weakens their coping capacities exposing them to the vicious cycle of bonded labour among men and women, human trafficking child labour, and other distressed forms of living.

The poor implementation of minimum wage standards across different states of India and general void of social security measures forces them to earn their livelihood on a day to day basis with no backup mechanism. In such a situation, they cannot recover without the most assistance from the humanitarian agencies and the government, which often doesn't reach them due to biased targeting.

Fear of Violence

The norms of untouchability place many limitations on how Dalits can access safety, security or relief during disasters. Continuing societal norms of pollution in using common water sources, common dining and commonplace for accommodation are prevalent in the minds of dominant caste communities. Fear of caste

conflicts and internalisation of their own age-old caste status hold them back from claiming their rights and seeking redress from the state. Often, they have to be content with whatever they receive in the name of relief from the private and public agencies involved in disaster response, due to lack of consultation with them and ignorance of the socio-political dynamics. Reports of the temporary breaking down of these barriers are found in the immediate aftermath of a large disaster but soon fall into routine ways by day three or four.

Forms of Discrimination unveiled by Civil Society Studies

The monitoring studies referred to above by National Dalit Watch have revealed following patterns of discrimination to which Dalits are subjected to in disasters. These are:

- Lack of information and early warning and timely communication systems on the impending danger (of floods) by the authorities;
- Discriminatory evacuation services leaving out or charging Dalits for boat services;
- Single women headed families; families with elderly and children alone and adults having mi-

grated for work were left without any assistance;

- Non-enumeration and delayed enumeration leading to underestimation of losses;
- Enumeration process carried out by officials sitting in panchayat offices where not all Dalits could gain entry for participation;
- Dalit victims who moved away to distant safer locations were not treated as flood-affected people during the time of enumeration by the officials.
- The path to reach the rescue shelters is laid through dominant caste communities that did not allow Dalits to pass through during the time of floods.
- Inappropriate registration of losses of Dalits agricultural labourers (sharecroppers and salt pan workers) by officials, especially where the Dalit houses per se were not affected but agriculture crops were damaged;

(Sharecropping and salt panes not recognized under the calamity relief fund guidelines thereby, not recognized under loss of livelihood).

- Dalits were employed to clear slush in the colonies and housing of other domi-

nant caste groups under programmes like MGNREGA, for which they were not paid their wages; No proper grievance redressal by officials to the Dalit victims for denying them due to compensation against their losses and damages;

- Political rivalry leads to caste clashes during disaster response;
- The scheduled tribes (STs) who lost their cattle went unregistered by the official under the pretext that STs live on forest produce and don't rear animals;
- Being engaged in lease farming, Dalit suffered multiple losses after floods, that of the lease paid to the owner, the damage went unrecorded, and compensation automatically going to the owner of the land;
- Houses are categorized as hutment category as most of the housing is thatched or mud-walled leading to eligible for low compensation;
- No cyclone/flood rescue shelters near Dalit habitations leading to inaccessibility to a safer place;
- Death and loss of infants during floods went unrecognized for the deaths and births registration is not maintained in Dalit colonies;
- DRR activities not taking place in Dalit colonies

and the communities are not aware of the Calamity Relief Fund (National Disaster Response Fund/State Disaster Response Fund) norms or assistance from the government.

India's Disaster Vulnerability

India was among the top three most disaster-hit countries in 2015, with economic losses amounting to \$ 3.30 billion (UNISDR, 2016). The report of the UNISDR titled "Human Cost of Weather Related Disaster," says that India had 19 disaster events including floods, droughts and heat waves in 2015. Of the 27.5 million people affected by floods in 2015, 16.4 were in India. India also witnessed 2248 deaths in 2015 due to heat waves. The country faces a formidable range of both man-made and natural hazards as evidenced by the drought affecting over 300 million people. Though the number of deaths due to disasters has decreased, on an average 20,000 lives are lost in India every year due to natural disasters. However, even these data are highly contested.

A study by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) say more than 22 percent of the damages caused by natural hazards—such as drought, floods, storms or tsunamis—are accounted for by the agriculture sector. According to the study, during a drought period, agriculture absorbs up

to 84 percent of all economic impacts. Within the agricultural sector, 42 percent of assessed losses was that of crops (\$13 billion), with floods being the main culprit, responsible for 60 percent of crop damages, followed by storms (23 percent of crop damages). Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry and fisheries accounted for 13.7% of the GDP (gross domestic product) in 2013, about 50% of the workforce, accounting for 7.68 percent of total global agricultural output, with contribution to the Indian economy higher than world's average (6.1%) .

The global assessment report (GAR) 2015, produced by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) estimated India's average annual economic loss due to disasters to be \$9.8 billion. This includes more than \$7 billion loss because of floods. A total of 98.6 million people were affected by natural disasters in 2015 of which 92 percent were caused by climate change buoyed by a

powerful El Niño impact.

An analysis of the increasing hazard vulnerability and disaster profile of India with the multifaceted marginalisation of Dalits poses serious challenges to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly those relating to DRR tied to Climate Change Adaptation and Poverty Reduction. In a caste-ridden society and polity as in India, discrimination in disaster response is highly predictable; discrimination happens by default, and thus requires more than just a standard neutral protocol to respond. In a nutshell, informed and inclusive DRR and Climate Change Adaptation would require, a recognition of caste vulnerabilities and marginalisation; diversity in disaster response teams across levels; and an empowerment approach with awareness on rights and entitlements, and a sound policy and budgetary provision to arrest caste induced disaster vulnerabilities.

⁷<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/national-disaster-management-plan-neglects-women-disabled-and-low-er-castes-aid-workers-2841384/>

⁸The Wire, <https://thewire.in/16766/fewer-people-have-died-in-the-last-5-years-due-to-natural-calamities/>

⁹<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/fao-quantifies-impact-of-natural-disasters-on-agriculture--49026>

¹⁰<http://statisticstimes.com/economy/sectorwise-gdp-contribution-of-india.php>, March 21, 2017

¹¹<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Disasters-cost-India-10bn-per-year-UN-report/articleshow/46522526.cms>

¹²<http://www.firstpost.com/india/natural-disasters-cost-india-3-30bn-in-2015-heres-why-we-should-be-very-worried-2622940.html>

Chapter 2: Methodology



The scope of the Study

The report intends to bring to the attention of the international and national stakeholders committed to safe, disaster resilient, and climate change adaptive sustainable development, the need for resilience planning at different levels for and with the socially excluded communities. This study fo-

cuses on disaster vulnerability and resilience needs of the communities that face caste based discrimination in India, the Dalits. The legal outlawing of caste discrimination has just changed the form of same discrimination and exclusion over the years, and not in substance. For communities living

amidst various risks on daily basis, which get compounded and magnified during natural disasters, it matters to be counted in the planning and implementation of SDGs for them. This report needs to be necessarily read for and from the perspective of India's Dalit communities.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are three-fold, as follows:

1. To identify trends, patterns, incidents and causes of caste based discrimination in disasters
2. To analyse the government's response to recognize and prevent discrimination/ ensure inclusion through national policies, laws, strategies, plans and budgets.
3. To identify and analyze Gaps and challenges to inclusion in Govt response, shortfalls in enabling environment, and its impact on Dalits

Data collection and analysis

The lack of official disaggregated data on the people affected in disasters segregated by gender, age, social category, and disability has been the major limitation in this study. The data available from civil society reports and humanitarian organizations, including the bilateral agencies are ep-

isodical and unconsolidated, often unavailable in the public domain. Therefore, the report dwells on the primary studies conducted in the event of disasters by some civil society organizations, mainly the National Dalit Watch of NCDHR. These studies were conducted through the tools of inclusion

monitoring and post-disaster vulnerability mapping, following which claims for compensations were filed with the concerned authority. Other literature and sources include news reports, journals, UN reports and civil society reports.

Chapter 3: SDGs & Disaster Risk Reduction



The SDGs and Disaster Risk Reduction frameworks are mutually reinforcing, and most, if not all of the SDGs, together would enable disaster-resilient nation. However, for this study, Goals, and Targets directly focusing and are related to DRR have been provided in the table below. The national mechanisms /measures advanced post SDGs adoption by the Government of India follow the SDGs matrix.

SDGs 2015-30
Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Target 1.5 by 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.
Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Target 2.4 by 2030 ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Target 3.d strengthen the capacity of all countries, particularly developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks.
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Target 4.7 by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
Target 4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (5.5 ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life & 5.b enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular, ICT, to promote women's empowerment)

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Target 10.2 by 2030 empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Target 10.3 ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including through eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and actions in this regard

Target 10.4 adopt policies especially fiscal, wage, and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Target 11.1 by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums

Target 11.3 by 2030 enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

Target 11.5 by 2030 significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of affected people and decrease by y% the economic losses relative to GDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with the focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

Target 11.b by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Target 13.1 strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
Target 13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the national disaster risk reduction strategies
Target 13.2 integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning
Target 13.3 improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities
Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
Target 17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
Target 17.17 encourage and promote effective public, private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
Target 17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

National Measures post adoption of SDGs (also Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Paris Agreement 2015-30)

The GoI has demonstrated its commitment for sustainable and disaster resilient development by taking lead in various international and national policy declarations and actions. It also proclaimed its intentions through the Voluntary National Review Report at UN HLPF 2017. Below are the steps advanced by the Government post SDG adoption, in the field of DRR.

To fast track 2030 Agenda, the Government of India has released a **draft Three-Year Action Agenda covering years 2017-18 to 2019-20**, wherein, it has recognized the natural calamity induced distress and hardships among small farmers. For this reason, the Plan has identified improvement in relief measures in the event of natural disasters. The Plan also seeks to achieve for at least two-thirds of the States liberal land-leasing laws that protect the rights of both the owner and the tenant and allow them to conclude written mutually agreeable lease agreements, based on **NITI Aayog's model land leasing law** (Ch 5, Agriculture:

Doubling Farmers' Incomes, 5.4 & 5.34).

The National Disaster Management Plan 2016 (NDMP), released the National Disaster Management Plan in December 2016 ¹³

The Central Government has allocated Rs. 55,000 crore (over \$8 billion) for five years from 2015-20 to all states for disaster management.

India's bold Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), communicated to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, form a significant part of its SDG strategy. These include substantially reducing the emission intensity of GDP, tapping non-fossil fuel energy sources and creating an additional carbon sink.

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijju, inaugurated the first 3 day national-level training of trainers programme to sensitise various Central Ministries and Departments on utilisation of Sendai Monitor for developing action plans for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in New Delhi 18 December 2017, with similar exercises for State Government officials to be held subsequently. The three-day programme was organized by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction-Global Education and Training Institute (UNISDR-GETI).

A Circular from the Ministry of Home Affairs, dated 23 June 2015, to the Principal Secretary/Relief Commissioners of all States/Union Territories, titled 'Implementing the Sendai framework and Action to be taken by District Magistrates', elucidating State and District level priorities for actions, toward the fulfillment of a commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

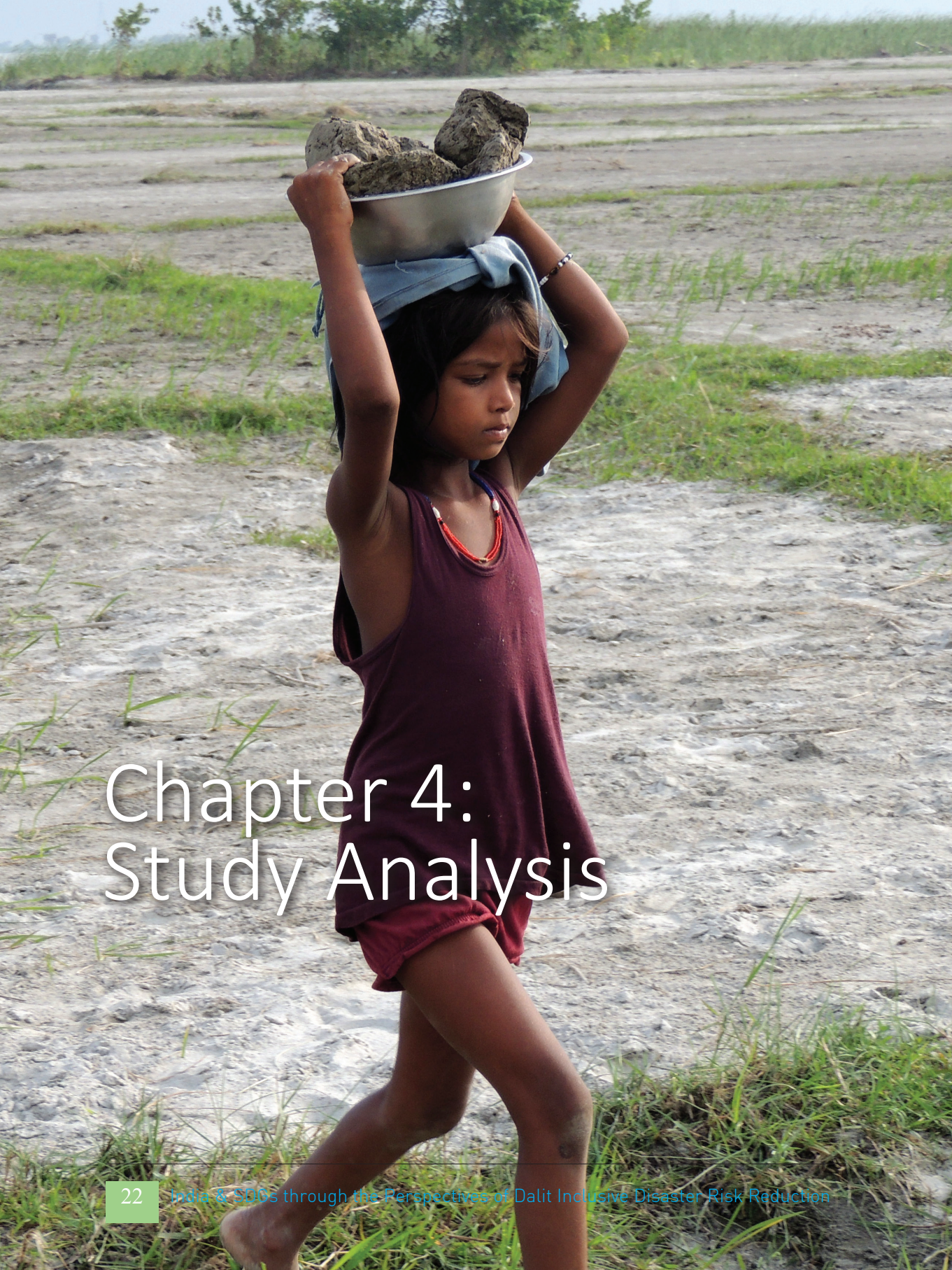
¹³ Assam first state to reduce disaster risk, Sendai framework being implemented, Avishek-Sengupta, Guwahati, Dec. 5, https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161206/jsp/frontpage/story_123248.jsp

10-Point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction released at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, November 16, 2016, New Delhi, India; highlighting (1) mainstreaming of DRR by all development sectors; (2) risk coverage for all- poor households to SMEs, multi-national corporations to nation states; (3) greater participation and leadership of women in disaster risk management; (4) investing in risk mapping globally; (5) leveraging technology; (6) developing a network of universities to work on disaster issues; (7) social media and mobile technologies; developing applications for all aspects of disaster risk management; (8) building on local capacity and initiatives; (9) learning from disaster experiences; and (10) bringing about greater cohesion in international disaster response to disasters.

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), which is the premier policy think tank of the Government and is chaired by the Prime Minister of India made the nodal authority to oversee SDG implementation.

¹⁴ No. 50-21/2015-DM.III, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) <http://ndm.thegutenberg.com/images/Sendai%20Framework12.PDF>





Chapter 4: Study Analysis

The Government has taken proactive steps to institutionalising the language of DRR into its sustainable development agenda, However, when contrasted with the realities of caste based discrimination in the country, evidenced by various studies, much remains to be undertaken at the political level.¹⁵

Climate change induced droughts to affect Dalits disproportionately

The Government has rightly identified issues of distressed farmers battered by climate vagaries and the agrarian downturn in there (draft) **Three-Year Action Agenda covering years 2017-18 to 2019-20**. Approximately 16 percent of India's geographic area, mostly arid, semi-arid and sub-humid is drought-prone. Severe droughts were witnessed by at least 10 states of India, namely, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Regions like Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh and Marathwada and Vidarbha in Maharashtra have been infamous for recording a high number of farmers' suicides coinciding with undulating drought spells. As many as 3,228 farmers committed suicide in Maharashtra in 2015, the highest since 2001, according to data tabled in the Rajya Sabha on March 4, 2016—that is almost nine farmers every day. However, drought and longer dry

spells are an outfall of climate notoriety, droughts give enough warnings and time to the authorities to swing into preparedness actions. Hence, while droughts cannot be mitigated, their effects can be moderated and neutralized. But, the issue here has been of the failure of governance, and poor groundwater governance, to be precise.

Whilst the effect on the landowners has been distressingly visible, administration and popular media have been blind to the plight of those without land—the Dalits. India is primarily an agrarian economy which employs over 50% of the population. As crops are adversely affected, agricultural income shrinks and causes loss of employment in the agriculture sector. Drought affects the dignity of Dalitshardest when they are reduced to beg for work. For instance, around a fifth of Marathwada's inhabitants are Dalits, with little or no access to land. With the

drying up of work, landless Dalits have just to migrate, sometimes with their women and children, leaving behind the aged who can't travel. Those staying back in the village have even few options. They don't get rations easily at the shops and are often always the last beneficiaries of any government welfare scheme. If water crisis continues, they manage to get some water through the tankers provided by the government, but those would reach them only last.

During droughts, borewells dry up, and hunt for water becomes another risk for women and children, walking long distances, many a time when they can't access the same borewells always as those of dominant communities only to be chased away by the owners. Denial of water for being Dalit motivated Bapurao Tajneto single handed dig a well for his family and community in village Kolambeshwar, Washim district, Maharashtra's issue

¹⁵ Synthesis of Monitoring studies and Findings post Tsunami 2004, Bihar floods 2007 & 2008, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam floods 2009, Assam Floods, Cyclone Phailin in Odisha 2013, Hudhud Cyclone 2014, Jammu and Kashmir Floods 2014, Gujarat Floods, Tamil Nadu Floods 2015, Vardah Cyclone in Tamil Nadu 2016 and Maharashtra drought 2016. Available at: <http://nationaldalitwatch-ncdhr.blogspot.in/p/synthesis-of-ndw-ncdhr-flood-studies.html>

¹⁶ Gol 2013a, 'Reserve Bank of India Annual Report 2012-13', Government of India.

¹⁷ 9 Farmers Commit Suicide Daily in Drought-Hit Maharashtra, Sabrang, April 6, 2016

¹⁸ Drought delivers an unequal blow: Dalits are the worst hit, April 06, 2015, Scroll.in, Available at: <http://scroll.in/article/718295/drought-delivers-an-unequal-blow-dalits-are-the-worst-hit>

was later taken up by the authorities under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. This was when the relief and rehabilitation department reported nearly half of the 4,356 drinking water tankers were sent to Maharashtra till mid-April 2016 were earmarked for Marathwada.

Months after the hailstorm, the Government announced a compensation package at the rate of Rs 2000 per hectare. “I don’t have even one hectare of land so the government did not think I needed compensation,” said Mujumule. But the dominant caste landowners in the village got Rs 25000-30000 for their larger fields. For the investment of Rs 650, 000 made in 2015, he managed to harvest only Rs, 15000 worth of crops. Now to make ends meet, Mujumule started cutting sugarcane and doing other odd jobs in nearby towns (Drought delivers an unequal blow: Dalits are the worst hit, April 06, 2015, Scroll.in)

Replacement and not Disaster Resilience

The issue of land leasing and the title is directly linked with the quantum and quality of disaster compensation one is entitled to. The immediate re-

lief and compensation norms of the central and state National Disaster Response Fund norms have been premised on the economics of pre-owned wealth attracting more attention and bigger compensation.

During several disaster situations studies by National Dalit Watch of NCDHR, the wage earners, agricultural labourers, sharecroppers were found to be systematically excluded from any compensation for the loss of investments they had made into leasing the land and tilling it. Lease farming / sharecropping remains an unofficial arrangement between the owner and tiller in India, while during Phailin cyclone in Odisha, the state government did announce covering even sharecroppers. There remains no record of sharecroppers in the country, and hence, the damage assessment itself becomes underestimation of actual losses incurred.

The fundamental concept of replacement and not disaster resilient reconstruction runs in direct contradiction to the principle of Build Back Better or Sustainable Development. Ignorance of the loss of work days for daily wagers and food insecurity and loss of income creating an environment for debt trap for lease farmers and

smallholder farmers are indicators to defining resilience. Added to this, is the poor implementation of minimum wage standards across different states of India and general void of social security measures.

Hence, the issue is much beyond immediate relief, and requires a development approach to DRR, and vice versa, by integrating DRR capacity building, resource allocation for required community infrastructure (multi-hazard shelters, evacuation gears etc., trained community volunteers, exit route map etc) etc., with hurdle-free social access to critical services and infrastructure at all times by all groups. In cases where this isn’t possible, it becomes

necessary to ensure these services to those denied the same on the basis of their caste, right where they live, through a clustered approach. These will certainly contribute to the realization of Goal 10, on reducing the disparity between communities.

National and State Disaster Management Plans- Missing links

The National Disaster Management Plan 2016 (NDMP) made India the first country to

¹⁹ The Dalit man dug a well after his wife was denied water, May 10, 2016, Indiatoday.in, Available at: <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/men-who-singlehandedly-moved-mountains-know-more-about-these-extraordinary-indian-men-322572-2016-05-10>

²⁰ Synthesis of Monitoring studies and Findings post Tsunami 2004, Bihar floods 2007 & 2008, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam floods 2009, Assam Floods, Cyclone Phailin in Odisha 2013, Hudhud Cyclone 2014, Jammu and Kashmir Floods 2014, Gujarat Floods, Tamil Nadu Floods 2015, Vardah Cyclone in Tamil Nadu 2016 and Maharashtra drought 2016. Available at: <http://nationaldalitwatch-ncdhr.blogspot.in/p/synthesis-of-ndw-ncdhr-flood-studies.html>

have a national plan for disaster risk reduction in the world. However, some areas that warrant a relook include the need for a clear and practical roadmap with a timeline and fund allocation. The Plan remains generic in its identification of the activities to be undertaken by the central and states governments for disaster risk mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, reconstruction, and governance. The Plan also lacks any framework for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, besides sidestepping the need to address the special needs of vulnerable groups, which could lead to millions of women, children, disabled and elderly people as well as Dalit and tribal communities being put at further risk.

A study of the State Disaster Management Plans of five states highlighted a number of areas for strengthening viz. clarifying responsibilities among various nodal agencies; considering all stages of disaster management cycle equally, as opposed to the current emphasis on response and relief after the disaster; adequately incorporating the socio-economic vulnerability of different groups, such as women and the very poorest people into vulnerability analysis; and considering the additional

risks that climate change will bring to the vulnerable populations. The disaster management plans also fail to take lessons from the experiences of Community based disaster management approaches world over, and are too dependent on official mechanisms.

Another serious problem is the lack of appropriate vulnerability assessments, and dependence on Vulnerability Atlas of India, which does not include slow onset disasters such as droughts and sea level rise. In order to have local DRR plans, as is set out in the circular of the Home Ministry (23 June 2015) mapping of the vulnerabilities of communities living in hazard-prone locations becomes essential and among the first steps. DRR is not just about disallowing encroachment around the embankments, and removing people from occupying low lying areas (Refer- Circular from the Ministry of Home Affairs, dated 23 June 2015, Target 2) when settlements, especially in rural areas are segregated based on caste identity. Moreover, the poor income levels and affordability factors push Dalits to inhabit these unsafe locations.

The vulnerability is determined by the capacity or lack of it to bounce back. In the

case of SCs, fragile livelihood and subdued representation and participation in local level political decision making processes for their development in peace times have rendered even the presence of Dalit village heads less effective in disasters. It was found out during the 2015 flood in Tamil Nadu that the village head belonging to dominant community prioritized relief materials and damage assessment of the people of his community, who serve as the vote bank. As a stark contrast, issues of ineffective decision making the role of SC Village head in favour of his community was revealed during the flood in Andhra Pradesh in 2009. This was due to the power wielded by the dominant caste members over the SC Village head, that made obligated to see through their recovery prior to SC victims of the flood.

Crucial inquiries to DRR

Localised DRR strategy will emerge only by unpacking 'vulnerability' in the context of 'people affected'. This will require authorities to base their vulnerability assessments on questions of Who lives in these locations, Why they live there, and What's needed to get them safe. These answers must

²¹ India's plan to tackle disasters neglects women, disabled and lower castes: aid workers, Reuters, New Delhi, 8th June 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/national-disaster-management-plan-neglects-women-disabled-and-low-er-castes-aid-workers-2841384/>

²² Strengthening Disaster Risk management in India; A review of five states disaster management plans, CDKN and ODI, July 2016

²³ Ibid

be backed with community-based, Dalit-inclusive planning and programming of DRR, connected with the efficient functioning of government schemes in peace times, and equitable compensation norms. The public services located around them need to be resilient to disasters and capacitated to provide basic life-saving services in the case of the eventuality than being suspended around the time they are needed most. Once these inquiries have sought the responses through baselines and disaggregated data collection, will infrastructural resilience contribute to effective DRR. The aggregate of micro-level community based planning alone can get an effective national plan.

Target 1.5 calls for the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. To achieve this, the vision of the authority would have to undergo a paradigm shift, as for now, DRR is understood from the lens building codes and bye-laws in a predominant way. The approach of sustainable development through risk reduction must be 'people-centered', and even further, 'vulnerable centered'.

Besides, the local government institutions have been much touted as the primary unit of

decentralized governance. In practicality, even when funds are made available to the panchayats, they lack the capacity to spend them. So far, panchayats have been seen as vehicles for delivering development schemes, and capacity building to enabling them to think for disaster resilient development of their villages remains a vision. The Government has limited their participation in DRR to receiving training and ensuring compliance with building bye-laws.

Investment in Early Warning

According to the Ministry, during the financial year 2015-16, an amount of Rs.8,756 crore was released to different states from the State Disaster Response Fund, in addition, to release of Rs.12,452 crore from National Disaster Response Fund to the states severely affected by natural disasters. However, the states complain about the lack of appropriate India Meteorological Department (IMD) infrastructure, rainfall and weather monitoring stations and lack of forecasts providing information down to the village level, rather than giving it for regions, and lack of IMD and ISRO information in a user-friendly and understandable manner, which is useful for states.

In December 2017, a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal

²⁴The Excluded in Relief and Rehabilitation, Survey of the post-flood situation of Dalit victims' access to relief and rehabilitation in Andhra Pradesh floods of 2009

near Tamil Nadu intensified into Cyclone Ockhi, resulting in snapped power lines, damaged settlements, over a dozen deaths, and nearly 90 fishermen remained missing. Hundreds of lives could have been saved from the ravages of Cyclone Ockhi if deep-sea fishermen were able to carry better communications gear on board and if there was a better system of an early storm warning. Similarly, during Vardah Cyclone in 2015, unavailability of early warning due to segregated settlements of Dalits, away from the centres of information, in the low lying areas, resulted in delayed evacuation services and assistance from the Government, causing serious damages and losses to the community. Thus, having sound localised early warning systems connected to the remotest and hard to reach locations is the need of the hour, to get India closer to fulfilling its obligation to Target 13.1.2 of the SDGs.

The Central Government has earmarked Rs. 55,000 crore (over \$8 billion) for five years from 2015-20 to all states for disaster management. It is still

unclear as to what would be the areas prioritized and what would be the amount for disaster risk reduction (preparedness and mitigation) actions. In 2017, the Government of India scraped the Schedule Caste Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub Plan (1989), meant exclusively for the development of SC and ST households. These funds could have been tied up with other funding mechanisms to prioritize and take targeted DRR interventions with SC and other marginalised communities, in most hazard-prone geographies. Developing and widening social safety linked with livelihood enhancement programmes for the vulnerable communities need to be the approach together with technology and systems based preparedness and mitigation measures.

Operationalising Dalit women's participation in leadership in DRR

The 10-Point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction released by the Prime Minister at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,

November 16, 2016, calls for greater participation and leadership of women in the management of risk. This is in line with Goal 5 on Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (5.5 ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life & 5.b enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular, ICT, to promote women's empowerment). Additionally, Sendai Framework for DRR recognizes the prerequisite of empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation of especially those disproportionately affected by disasters. Participation of women in disaster risk management, in general, has not seen investment by Government, and the field has remained largely male dominant, with women as silent subjects. Coming to Dalit women, their capacity has been vastly neglected. This is where sensitization and training need to include men and women of marginalized communities to enable participation of wom-

²⁵ The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, A Civil Society Review, 2017, Pg. 72, Available at: <http://wadanatodo.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Civil-society-Report-on-SDGs.pdf>

²⁶ Tracing Cyclone Ockhi In India, December 5 2017, NDTV, Available at: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/tracing-cyclone-ockhi-in-india-all-you-need-to-know-1783912>

²⁷ Deepsea fishermen need early warning after Cyclone Ockhi, January 29, 2018, Village Square. Available at: <https://www.villagesquare.in/2018/01/29/deepsea-fishermen-need-early-warning-cyclone-ockhi/>

²⁸ Broken Promises, Faded Hopes, Key Findings from the immediate assessment, 2016, National Dalit Watch - National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, New Delhi & Social Awareness Society for Youth, Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5xwodG3h_03aHQxUFVleUJkcg/view

²⁹ India government to convene a high level meeting for disaster risk reduction, Times of India, Mar 21, 2017, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/government-to-convene-high-level-meeting-for-disaster-risk-reduction/articleshow/57756231.cms>.

en. Having a cross-cutting focus in all training and capacity building plans of the Government would enable women to emerge as disaster risk managers in their communities, as set out in Goal 5.

In the UN High Level Political Forum on the SDGs, which is tasked by the UN to oversee the implementation of the SDGs, periodical review and share lessons among the countries, 25 countries made a Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the status of implementation of the SDGs. In 2017, 44 countries including India have committed to do a VNR. The Government presented its achievements post-SDGs but nothing got reported on the initiatives taken for DRR, with measures under climate change adaptation being focused on farming and small and marginal farmers leaving out the agricultural labourers. However, the VNR mentions about Indian states revising their land leasing Acts along with the lines of a Model Act developed by NITI Aayog, aimed at protecting the rights of the tenant while also ensuring the landowners' ownership of the land. There are links between Climate Change and biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity and restoring degraded ecosystems climate change adaptation, and providing wide range of ecosystem-based services that are essential for the livelihoods of biodiversity-dependent communities such as

Dalits .

Whilst recognizing climate resilient agriculture as the area of investment for coming years, Climate change adaptation should involve alleviation of household vulnerability to seasonal food insecurity consumption across the food/livelihood insecure period. The Green Climate Fund has sanctioned USD 34.357 million of the total outlay USD 166.297 million, towards the project of "Groundwater recharge and Solar Micro Irrigation", to ensure food security and enhance resilience in vulnerable tribal areas of Odisha. The balance funds would be supported by Government of Odisha and World Bank . Similar initiatives must be expanded in Dalit dominated geographies, where livelihood security is fragile, the community is without land and other development resources, and trends of hunger and malnutrition are worrisome. Blindness to the centrality of caste induced vulnerabilities has fallen short of recognizing Dalit communities as contributors and conservers of nature. Dalits, who are highly dependent on earnings from agricultural labour and, livestock rearing dependent on forests and other common lands and, have fewer resources and options to combat the damages to the resource base because of climate change.

³⁰ "Impact of Climate Change On Survivability Of Dalits-An exploratory study from the lens of DRR", 2013, National Dalit Watch-National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights & Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, New Delhi

³¹ https://www.nabard.org/auth/writereaddata/tender/1105170959Whats_New%20-%20updated.pdf

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Promoting inclusion will take time and political determination. Raising awareness about the consequences of leaving some people behind and recommending actions that Governments can take to avoid doing so can help generate political will. The NITI Ayog mapped the SDGs to existing interventions, Nodal and other Ministries, and invited suggestions from the public and civil society to the proposed national indicators to SDGs. However, such mapping needs to translate into a clear roadmap to implement the SDGs with identified roles for the state governments (community, civil society/private stakeholders) and a monitoring mechanism to measure progress. Despite the talks of DRR and climate resilient development, the country suffers for the want of reliable disaggregated data on disaster damages and casualties. This kind of data needs to be collected at local levels, and available to the government at

all levels, and to the public, for informed policy actions. The Government thus needs to draw up a quick plan to overcome the want for quality data.

Even though India has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development agenda and /through parallel actions on disaster resilience and climate action, 'Disaster Vulnerability' need to be unpacked from the perspective of social exclusion/inclusion, by making the experiences and aspirations of marginalised and socially excluded count. The pre-existing social, physical, geographical, cultural, political and economic must be analyzed to inform any of the disaster management plans and strategies at all levels. This also requires the need to necessarily include the marginalised local populations at all levels of preparedness and mitigation efforts, with capacitated community leadership. This leadership needs to be

supported to work in tandem with PRI members, in ensuring their local knowledge of the vulnerabilities is considered in decision-making planning.

A people-centered approach is the need of DRR to make development for people and nation sustainable. Different humanitarian actors need to invest and collaborate with local community-based organisations and organisations headed by /of marginalized communities. Last but not the least, public education and awareness are second to none in terms invoking agency of people in the achievement of the SDGs. Information about local Risks, Prevention and Response services of the Government need to penetrate the communities inhabiting unsafe regions. SDGs will have to be localized and connected with the wants and aspirations of the marginalized communities, and so should the disaster risk reduction approach be.

³² Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development Report on the World Social Situation 2016, Executive Summary, United Nations

Chapter 6: Recommendations



In view of the SDGs and initiatives taken by the Government of India, against the background of historical and deeply embedded caste-based discrimination;

Affirming the policy and legal measures instituted by the Government of India for protection and promotion of the rights of Scheduled Castes, through a series of legislation and social policies of Affirmative Action, and India's commitments to the SDGs and SFDRR,

Acknowledging the findings of vigilant monitoring by civil society groups that has revealed the consistent pattern of discrimination and exclusion faced by vulnerable communities and groups in all interventions pertaining to disaster response, mitigation and risk reduction, the following recommendations are being made to the Government of India and United Nations in relation to the achievement of SDGs through caste vulnerability informed inclusive DRR.

Recommendations to the Government of India

1. Recognize that large numbers of people affected by disasters are excluded due to various forms of vulnerabilities created by social stratification and discrimination imposed by caste, gender, age, ethnicity and sometimes the religion. The exclusion is by default or design.
2. Recognise the unique challenges and needs of children, especially the vulnerable ones (e.g. children heading families, orphans and those in institutions or under the care of people, not their biological parents) and respond accordingly.
3. Develop targeted action agenda at local levels to achieve disaster risk reduction among the vulnerable and deprived communities.
4. Amend the National and State Disaster Response Fund Norms to recognize and recompense for the loss of daily wage, sharecroppers/lease croppers/ agricultural labourers, and small/households level enterprises presently out of the relief and compensation purview.
5. The Disaster Management policy guidelines and minimum standards for relief and rehabilitation should lay down the steps and procedures to ensure complete inclusion of Dalits and other vulnerable groups is ensured as a non-negotiable entitlement.
6. Ensure specific circulars and Government Orders / Rules instruct specifically and make it incumbent on the officers of the administration to visit and enumerate the affected people in the settlements of the Dalits and other vulnerable groups (children, people with disabilities, single women, the elderly etc.)
7. Ensure the reaching-out and assessment process uses participatory methods for better inclusion, so as to design programmes that are sensitive to the rights of Dalits and relevant to their economic and livelihood needs.
8. Empanel CSOs, especially Dalit NGOs to reach-out to disaster affected communities, develop tools based on participatory methods and principles of social equity audit, for monitoring/auditing the extent of social equity and inclusion of Dalits in disaster response and risk reduction programmes. (The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Model could be looked at).
9. Ensure and monitor the proportionate allocation of public resources that are required for the Dalits and excluded groups to enable them to cope with the disaster on par with the other communities. The budgetary allocation and spending on disaster response and DRR interventions should be transparent and be proactively disclosed to be widely accessible in a form that is comprehensible to the victims and all citizens.
10. The nodal agencies implementing disaster response and DRR programmes should build up an internal MIS on the share of Dalits in the response programme. The MIS should provide

disaggregated information on all the affected households of vulnerable communities and also give detailed data on women, infants, children, persons with disabilities, aged people died and rescued. They should institute mechanisms for mid-term corrective measures based on the information so received.

11. Designate /appoint focal persons in order to monitor all aspects of inclusion of Dalits at all levels of the administration – planning, implementation and governance of Disaster management interventions.
12. Appoint Ombudspersons on a permanent basis, specifically to look at the issue of exclusion in disaster-prone areas, and in an area that has been affected by any disaster. These ombudspersons should be vested with adequate powers to enforce inclusion of Dalits and other vulnerable groups by state agencies and function as per guidelines and procedures laid out to address grievances and cases of exclusion. They should not only be empowered to direct the administration to include and grant entitlements for all those excluded in disaster response and risk reduction interventions of the government; but also, to initiate a departmental inquiry or / and prosecution of public servants who may have through their acts of omission or commission led to exclusion of Dalits.
13. Ensure representation of Dalits in institutional decision-making processes and consultations in disaster management - at all levels - from local government level to the national level.
14. Dalit rights organizations with a proven track record to be represented in all levels of GO-NGO coordination mechanisms in the context of Disaster Management. Disaster Management Authorities at the National, State and District levels, should have task forces/committees representing the Dalits and other vulnerable groups that deliberate on and decisively influence disaster management programmes.
15. The specific disaggregated database should be compiled on Dalit households and all other vulnerable groups, the mode of access to those households and the preparedness of the administration to reach out to them in the event of any disaster. This database should be made available in the public domain by all district disaster management authorities / nodal ministries.
16. The entitlements of Dalits and other vulnerable groups should be defined, communicated precisely through all relevant media and made accessible with minimum procedural hitches. The onus should be on the duty-bearer (the state) and not on the affected (the rights-holder) to ensure that all the affected Dalits and vulnerable groups receive their entitlements pertaining to Disaster response and risk reduction programmes.
17. The state to ensure that child protection policies are in force during humanitarian interventions so that no child is harmed or exploited in any way directly or indirectly by officers at any level.
18. Special attention should be given to the differential food security needs and nutritional needs of Dalits and vulnerable groups, particularly in disaster relief and during the recovery period.
19. The National Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Management Institute and Ministry of Human Resource Development and their counterparts in the states should introduce modules on the inclusion of Dalits and vulnerable groups in disaster response, mitigation and DRR, as part of courses on human rights in schools, universities and training programmes for Government staff. Such courses instilling a culture of human rights should start from early years of schooling so that the mindset that promotes caste-based discrimination and exclusion could be transformed early in life.

Recommendations to the United Nations

1. The Human Rights Council and its members should call on caste-affected states to act on the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, in her report on caste discrimination.

2. The Human Rights Council and its members should promote and endorse the Draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent, and institutionalize regular reporting and effective dialogue on the elimination of discrimination based on caste and analogous forms of inherited status.

3. The UNISDR must be entrusted with the responsibility to periodically review progress to UN Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (presently the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction) viz-a-viz the SDGs and indicators at national, regional and international levels.

4. Conduct the Universal Periodic Review of UN Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and engagement with the Permanent Representative of the Open Working Group on SDGs.

5. The UN HRC must designate a Special Rapporteur to review countries' situation on the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, in collaboration with UNISDR.

6. Mandate the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, to review and integrate elements of DRR in their thematic and country mandates when reviewing the country in relation with SDGs.



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