



Nepal Earthquake 2015:

Building Resilience, Rebuilding Lives

Findings from the Ground





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Executive Summary

The April 25th earthquake and its aftershocks have seriously threatened Nepal's political and socio-economic stability. Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) undertaken by the government of Nepal shows more than 8 million people were affected and the country bears the loss of USD 7 billion in monetary terms in the earthquake. PDNA provided vital information on physical damages, economic loss, human loss and injuries. However, the earthquake had made long-lasting socio-psychological impacts on life and livelihoods of the affected people and families than the tangible effects as mentioned in PDNA. Post-earthquake reconstruction is not merely about rebuilding tangible damages but also reviving life and livelihoods of the affected people.

This report is prepared based on the study conducted in six districts, namely Gorkha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading and Kathmandu Valley in November 2015 with an intent to identify people and communities' voices on recovery and post-earthquake reconstruction in the aftermath of the April 25 earthquakes. The similar study was conducted in June 2015 focusing on rescue and relief operations immediately after the earthquake.

Major findings of the study are as listed below.

- The government completely failed to fulfill its obligation to respect and protect the basic human rights of the affected families. A firm and assertive plan didn't come from the state's side for relocation of the displaced, compelling the victims to spend each day in despair.
- Malpractice has escalated due to the vacuum in the local governance by elected representatives which triggered nepotism and abuse of authority during the relief distribution
- The earthquake victims were totally unaware of critical information about government decisions and supports. Even people who have money are unable to build houses because they don't know what kinds of houses to build. They are waiting for government support to rebuild, repair or retrofit their homes for the last eleven months.
- Common shelter for all family members has created various difficulties for women and girls. Shelter and safety-related issues remain the biggest concern for communities. Trauma, cold and lack of proper health services further testing the affected communities.
- Affected people patiently waited but in vain as they didn't receive any support from the government when needed to build basic shelter to pass the winter season.
- The earthquake exacerbated the problems faced by the agriculture-dependent communities, due to earthquakes and subsequent landslides most of the irrigation systems have been destroyed and arable land is scarce that has affected agricultural production leaving poor families even more vulnerable affecting their livelihoods.
- Landless people suffered worse than those owning land. Hundreds of homeless people, who are occupying the vacant lands, are not willing to return to their home lands because of safety reasons.
- There is an acute shortage of water as the water sources dried up after the earthquake. Exploitation and improper uses of natural resources brought pressure on the environment and its components.
- Level of frustration and disappointment of the earthquake-affected population is increasing towards the government. Lack of co-ordination

is seen between the government and local communities. In many structures such as DDRC and VDRRC there is no representation from underprivileged and marginalized communities.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are been made on post-earthquake reconstruction.

- Urgent measures adopt to protect women and girls residing in the camps and temporary shelters from gender based violence by strengthening prevention, monitoring and referral systems to encourage the reporting of GBC cases and the provision of counselling.
- The government should urgently and clearly communicate the appropriate models and materials for earthquake-resistant houses, and how and when funding can be accessed. Common communication methods like local radio broadcasting need to be properly utilized to aware the communities on government plans and programmes.
- Strengthen meaningful representation of women and men form excluded groups in district structures including District Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and other committees and ensure at least 33 percent representatives in those committees.

- Ensure that food security and livelihoods recovery is prioritised and integrated with post disaster recovery framework. Priority should be given to repair and maintenance of damaged irrigation systems before the upcoming planting seasons.
- A special plan targeting landless people need to be developed that ensure their access to land where they can build shelters.
- Housing reconstruction programme must immediately start. It is not possible for people to remain in insubstantial and inappropriate temporary accommodation for an extended period of time without there being long-term consequences at their personal health.

Other Policy measures • Government

- must take all necessary measures to ensure the rights guarantee on the Constitution to live a life of with human dignity and free of discrimination.
- Decentralisation of power and authorities is key to check corruption and nepotism and hence it's imperative that local elections are held as early as possible.
- Ensure that Disaster Risk Reduction is mainstreamed into reconstruction plans and processes and ensure that Building Codes are implemented and enforced.
- The government should urgently commission geological surveys in the earthquake affected districts and later to others remaining districts. Safe areas and risky and vulnerable areas for human settlement need to be identified and declared.
- The government must adopt land Use Act and enforce it.





April 25th: Day of Devastation

On 25 April a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal with the epicentre located 81 km northwest of the capital city of Kathmandu, Barpak, Gorkha district. The devastating Gorkha Earthquake and its aftershocks killed nearly 9,000 people and 22,000 were injured in incident. The Earthquake fully destroyed more than half a million physical structures and 270,000 houses were partially damaged leaving tens of thousands of people rendered homeless. Key infrastructure - including schools, health facilities, access roads, temples and heritage sites - have been fully damaged or destroyed. Over 1,000 health facilities including primary health care centers, village health posts and birthing centers are destroyed in the earthquake. About 32 per cent of facilities providing specialized maternal and neonatal services were destroyed. About half of the monuments of immense historical, cultural and archeological significance were destroyed. These sites are an invaluable loss to the living Nepali culturesⁱ.

Out of 75 districts 31 districts were affected in earthquake where 7 districts were severely hit and 7 districts were categorized as crisis hit. As PDNA argued these severely and crisis hit districtsⁱⁱ were designated as specific purpose for purpose of prioritizing rescue and relief operations; other 17 neighboring districts are partially affected. Severely affected districts are located in the Central and Western Region including the Kathmandu Valley. About 5.4 million people live in these 14 districts; all of them are located in the Central and Western

Region including the Kathmandu Valley, according to central bureau of statics.

This earthquake induced many mass movements in mountainous areas and resulted landslides. In addition, the earthquake also triggered a major avalanche on the south slopes of Mt. Everest,

District Name	Damaged Public (Residential) Buildings	Average Household Size (2011 Census)	Estimated Affected Population	Current Population (2011 Census)	% Affected Population (14/05/15)	% Affected Population (11/05/15)
Okhaldhunga	2074	4.55	9437	147984	6	25
Ramechhap	26743	4.62	123553	202646	61	39
Dolakha	68880	4.08	198430	186557	107	11
Sindhupalchok	49933	4.32	215711	287798	75	67
Kabhepalanchok	30000	4.73	141900	181937	37	37
Lalitpur	16144	4.26	69625	468112	15	15
Bhaktapur	18900	4.44	83916	304851	28	10
Kathmandu	36973	4.00	147892	1744240	8	6
Nuwakot	57943	4.89	271751	277471	98	51
Rasuwa	7040	4.43	31187	43800	72	82
Okhadi	43741	4.55	199022	336067	58	27
Makawanpur	15012	4.88	73259	420477	17	0
Gorkha	44607	4.08	181997	271061	67	67
Sindhuli	12704	5.14	65259	293173	22	7
Total	410894		1811979			

(Source: (a) IRIS, (b) PDNA)

located approximately 160 km east-northeast of the epicenter. The avalanche destroyed the base camp of climbers. According to reports, the avalanche killed at least 17 people and injured 61 others (IRIS, 2015). Some other adjoining countries namely India, China and Bangladesh also affected in the earthquake.

The PDNA has made a rigorous work on damage and loss of physical properties, or hardware aspect, however, less likely to see the software side-social, cultural, and humanitarian welfare- the disaster affected. As PDNA reported hundreds of historical and cultural monuments at least a century old archeological sites were either destroyed or extensively damaged since damaged

exposed the weaknesses of houses did not have any seismic-resistant features or were not built in accordance with the building codes. The earthquake occurred at 11.15 a.m., Saturday, an official weekly holiday, when all government offices and schools were closed and people were already in open field. If the earthquake would have struck at night, instead the middle of the day, there would certainly have been greater number of casualties. Similarly, the death toll of young population could have been much higher considering that nearly 7,000 schools were damaged.

After the devastating earthquake Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative (HAMI) is continuously monitoring the situation of highly affected districts. It conducted its first phase monitoring immediately after the quake. Before starting second phase monitoring HAMI consulted with community people, organized Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with them,

prepared Key Informants interviews (KII) on the discussion with the community people and presented them before stakeholders as consulted during the first phase by organising interaction programs entitled People's Participation on Reconstruction. The Team observed the situation of survivors during the on-the-spot monitoring and held discussions with the local communities and earthquake survivors on relief, rescue and early recovery and their rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Objectives

The main objective of the fact finding mission is to identify peoples'/communities' voices on post-earthquake reconstruction. The study has aimed to:

- Identify the peoples'/communities' issues on reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- Present the peoples' issues on reconstruction district level government and non-government



stakeholders and collect their opinions as a resource/reference for the Nepal's reconstruction;

- Advocate for pro-people reconstruction based on details collected from village level.

Scope

The scope of the study is manifested as the government has been planning to support earthquake victims for reconstruct their houses. There is an opportunity of putting forth people's agendas in reconstruction plan, policies and programs. It is often criticized that these communities' decision-making role is often neglected by the policy makers and this monitoring effort is to address these lacunas by offering respective communities a civil society space for Nepal's reconstruction. This study also comes across analyzing critically the government's policies, programmes and undertakings on reconstruction with a highlight on CSOs initiatives, particularly the interactive sessions with stakeholders in district headquarters after community consultations. The fact finding monitoring was conducted in ten worst-hit districts; namely Gorkha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur.

Methodology

Taking a lesson from the first phase monitoring by HAMI Initiative in June 2015 which was mostly based on the consultation with the respective Chief District Officers, local political parties,

civil society groups, media, local development officers, survivors, this second phase monitoring was designed with quite different techniques; consulting first with the community people, organise focus group discussions (FGDs) with them, preparing a report based on the discussion with the community people and presenting them with the stakeholders as consulted during the first phase by organising the interactions on People's Participation on Reconstruction.

A Focus Group Discussion Guideline/Checklist was developed by the expert team and finalized in consultation with the HAMI Campaign core committee members as well as representatives of federations' alliances and Senior Human rights Activists. An orientation program was held for field monitors (Annex) while a separate consultation was held with CSOs, political parties in central level to refine the tools by incorporating their feedbacks and suggestions.

Human Rights activists with expertise in field of marginalized communities and social justice were mobilised for the qualitative data identification and analysis to identify the needs related to their day to day household need such as food, shelter, cloth, schooling of children, and so on of the local communities. This fact finding mission also identified the issues of reconstruction gaps and the future needs on socio economic and cultural needs.



भव' शब्द मुर्गहस्को शब्दकोषमा पाईन्छ।



Disaster in Context

Nepal is considered as one of the disaster prone country. Natural and human-induced, including adverse geo-climatic conditions, topographic features, environmental degradation, lack of proper population management with equity-distribution policy to ensure infrastructure based urbanization, unsustainable development practices, are taken as major reasons behind disaster. Due to geographical and other conditions stimulated climatologically, rugged and steep topography, extreme weather events and fragile geological conditions, the country is regarded as a disaster hotspot because of vulnerability of the populations together with regular and frequent occurrences of different natural disasters (MoHA, 2013). Also, as Nepal is extremely vulnerable to water-related hazards, its hydrology is highly variable, with the monsoon bringing 80% of Nepal's rainfall in less than three months during summer season (World Bank, 2012).

Historical records show that Nepal has been suffering from various types of disaster. While the hilly areas, with rough topography and very young geology, are very prone to landslides, the lowland Tarai is prone to floods. Avalanches, GLOFs and snowstorms are common in high hills of Nepal. In this context, managing disasters in the 21st century requires a concerted as well as an integrated national effort which needs to be coordinated at all levels. Various government reports say GoN has been working to reduce risks through mainstreaming disaster management into sectarian development for

preventing the occurrence of disasters, mitigating their impact and ensuring that there is adequate preparedness to ensure an effective response. However, the preparedness and immediate rescue operations conducted by the government seems not satisfactory from people's side.

In fact, Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is a comprehensive approach to reduce a disaster risk, which is set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action. Its expected outcome is the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries (UNISDR, 2009)ⁱⁱⁱ Disaster risk and vulnerability has increased due to security issues and decreased livelihood opportunities, migration, displacement, limited access to and weak flow of information to the population displaced internally due to more than a decade-long conflict in the country (NSDRM, 2009)^{iv} In addition to that, increasing vulnerability in both urban and rural areas in Nepal requires an integrated approach to disaster risk management. In common with many developing nations, Nepal is faced with rapid urbanization, with a 3% increase in urban population since 2001 (CBS, 2012), specifically in the Kathmandu Valley. Urbanization is occurring in a haphazard manner with little regard to averting risk and placing more lives in danger, specifically with regard to earthquake. According to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at the end of 20 century that Nepal is the 11th most earthquake prone country in the world (UNDP, 1999). The

first recorded earthquake occurred in 1255, followed by numerous events of earthquake hit Nepal; however, we have learned ever since is like a folk tell, earlier aged persons often refers, ‘nabbesalkobhukamp’ (an earthquake of 1934). Nepal had a population of about 5-6 million in 1934, of that over 8000 dead occurred. Following this mega earthquake, after 50 years, another earthquake occurred with magnitude of 6.5 Richter and epicenter in Bajhang where 103 deaths toll and 391 injuries took place.

happened. Physical damage in terms of houses collapsed and partially damage accounted for less than 5 thousand. Since then there have been many earthquake event occurred causing severe human and physical losses but there is a gross lack of documentation of post-disaster human and physical impacts. The latest one of 25th April, 2015; where 7.8 Richter scale of magnitude with Barpak, Gorkha district epicenter hit the country disproportionately of magnitude with Barpak, Gorkha district epicenter hit the country disproportionately.

The largest one early in the 21 century occurred in the north eastern border of Nepal with India, there were no death toll and nominal injuries

Earthquake events in Nepal

Years	Magnitude	Time	Epicenter	Human Loss		Damage	
				Dead	Injury	Complete	Partial
15 January 1934	8.4	2.24 PM	Nearby Madhubani, India	8519	-	80963	126285
29 July 1980	6.5	2.58 PM	Bajhang, Nepal	103	391	35000	
21 August 1988	6.6	4.54 AM	Udayapur, Nepal	668	6081	21976	42198
18 September 2011	6.9	6.25 PM	Sikkim-Nepal, Border	-	24	4646	4776
25 April 2015	7.6	11.56 AM	Gorkha, Nepal	8790	22,300	510772	

Source: Adapted from Nepal (Sept/Oct, 2015)





Disaster Policy Mechanism

Since 1996, efforts were initiated to adopt measures towards addressing different types of disasters with the introduction of the National Action Plan on disaster management in Nepal. Prior to that, matters of disaster management and reduction were regulated by Disaster Legislation, that is, Natural Calamity (Relief) Act, 1982^v. There is Local Self-Governance Act, 1999, which intends to promote the concept of local self-governance within the decentralization framework for managing environment-friendly development. However, local bodies mandated to work in the field of disaster resilience haven't been able to perform their responsibilities in absence of elected people's representatives since last 13 years. Besides these, there is National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal (NSDRM), 2009^{vi} Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee^{vii} (CNDRC); National Building Code (NBC)^{viii} 1993; Building Act, 1998^{ix}; Local Disaster Risk Management Planning (LDRMP) Guideline^x, 2011; Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (DPRP) in Districts^{xi}, 2010; the National Disaster Response Framework^{xii} (NDRF); Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium^{xiii} (NRRC) 2009 responsible for developing concise and comprehensive national disaster response framework for Nepal that can guide a more effective and coordinated national response focusing on large scale disaster.

In recent years, the GoN has taken steps to move from a relief and response paradigm towards putting greater emphasis on DRM by trying to address various stages of disaster management cycle. Yet, there is a serious problem in implementation, monitoring and follow up of the disaster management policy. An evident example is the recent problem of government in providing long-term relief planning, and

sustainable approaches in dealing with the earthquake victims. Also, recurrent and major disaster impacts such as of earthquakes and floods seem to perpetuate poverty outcomes. The extent of vulnerability of communities to disaster risk differs in urban and rural areas.

After the earthquake, the National Planning Commission (NPC) has prepared the Post-Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Policy. The policy was prepared based on suggestions laid by the prime minister-led National Reconstruction Advisory Committee, strategies prescribed by the PDNA report and recommendations made during the June 25 International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction. A high powered authority for post-earthquake reconstruction has been approved through ordinance under the prime minister to lead the task of reconstruction and a National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). The Authority would be solely responsible for the post-quake reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Similarly, the government has already tabled the new Natural Disaster Bill in the parliament to deal with the disaster issue in the broader perspective.

Building Regulation and Earthquake Risks

There is not yet a comprehensive and well-equipped mechanism to implement the National Building Codes to guard against the risks of earthquake.

- The Building Regulations Mechanism under the Building Act has not yet been established for approval of smaller buildings at local level, although these are covered in the Act itself. However, the development of the guidelines described as the Mandatory Rules of Thumb (MRT), is a pragmatic response to this gap.

- The National Building Codes established under the Building Act have so far been only partially implemented by few municipalities, meaning that high-risk buildings continue to be constructed, including in the heavily populated and seismically active Kathmandu Valley. Some actors believe that municipalities are not obliged to implement the National Building Codes, although this perception appears to be an error concerning the hierarchy of laws. Even where the codes have been implemented to establish prior approval of larger buildings, however, no municipality has yet managed to implement the full cycle of building regulation by establishing (1) prior approval, (2) inspection and (3) enforcement/penalties. These three elements are therefore essential to achieve building code compliance:
- There appears to be no legally mandated system for safety inspection of existing buildings for fire, earthquake or other risks. This would normally be a local government implementation responsibility under local by-laws, but it may require additional national legislation to create the obligation on local government and establish its parameters.
- As yet there is no system of assessment or incentives in place to retrofit private buildings for earthquake and fire safety. Such a process would require massive resources, as 93% of the existing buildings are non-engineered. However, in the absence of such a concentrated effort, little progress can be made on improving the earthquake and fire safety of the overall built environment, especially in established urban centers.

Thus, the government needs to pay its attention in public policy, collective action and address issues related to disaster risk reduction by emphasizing on the following key areas:

- Strict implementation of disaster management plans and policies;
- Raising public awareness;
- Creating enabling environment for disaster friendly public services;
- Ensuring residual risk transfer;
- Improving disaster management information system;
- Strengthening networking and coordination;
- Enforcing national building code and land use planning; and
- Mainstreaming disaster and climate risk management into developing planning process.

In nutshell, there is a well-developed policy framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Nepal, and also a substantial (though as yet incomplete) legislative framework, but the institutional structure for implantation needs strengthening at all levels of government. The challenge is to implement these measures in a period of political transition, and to move to a new system of implementation with full community participation to empower communities and create a sustainable approach to DRR.

Disaster Issues in Periodic Development Plans

The 10th Five Year Plan (2002-2007) gave special attention to disaster management while developing infrastructures and making construction and development projects sustainable and the Three-Year Interim Plan (2007-2010) recognizes disaster as one of the major impediments of national development process and addresses Disaster management task. The plan recognizes the need to foster collaboration and coordination among key DM actors and institutions active in different sectors of national economy.

The current 13th Three Year Interim Plan (2013/14-2015/16) has emphasized the disaster risk management issues as an inherited character of sustainable development and has accorded priority to pre-disaster preparedness to recovery process. A National Platform for DRR has been formed with the involvement of multi-stakeholders. The government has established disaster risk management focal desk and appointed officials in different Ministries and Departments to synergize DRR efforts into the works of the relevant line agencies. It has prepared country level Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment, targeting the better prepared, response and recovery activities with the proper knowledge of possible hazardous situation at district and at local level.

These past disaster effects and the recommendations in course of the respective disasters were not properly addressed in time causing huge damage and loss after every disaster like the one caused by the recent one – the devastating earthquake occurred in 2015.



Impacts of Earthquake

There are three issues keenly viewed under this topic that how April 25 earthquake caused impacts at social, economic, and political fronts.

Socio-economic and Political Impacts

Amidst sorrows and losses caused by the earthquake, there were some positive aspects among people in quake-affected areas. In Gorkha alone, the epicenter of devastating earthquake, huge numbers of earthquake survivors from different villages and communities were seen maintaining social harmony and tolerance regardless their stay in single area or camp. Some communities still practiced communal meal and sharing of household utensils for those in need and left out. However, cast-based discriminations were observed in some places. The so called higher rank cast people dominated most of the basic services, shelter, food aid, health facilities and the lands, completely neglecting the deprived and marginalized populations.

A deprived woman from Bhaktapur shares,

“We have not yet received adequate relief because we are Dalits ... only thulamanchhe [big people] know when the relief is coming ... first they distribute it among their near and dear ones and the leftovers will be distributed to us...”

Observation and finding: Malpractice in relief distribution escalated in the absence of elected people’s representatives in the local bodies.

In the aftermath of earthquake, politicizations emerged as challenge while distributing relief to earthquake victims. The earthquake triggered malpractice of nepotism and abuse of authority during the relief distribution

Since local bodies are running without elected people’s representatives since last 13 years, democratically established political institutions are totally paralyzed. In absence of such a political authority at local level, the measures against post disaster initiative for rescue, relief, and reconstruction activities have to depend on a coordinated effort of all parties. It is virtually a disguised authority, no need to be accountable on whatever decisions they took. In the name of governance there is a VDC secretary and subordinate accountable to central bureaucratic authority always found to be loyal to bureaucracy. In some cases, even VDC secretaries are not available there as government fails to fill vacant position. This has led VDC secretaries to deal with more than one VDC office stationed in district headquarter instead of working in village level.

Impacts on Livelihood Practice

Observations and finding:

The earthquake exacerbated the problems faced by the agriculture dependent communities, leaving poor families even more vulnerable where arable land is scarce due to earthquake.

Most of the earthquake-affected victims were dependent on agro-based occupation. Earthquake damaged their limited livelihood sources mainly

- agriculture, livestock farming, tourism etc. Most farmers from the earthquake hard hit districts especially Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk could not plant rice in recent spring season as they remained busy in arranging temporary shelter for their safety when they had to plant paddy in fields. Poor people are suffering the most. Cases of child labor were reported in some cases forcing the younger household members to take up income generating activities to support their families. Similarly, the damage of stored grains in their houses is likely to increase food insecurity though they are often feed halves in their aggregate food intake. There is a dependency of forest resources mainly for wood and fodder for the communities. The earthquake triggered the forest resources seeking behavior or dependency of rural people on one hand, and it also accelerate the landslides and earth fissures.

During field visit and focus group discussion earthquake victims say they were forced to engage in labor for survival.

“Most of our food supplies come from our farms. But not many of us own land, or possess big land - the grains and food that are produced hardly sufficient for six months or even less. We have to look for alternatives to survive the rest of the year. We manage some money through labor - wage based salary (Nilak in local language). But, we have festivals and other cultural activities to conduct for which we have to spend from the little earnings from our labor. Health care spending or other expenditure occurs occasionally which is like a big dream for us...,” says Magar in Gorkha.

It is not only the case of Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk, most of rural families who are not affluent as able to meet their expenses as they earned in year seems to be similar phenomena especially in the hill region. It is said the irrigation systems were also badly affected. In the discussion the opinion came out from the participants:

Due to earthquake, most of the irrigation systems have been destroyed in the district that has affected to agricultural production. Moreover, people also could not engage in agriculture effectively. Thus, participants have worries that there would be food crisis in this year.

Winterization

Observation and finding:

The survivors patiently waited but in vain as they didn't receive any aid announced from the government when needed to build basic shelter to pass the winter season.

Following the earthquake, the immediate rescue and relief distribution activities span for 2-3 months period. The end of monsoon season added another challenge for the earthquake victims which fortunately, proceeded without any catastrophic results particularly in affected zone. The survivors patiently waited and hoped to obtain support to build their huts that would protect them from the cold of winter.

How long to wait for the government?

Saligram Aryal, Teacher of Nalang VDC, Dhading

We residing in the tents and zinc roofed huts are in serious problems. We passed by the summer in rain and heat with fear of snakes and water inside the residence with beds on the ground. Now the trouble is of the cold ground attached to the beds with very thin blanket not having sufficient space for the family members. The government does not permit us making the house without house design. As a result no place to store cereal products, keep livestock properly and lack of water. We passed by the big festivals in the middle without assurance of any assistance of help at this crisis. We are not confident that we may not get government's committed amount of relief if we decide to build our house ourselves.

But all in vain as they didn't receive any aid from the government to build shelters to pass the winter season. With the winter closing nearer, the essences for the warm clothes and new comfortable shelter also grow.

At least the government has decided to provide Rs. 10000 as warm relief packaged for each households rendered homeless in earthquake to save life in cold.

In Paslang VDC, Gorkha, Ward number 4, 33 houses of (Indigenous Nationality (INs)) collapsed. Magar community is dependent to agrarian economy. In the last couple of years they had launched a home stay hotel business to make money in village. The homestay had

partially addressed their economic need i.e. clothing, education for children, and so on. Now neither they have a home to stay warmly at least for their family members or extra income to buy clothes that retaliate the severity of the winter.

Kavre district, adjacent to capital city itself faced winterization problem. So, it was not necessary to go Laprak or Karaunja of Gorkha to see problem in winter. Media covered tragic story of earthquake victims exposing their hardship during winter season.

TukuKumari Khadka and her husband were preparing to wrap up their day's work in a nearby farm when a strong wind blew away the roof of their makeshift shelter made up of zinc sheets—their abode since they lost their home to earthquake—in Sundar Danda in Kavredistrict. "The wait for government support was getting frustratingly longer. And with winter already round the corner, cold winds would whip through our shelter," TukuKumari said of the October evening. After the earthquake, TukuKumari's and other households of Sundar Danda had received some tarpaulin sheets from some organisations, under which they lived for a few days. They later built temporary shelters with zinc sheets they were given.

Land Use and Land Entitlements

Observation and Finding: *Landless people suffered the worst than those owning some piece of land.*

During the assessment, most of the affected were taking shelter in makeshift temporary shelter. In the midst of losses and grieves, people owning some land in the safer areas allowed the affected to settle with the owners and their close relatives. However, most of the owners citing various reasons had started to force the affected families to vacant their land, which added more traumas to the already affected. Thus, some communities have started to pay minimum amounts as rental fee to the land and house owners whereas people who could not afford were seen making makeshift shelters elsewhere: in the fields, woods and other public areas.

The situation of the Thami community in both

Sindhupalchowk and Dolakha is dire. The affected families who were taking refuge in the community forests are given strict orders to leave it. Few families who have returned back to their original places face a new fear of landslides.

At discussion organized by HAMI a Thami woman of Dolakha shared her grief as:

"We are forced to render homeless although our houses are still standing there. We were able to spend these hard months on a small land. Now the land owners want to continue their farms. We cannot forever stay in others' land. But we cannot return to our old house either. Where shall we go now?"

Another participants from Sindhupalchowk district shared his difficulties "The land where we used to grow our subsistence food is also not in use since there are several trenches formed in our paddy fields." The affected communities expressed of having learning of many things due earthquake. As expressed by the FGD participants from Dolakha, "It taught us that we have to be conscious about the structure of land in which we are staying".

The earthquake has added another layer of hardship on those people surviving in squatter clusters in the valley. The state and the people were seen neglecting the issues of landless people since unlike the hundreds made homeless by the earthquake the landless people already were occupying the vacant lands. Furthermore, as they do not own the land they were occupying, they were not eligible for the services provided by the state in absence of required land registration certificates.

One of the participants of the discussion argued:

Another participants from Sindhupalchowk district shared his difficulties "The land where we used to grow our subsistence food is also not in use since there are several trenches formed in our paddy fields." The affected communities expressed of having learning of many things due earthquake. As expressed by the FGD participants from Dolakha, "It taught us that we have to be conscious about the structure of land in which we are staying".

At a FGD locals of Nuwakot demanded that the

government should develop new reconstruction programs for rehabilitation of landless affected families.

Vulnerable communities hit hard

The earthquakes have intensified pre-existing vulnerabilities. Relief efforts will need to continue to identify and respond to distinct structural and situational factors that increase vulnerabilities at both local and community levels, including for women, children, the elderly, minorities and people with disabilities. Many people affected by the disaster are highly vulnerable on the basis of socio-economic, language, religious, caste, ethnic and geographic factors.

In the aftermath of a disaster the risk of sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, trafficking, forced prostitution and marriage are suspected to be heightened. The records of earthquake has already shown that girls and women suffer more in disasters as both the number of deaths and casualties is high among women than men. Likewise post-earthquake also, a notable amount of sexual harassment and other related complaints were registered by girls and women in the temporary shelters. While there are registrations of complaints, many hesitate to complain and register such abuse because of the social stigma. With no proper shelter and place of residence, these exploitations continue to happen

Observation and findings: *Common shelter for all family members has created various difficulties for women and girls. Shelter and safety related issues remain the biggest concern for communities.*

Participants in the district of Sinduhupalchowk opined at a function organized in FGD: By community, Tamang is severely affected; and by structure of the population, children and old aged population are more severely affected. It is so difficult to a family where old aged couple is abandon by their siblings after marriage. Even they could not fetch the relief material that is distributed at times.

It was observed that pregnant women and mothers of infants are vulnerable as they are

living in the support of relief packages, which does not guarantee nutrition and health to the vulnerable women and children. Mothers, children and elderly people cannot claim or go for receiving the relief. Therefore, organizations should assure adequate relief for them. Thus, arrangement of proper shelter for the earthquake victims should be the first priority especially for the protection and safety of vulnerable groups like old aged people, children, people with disabilities, girls and women.

Environmental issues/implications

Various recent studies have shown that the hilly areas have been found with depleting water sources. The growing earthquake trends in Nepal that contributes to deplete the water sources and they tend to move downward nearby riverside and unnecessary nursery plantation in the weak soil attachment rocks due to which the hills have been swept away after turning the thick plantation into thick jungle without sufficient ground to stick

Helpless woman: No rehabilitation

Name: - Pabima Jirel

Age:-65

Address: Hathdanda, ward No.6, Dolakha

Pabimajirel, a residence of Jiri Danda Ward No.5 is at present living at a temporary residence in Hathdanda, Dolakha. She is 65 years old and her husband has left her after marrying another woman. She is living in a rent house with her daughter. She goes to work in other houses and rears goats for settlement. After the marriage of her daughter she was living alone. She had only 5 goats as her wealth and some foods stored. The earthquake of 2072 Baisakh 12 completely destroyed her house and killed her 5 goats and the little food she had stored. money she had hidden was also buried in the same destroyed house. Now she has got nothing left except the clothes she was wearing. The police could only take out the dead goats .other all things were buried. Due to this Pabima has gone out of mind. When she sees other people she tells them to take care of her. She says she is hopeless and totally broken. One day suddenly she could not move her body. She got paralysis. Knowing this her son and daughter came there to see her. When they came there they came to know that she hadn't got the rehabilitation card. She hadn't got any help from government. They took her to hospitals carried out her treatment and now she has returned to village and has got some help and compensation from the government.

with the rocky hills causing landslides are blamed behind water scarcity.

Observation and findings: *Exploitation and improper usages of natural resources brought pressure on environment and its components.*

Locals from selected districts have expressed their concern over dire shortages of water. The local communities in Dhading, Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk claimed that the paddy production in their areas was decreased by half due to the shortage of water. In Dolakha, nearby drinking water sources were running out of water after earthquake. "The earthquake rumbled the land due to which water source dried. We have to walk a lot to get water," says an earthquake victim in district of Dolakha. These participants also expressed the worry about the big stones falling from the hill on the village. "There is still the condition of falling of those stones at anytime which may destroy our shelters." To them, the village is also in the danger of landslide. So, they said that they could

get comfort if they were taken to another safer land. The land structure of the village is safe but the hill above the village has caused more problems for the villagers.

According to Krishna Prasad Adhikari an official of District Forest Office, in Dhading, the earthquake victim families are allowed to transfer the debris of the dilapidated houses including woods and timbers to the other places or for processing in the mills in all 31 districts of the earthquake hit areas. They are also allowed to take out timbers from the community forest to use them for building shelter or new house.

The carcasses have also polluted the environment. "Nobody gives priority on these issues", expressed the Dalit communities of the Sindhupalchowk district



Recovery and Reconstruction: Voice of locals

In last week of December, the government has formed the NRA, the central body responsible for post-earthquake reconstruction by introducing a National Reconstruction Authority Act. The Authority which was established almost nine months after devastating earthquake will determine the earthquake-triggered losses; recommend the government to announce the affected zones; set the priorities of reconstruction; and approves policy, programs and budget for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. The Authority has three-tier structure: Directive Committee, Advisory Council and Executive Committee in the central level. A monitoring team comprising lawmakers is also formed to oversee the activities of the Authority. Besides central office, seven sub-regional offices will be established in regional level to co-ordinate between central and local level. The high-powered Authority will mobilize around \$ 6.7 billion, the budget estimated by the 'Post-Disaster needs Assessment Report-2015' for the reconstruction efforts. Looking at the impact of the earthquake the report explains that the earthquake largely affected the Nepalese economy in terms of its infrastructure, tourism, cultural heritage, schools and hospitals. However, these will also be key areas in building back better after the disaster. There is a lot of scope to build back better than before and to ensure that the risks are not rebuilt for future generations to suffer from again.

Earthquake affected people and communities made serious concerns on following issues and factors:

Reconstruction

Reconstruction is first need in almost every region of the districts because everything is destroyed there. The government has not given much priority in rebuilding quake destroyed houses and infrastructures despite its promises. Since locals are not in position to bear reconstruction cost on their own they are raising the issue in every available public forums. Unfortunately, nothing has been progressed in rebuilding quake-destroyed houses. According to the government representatives and reports, the Authority has finalized policies and action plans regarding the reconstruction. Few directives have been sent to the District Office aiming to begun housing reconstruction in all villages of quake-affected districts.

Observation and findings:

No effective and concrete move has been yet taken by the government in beginning reconstruction in the localities where it is needed.

Locals have raised agenda of housing reconstruction in FGDs. Queries and concerns were raised related to grant support, how current financial support fits within the overall scheme and guidance for reconstruction and timeline for support. Grossly, the earthquake hit across the reason, district, village, do not have capacity to build their own residential houses as they need/wish; and whoever may be small proportion is able to build own houses is hung with a hope that the government will provide them Rs 200000 as announced by the government. The reconstruction aid will be channelized through

banking systems in three phases and maximum 2.5 bank loan will be provided to each households rendered homeless in earthquake to completed housing reconstruction.

Observation and finding: *Level of frustration and disappointment of earthquake-affected people is increasing towards government; Lack of co-ordination is seen between the government and local communities.*

Communities are looking for answers to their concerns around grant loan support and guidance for reconstruction. Majority of the people believe that their community has not recovered from the earthquake. Their key needs include repairing community infrastructures, livelihood training, school recovery, safer spaces for women and children and investing in disaster risk reduction.

A roundtable interaction program entitled “Challenges and Issues in Post Disaster” was organized in all 7 affected districts in different dates. There was participation of diverse background including Chief District Officer (CDO) and local leaders of political parties, representatives from INGOs, NGOs, UN, Media and conflict affected people. Common issues raised during interaction program were as follow:

- Buildings were collapsed in earthquake as bricks, stone mud mortar and people were unknown about how to build the earthquake resilient houses. Consequences alarmingly increase.
- Level of frustration and disappointment of earthquake affected population is increasing towards government, since government is delaying to provide support implies the no support, thus some people who didn't have hope that they would get support, began the construction work by sharing labor (Jhara/Parma).
- One of the major issues raised from local people is the Building Codes (BC) government is preparing for whole Nepal including earthquake affected districts. They argue: it is not practicable to apply BC by the central government and it should be devised locally if needed, otherwise BC should be

mandatory for RCC buildings that constitute many steps, and it should not be mandatory for 1 or step buildings mad or brick, stone, mud mortar.

- Participants also raised the issue about the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of INGO/NGO and government for Reconstruction.

In an interaction program, one of CDO from quake-affected districts confessed the situation was worrying in the districts. Seeking anonymity citing his role in the district he said: Regarding the reconstruction authority, it is yet to be cleared what central government has to deal with, followed by district authority has to deal with and the local government, for example VDC, yet to be clear. Until the clarity comes in this regard from central, nothing can be initiated.

Representatives of quake-affected communities deny housing reconstruction aid in installment basis as announced by the government. They argue: Government must provide us the money once from the nearest bank than to provide us in installment basis. When we get the budget in the bank, we may take as per need instead of waiting months to get next installment. Money in the bank may sounds as their money deposited in their account. Now the mechanism needs to be built that shows or verify to take out money as per need.

Shelter and resettlement

Food, Shelter and cloths are the major concern of people. People should be facilitated in replacing their temporary shelters with earthquake resilient houses. Resettlement, reconstruction and reallocation should be the primary concern of authorities. Government should bring awareness programs in explaining the amount and process of receiving the grant. Also, equal importance should be given to educational infrastructures as well. The current TLCs (Temporary Learning Centers) should be replaced with earthquake resistant buildings. From the interactions in the district it is observed that, It is difficult to get skilled human resources and labourers to build houses in villages. Even they get one, the wage they demand is very high. In the aftermath of earthquake even daily wage of an unskilled

Learning's from the International communities: Post quake Reconstruction and Recovery

The earthquake in the Kashmir region of Pakistan measured 7.6 on the Richter scale and left more than 3.5 million people homeless. The January 2001 earthquake in the Indian state of Gujarat killed between 16,000 and 20,000 people. More than 1.2 million constructions were damaged, and 1.7 million people lost their homes. However, there are varied experiences encountered both positive and negative measures on rebuilding or reconstruction of the damages. Sanderson and Anshu (2008) observed a case of unsuccessful government-planned reconstruction project took place in the state of Gujarat in India following the 2001 earthquake. The decision to undertake massive and rapid reconstruction has proved very costly, and the result has been inappropriate constructions (producing uninhabited villages). Reconstruction driven by contracted companies is rarely able to develop local people's initiatives. In regards to the successful story of reconstruction, Asia has experiences that have involved the beneficiaries in the planning, design, and construction of their future homes. In Indonesia, the following recommendations were issued by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR):

- The people must build their own provisional housing on their own land as quickly as possible.
- The people must rebuild their permanent housing without assistance from a contractor.
- The villages must designate the NGOs with which they want to work.
- NGOs may not be imposed on them by other authorities (Anzorena, 2006)

In the case of Gujarat, with top-down approach was adopted where planning, the developers had to acquire land through donations or direct purchases on sites located approximately 3 km from the original villages (Adhoi and Vondh) and rebuild on a different site, but families did not accept the new villages, so left (Sanderson and Anshu 2008). Whereas Latin American experiences are just reverse approach where social organizations involved in the processes more than the technological innovations from which interests of the poorest families met in Peru, Chile, and Ecuador. Among some of the 25 Asian and Latin American examples, according to Audefroy (2006), analyzed and found several constants in relation to the reconstruction planning process. In the cases in which planning was directed from above without consultation with the affected populations, results have been discouraging: abandonment of the homes in Gujarat, and reconstruction inside the 3 km zone along the edge of the ocean in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) had posed a list of post-tsunami reconstruction strategies, and when such recommendations were followed, disaster became a great empowerment opportunity for people to reinforce gender equality, environmental protection, and social justice. It is widely learned that a participatory process is the key element in reconstruction; without it, new ghost towns are created: places with no soul, which will never become cities. John Turner (1976) described housing as a verb and a process, not as an object without people. It is the same for housing design: designs imposed from outside the community, as in the Chiapas reconstruction design proposed by the Technological University and applied by Caritas Mexicana, despite providing a good immediate solution, have little chance of being appropriated by their inhabitants, in this case rural indigenous or peasant communities. On the other hand, the housing design in KohMook, Thailand undertaken by an association of architects (CASE) simply translates the beneficiaries' ideas into plans and blueprints. The participatory process used by architects and planners plays an extremely important role in promotion of a better life for the community, while also responding to their needs and producing a better local environment. As far as reconstruction is concerned, Gujarat Model is very much pronounced in Nepal. In regards to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and UNDP collaboration, it was an innovative and important in wide-ranging partnership with a number of Civil Societies Organizations (CSOs) to the UNDP programme was important in Gujarat. It is said that the evolution of the UNDP partnership with Abhiyan, based in Kachch, the district most affected by the earthquake, is an illustrative example of the wide-ranging nature of CSO-UNDP collaboration. As a coordinating umbrella organization, it has sponsored and set up earthquake rehabilitation supportcentres (also known as setus), which are village level information and coordination units. Abhiyan has directed its collective efforts toward facilitating the implementation of people-controlled, equitable rehabilitation policies and creating transparent mechanisms for judicious use of resources. The network believes that the biggest challenge facing post-quake Kachch is to ensure that the massive funds that have poured in for relief, reconstruction and long-term rejuvenation do not increase dependence on external resources. As far as reconstruction is concerned, Gujarat Model is very much pronounced in Nepal. In regards to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and UNDP collaboration, it was an innovative and important in wide-ranging partnership with a number of Civil Societies Organizations (CSOs) to the UNDP programme was important in Gujarat. It is said that the evolution of the UNDP partnership with Abhiyan, based in Kachch, the district most affected by the earthquake, is an illustrative example of the wide-ranging nature of CSO-UNDP collaboration. As a coordinating umbrella organization, it has sponsored and set up earthquake rehabilitation supportcentres (also known as setus), which are village level information and coordination units. Abhiyan has directed its collective efforts toward facilitating the implementation of people-controlled, equitable rehabilitation policies and creating transparent mechanisms for judicious use of resources. The network believes that the biggest challenge facing post-quake Kachch is to ensure that the massive funds that have poured in for relief, reconstruction and long-term rejuvenation do not increase dependence on external resources.

labourer has gone up with youth already left the country for foreign employment. The wage of a skilled one is even higher. People are interested to know about technologies for building earthquake-resistant houses.

Observation and findings: Community people are not satisfied with the government in earthquake response (relief support, financial support unclear government plans and reconstruction process). They are waiting for government support to rebuild or retrofit their houses for months.

On prolonged reconstruction of houses locals argue:

We displaced people must get resettled in our original place at the earliest since we donot want to occupy paddy land and even private and community forest where we can graze our cattle. The identity card distribution must be strongly taken care, for example, if one house is completely damage, the affected land owner should get only one ID card. It seems to be late for reconstruction work, argued locals..

“If the government provides us the house designs, we will borrow loans and build houses ourselves.”

Even people who have money are unable to build house because they don't know what kinds of houses to build.

All members participated in FGDs had lost their houses in the earthquake. Most of the houses were destroyed because they were built using only stone and mud in very weak manner.

Sixty-three year old Gyan Bahadur Kunwar, is a farmer in Mathlo Sikhar-8 Gorkha. He has two sons, three daughters and a wife. Both sons have separated and daughters have already left the house after getting married. After the earthquake Kunwar is taking shelter with his wife, Sita at temporary shelter.

It was about a minute difference they were out of the house, so they believed that they got re-birth in life.

Kunwar complained that living under tarpaulin is not good, since it is cold during the night and hot during the day where they need warm during night and cool in the day time. For Mr. Kunwar big anxiety is to get rid aftershocks and many other problems. Now, they need a safer house where they can spend rest of the life in a peaceful manner. So, he great passion is growing in his home; to build a earthquake resilience small hut where they get the peace. However, he does not have any idea how earthquake proof house can be built since he doesn't have any knowledge and skills about it.

It is really pathetic situation, since affected people have a hope they nurtured since the state made a policy to provide Rs 200000. Those households whose house is completely damaged are entitled to get that support as different media reported, but no states authority is found accountable at district level. There is an interesting dichotomy observed at field: One doesn't know about the State, lack of knowledge, so felt nothing the government provides such a support, so don't have any hope; and second does know about the government and its declaration that government would provide us a support, so they are waiting/ hoping to get, and argue that government must provide them. Both are seemed to be frustrated but both don't have any alternative but to wait to get out of this crisis. During the interaction program locals opined their views as follow:

Although we don't know about what sorts of policy and programs related to reconstruction are being formulation we have heard that government will provide each of us two lakh rupees for rebuilding houses. Government has not given anything yet. It would be nice, if government provide us bit more money to support us to build our house. In regards to the relief materials in the name of quake-affected communities, very few we know about different groups support us at this very critical moment. But the government and other agencies must support us providing foods and clothes along with house building materials and other kinds.

Agricultural assistance

Rice is the primary need in present context. Also, there is shortage of other food products. Currently, it is the time to store harvest (Anna Bhitryaune), which has saved people from complete-famine. However, because of the earthquake, this year people could not cultivate in time. A huge number of seeds and food products got destroyed along with the houses. Moreover, rainfall was very scarce this year, which decreased the quality and quantity of production. Thus, people are very much worried for the coming year and need agricultural assistance.

Observation and findings:

Most people have opined that government and concerned authorities should come forward with entirely different package of plans and policies to deal with the messy agricultural situation right now.

Most quake-victims are facing the scarcity of seeds and fertilizers. People are not able to give attention to their farms and lands as they use to do previously. Because of the loss of animals, people are not able to make compost manure also. Unexpected changes in the weather have made the situation worse. People are worried that the production in next year is going to be very low.

Unsatisfactory relief distribution

People managed the urgent crisis through relief program of earthquake. Many government and non-government organizations provided relief during the earthquakes. However, the relief program was not very satisfactory. To be precise, the relief was not proportionate in terms of needs of the people. Communities in access to road facilities or residing nearby road were frequently provided the relief whereas communities residing in a more rural locality received only few relief facilities.

People have expectations with both government and non-government organizations especially because many organizations, leaders and government representatives have visited the affected district during earthquake and have expresses their commitment to help the people of the

locality. Including both old and new, and government and non-government organizations, more than 100 organizations have visited those districts.

Observation and findings: Relief support was not proportionate in terms of needs of people.

Due to lack of the VDC wise detail records on damage caused by the earthquake, in some affected areas, opportunistic individuals and some well-connected groups were able to accumulate more relief meant for quake-victims.

According to the key informants, duplication of victims and relief materials should be strictly avoided. Relief and advocacy programs should be conducted by first doing a proper survey of needs of people. There are few organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, which are working to address the concerns of the people. However, there has been no effective result. Duplication, problems in site selection, non-proportional distributions etc are the major drawbacks of non-governmental organizations. One door policy of government has also not been implemented properly. There is necessity of co-ordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations. Therefore, people are expecting the future relief programs to be distributed in need based and proportionate manner.

Thami communities from Dolakha expressed their feelings regarding relief in this way

“At the beginning the relief materials did not reach up to our village. But later, under the guidance of the municipality the materials like rice, pulse, and tent and zinc sheet came to the village. The condition was very worse in the beginning but later we got a camp for 10/12 families. So, we felt a bit relieved.”

Thami community people expressed of having obtained the relief materials without any kind of discrimination. They have similar economic and social status in the village. All have the sense to be helpful to one another. There is mutual understanding in the community. All the community members got equal share of goods. It is seen that the people of this community unite and get together while demanding for support packages.



Human Rights Agenda in Disaster

A fight for existence: Right to Live

There were massive needs for proper shelter and insufficient supply of tents, leading to overcrowding in the temporary shelters. A huge number of earthquake survivors were sheltered under a single tent in most districts where possibility of infection of contagious diseases was high. The authorities were also not responding properly to the victims' safety concerns regarding natural hazards, animal or reptile attacks, diseases, sexual violence and theft.

There was slim chance of affected people returning to their original places in near future as the whole areas trembled with each tremor. A firm and assertive plan didn't come from state's side for relocation of the displaced people, compelling them to spend each day in despair. No proper initiatives were taken in heed along with suggestions and advices from experts and voices of the people were turned to deaf ears. It was suggested that plain and stable public land can be utilized to settle the displaced people.

Observation and Finding: *The state completely failed to fulfill its obligation to respect and protect the basic human rights of the affected families*

The earthquake survivors found themselves in the midst of a fight for their rights before they had time to mourn their losses. Locals complained about government's lack of responsibility towards respecting, fulfilling and protecting their basic human rights. They have been spending lives with anguish and frustration waiting long for their government to understand their

severity and address their problems. Participants from Newaar communities from Shankhu, Kathmandu and women from Nuwakot shared their hardship in FGD.

"We waited for the Dashain, Tihar and government's policy for reconstruction, but our wait has gone in vain as the problems are further aggravating rather than being addressed in time."

However, even in the presence of the government the genuine choices and people's right to choose proper rehabilitation and initiation for building houses was found to be completely ignored. No efforts were made to identify the local traditional technologies and locally available resources for reconstruction.

The unofficial blockade imposed by Indian states on Nepal disagreeing some provision of newly adopted constitution added woes to the plummeting humanitarian crisis. According to the central member of the All Nepal Peasants' Federation in Dhading,

"The blockade which hindered the supply of fuel and daily essentials coming through Indian border affected health camps and the programmes aimed at rehabilitating the quake affected people."

Safety Concerns of the Affected

The environment of the temporary shelters and tents were found unsuitable for women and children. Their vulnerability is exposed in temporary shelter and camps; fast arriving winter season, persisting trauma, grieves of losses along with increment in domestic violence and

violence against women have further plunged their situations to new low. There was a rise in mobility from the human traffickers in most of the affected districts.

Observation and findings: *Trauma, cold and lack of proper health services further testing the affected communities*

In many places such as in Dolakha, children were identified with various kinds of diseases due to extreme cold. Most of the children were found malnourished partly because of the frequent aftershocks. They were anxious and had to run away and thus could not get adequate foods. The children still hesitate to go to school due to fear psyche.

Gayatri Khatiwada, woman activist from Dhading shared that the reconstruction plan needs to make the houses senior citizens, women and children, PWDs friendly in terms of kitchen, bed rooms, toilets and passages. Women have been found victimized due to uterus prolapse and the cause is the unnecessary burdens created due to impractical and traditional settings of the households.

According to the FGD participants from Dolakha,

“Female members staying in tents have the further problems at the time of menstruation. Similarly, the recently child bearing women are deprived of nutritious food. The pregnant women have the trouble to run away at the time of aftershocks. The pregnant women are scared a lot because at the time of earthquake the foetus might fall from womb of mother before the time [problem of stillbirth]. The single women mentioned that they alone have to take the responsibility in the house.”

Senior citizens, pregnant and women in delivery with their babies and children have been further victimized by the cold weather. According to the FGD participants from Thami community in Dolakha, “It gets very cold in tents. So, children and old people suffer the most.” The identified single women in the same district said, “We have to manage everything ourselves being helpless.” One of the senior citizens from Dolakha added, “I am unable to walk in normal manner after the earthquake. I cannot move out of this tent and getting problem to go to toilet. The dew drops fall from roof tins and have to be completely wet. “Now I am suffering from headache, inflammation of legs and hands and also laziness.” Some other senior citizens expressed that life became miserable while staying in tents because of back pain, headache and pneumonia. Locals complained they were not to walk and go to toilet.



Survivors' Right to Information

The rights to information and expression are fundamental human rights. Access to information is essential in the aftermath of a disaster to provide watchdog oversight over the post-quake recovery and reconstruction process. The earthquake victims were totally unaware of critical information about government decisions, distribution of relief packages and supports. Most of the remote areas have high illiteracy rate, however common communication methods like local radio broadcasting were not properly utilized to understand the concerns and needs of rural communities affected by the earthquake.

Observation and findings: *The earthquake victims were totally unaware of critical information about government decisions and supports*

Key informants from Gorkha have raised the questions regarding loopholes of reconstruction in media, public and meeting with concerned agencies. However, issues have not been addressed properly. Victim's demands and voices for reconstruction and rebuilding were ignored whereas critical information sharing was always ignored. Some cases of fake victims were broadcasted in radios but substantive evidences were not made public.

Accountable and transparent government

It is the responsibility of the government to be accountable to the people and transparent while working during crisis period. Contrary to this, the government remained helpless in crisis while VDC offices were running without secretaries. VDC offices did not have adequate and up-to-date information about relief and rescue operations and efforts made to rebuilding houses from government side. It was also unclear who would register the victims and issue earthquake victim ID required for the effective relief distribution. Even as government called all-party mechanism to be mobilized for effective relief distribution no local leaders were not motivated to get involved in such mechanism due to lack of strong monitoring mechanism.

Observation and findings

The needs and grievances of locals varied from areas they settled in but none of their voices are still taken any heed by the state. The locals accused the administration for not prioritizing genuine needs and choices while rebuilding quake destroyed houses. Inclusive participation of local communities in Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) and the distribution process of resource or relief were completely ignored. On the other hand it was found that representation of underprivileged and marginalized communities was almost nil while forming DDRC and VDRC.

Multi-stakeholders Coordination and Collaboration

The delay in establishing NRA delayed in beginning reconstruction campaign. However, Building construction Department is making measures for housing and other infrastructures to be built. Further, District Development Committee (DDC) is making plan to distribute 2 Lakh rupees to affected community in four installments.

Generally, building codes are prepared by central government but any single model may not be applicable in all places. For example, building code, which is applied in the house constructed in Tarai area may not be applicable while constructing house in the hill. At an interaction in Gorkha districts, participants emphasized to mandate local bodies for developing the building codes as per local necessity. They opined of not suggesting only RCC building but also building made with mud and stone.

In Gorkha district, reconstruction policy was not clear. Local authorities were confused over autonomy of district disaster response committee (DDRC). Lack of financial resources, coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders and landless problem were posing a serious threat to post-earthquake reconstruction in future.



Conclusion, Findings and Recommendations

Conclusions

Nepal experiences number of earthquakes since 1255 AD, among them the mega earthquake occurred in 1934, and the latest one 2015; had made an unprecedented impacts on socio-economic and political sphere of Nepalese population. Nepal lies in the Central Himalaya, underneath of this, there are two tectonic plates-Indian and Uresian (Tibetan), are in collision and Uresian plate is moving towards north 2 centimeter every year. No one can imagine the consequences of it, however, many geologists and scientists are estimating its hazards in terms of human loss and physical damages. Nepal is (should be declared) earthquake prone country, so a regular study and impart of knowledge at community level is essentially important.

PDNA (2015) has carried out a very important study in a very short and chaotic environment with using internally standard methodology; that must be taken as foundation to understand the physical damages, economic loss, human loss and injuries. However, PDNA paid less attention towards the coping capacity and strategy of the society. To estimate the damage and loss give us an ample knowledge about disaster induced statistics, but following the loss, we need to develop our own strategies that how to bring better back.

There are some discrepancies cropped up whether damage and loss of life are fatal events one has to bear or preventable if timely measures taken by us. People who are struggling for survival might think that natural disasters

are nothing more than a fatal event and this is true, but what about the experiences human being have made over the years, and how to use those experiences or knowledge other groups have applied effectively in Nepalese context. So, disaster and its effects and consequences need to be taken as a part of human knowledge, and preparedness for possible threats we have to encounter at any time and at any place should be nurtured within us. Thus land use for house building or cultivation, food we produced for survival and stored at safer place is essentially important to know.

The collected facts during this second phase monitoring indicate the serious lack of coordination among the government authorities for ensuring human dignity of the affected communities, families and individuals indicating apex body's urgent action for smooth coordination for reconstruction. Similarly, lack of coordination with the non-government organisations has created problems to identify who does what in the affected areas. As a result, outreach of both the government and non-government sectors to the needy communities/affected people is the matter of concern. In many places, the affected communities have said, "Till now no one has come there to teach them how to build the houses in their community."

Collected data have further justified the increasing trend of violence against women in the temporary shelter or camps. In order to address this, women friendly reconstruction plan is the need of the hour. Similarly, physically challenged

women and children have been further victimized during the cold winter indicating an urgent need to rehabilitate these communities in a secure and safe place. In many places, children are still deprived of education, who fear entering the almost damaged or ruined buildings to resume their studies.

Issues of caste-based untouchability is more precarious than others as they are not even allowed to leave the places of vulnerability and mixed up with other communities in temporary shelter or camp. Furthermore, the mechanisms created so far in order to address the rehabilitation and reconstruction in the local level are not inclusive. As for example, there are virtually no representation authorities from Dalit communities.

One of the main and foremost authorities from the government side that are the VDC secretaries themselves have been found overloaded with the added burden due to earthquake. These secretaries are only the established local bodies responsible for over 30 ministerial tasks from the Singha Durbar, one of the bitter realities how Nepal's plans, policies and programmes have been further centralized despite big talks of the federalization through constitution and related laws. The rehabilitation and reconstruction issues are fallen under the quagmire of the overloaded responsibilities of the VDCs and municipalities of Nepal.

Media's role is vital for the effective and coordinated reconstruction. News value and importance of transmitting news is the matter connected with the reconstruction at this hour of crisis. Mainly people at the local level have given suggestion that media needs to be reflected as critical trying to be solution oriented as possible, rather than creating problems to the societies.

Finally, some good initiations by the government have been remarkable to fulfilling the needs of the affected communities such as distributing package based money, provisioning loan for them to rebuild houses. However, mechanisms to ensure transparency in fair distribution,

ensuring that no affected communities, persons or survivors is left out is the major concern put forth by the stakeholders mainly during the interactions in the district level. Stakeholders have also serious concern over the degrading environmental situation in the name of reconstruction. In order to overcome those utilizing local resources, knowledge and techniques is far better and more sustainable from the perspective of ownership rather than importing them from outside. Such an idea is sure to add brick for increased resistance capacity of the local communities

Findings

- The government completely failed to fulfill its obligation to respect and protect the basic human rights of the affected families. A firm and assertive plan didn't come from state's side for relocation of the displaced, compelling the victims to spend each day in despair.
- Malpractice has escalated due to the vacuum in the local governance by elected representatives which triggered nepotism and abuse of authority during the relief distribution
- The earthquake victims were totally unaware of critical information about government decisions and supports. Even people who have money are unable to build house because they don't know what kinds of houses to build. They are waiting for government support to rebuild, repair or retrofit their home.
- Common shelter for all family members has created various difficulties for women and girls. Shelter and safety related issues remain the biggest concern for communities. Trauma, cold and lack of proper health services further testing the affected communities.
- Affected people patiently waited but in vain as they didn't receive any support from the government when needed to build basic shelter to pass the winter season.
- The earthquake exacerbated the problems faced by the agriculture dependent communities, due to earthquake and subsequent landslides most of the irrigation systems have been destroyed and arable land is scarce that has affected to agricultural production leaving poor families even more vulnerable affecting their livelihoods.
- Landless people suffered the worse than those owning land. Hundreds of homeless people

are occupying the vacant lands. Because of the safety concern they are not willing to return to their home lands.

- There is acute shortage of water as the water sources dried up after earthquake. Exploitation and improper usages of natural resources brought pressure on environment and its components.
- Level of frustration and disappointment of earthquake affected population is increasing towards government. Lack of co-ordination is seen between the government and local communities. In many structures such as DDRC and VDRC there is no representation from underprivileged and marginalized communities.

Recommendations

- Urgent measures adopt to protect women and girls residing in the camps and temporary shelters from gender based violence by strengthening prevention, monitoring and referral systems to encourage the reporting of GBC cases and the provision of counselling.
- The government should urgently and clearly communicate the appropriate models and materials for earthquake-resistant houses, and how and when funding can be accessed. Common communication methods like local radio broadcasting need to be properly utilized to aware the communities on government plans and programmes.
- Strengthen meaningful representation of women and men from excluded groups in district structures including District Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and other committees and ensure at least 33 percent representatives in those committees.
- Ensure that food security and livelihoods recovery is prioritised and integrated with

post disaster recovery framework. Priority should be given to repair and maintenance of damaged irrigation systems before the upcoming planting seasons.

- A special plan targeting landless people need to be developed that ensure their access to land where they can build shelters.
- Housing reconstruction programme must immediately start. It is not possible for people to remain in insubstantial and inappropriate temporary accommodation for an extended period of time without there being long-term consequences at their personal health.

Other Policy recommendations

- Government must take all necessary measures to ensure the rights guarantee on the Constitution to live a life of with human dignity and free of discrimination.
- Decentralisation of power and authorities is key to check corruption and nepotism and hence its imperative that local elections are held as early as possible.
- Ensure that Disaster Risk Reduction is mainstreamed into reconstruction plans and processes and ensure that Building Codes are implemented and enforced.
- The government should urgently commission geological surveys in the earthquake affected districts and later to others remaining districts. Safe areas and risky and vulnerable areas for human settlement need to be identified and declared.
- The government must adopt land Use Act and enforce it in practice.

Annexes

HAMI

Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative (HAMI), formed on 11th May 2015 is the convergence of the CSOs working particularly with the right holders works as emergency aid management watchdog by creating its linkages with different national and international arenas so as to obtain and validate recognition from state and non-state actors in the national level as well as by the international communities, it monitors the attempts and activities made by the government, international communities, non-government and private sectors through continuous efforts of evidences based advocacy and lobby. Human Rights Alliance is the secretariat of HAMI.

HAMI Initiators

Organisations	Areas of Involvement
National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice Nepal (Human Rights Alliance)	Overall protection and promotion of human rights
Jagaran Media Centre (JMC)	Discrimination (Caste/Ethnicity, Class and Gender)
Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC Nepal)	Mainstreaming human rights based development approach (Relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction - 3R)
Rural Women Creative Forum (RWCF)	Rural women and children
Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN)	Senior citizens
Jagriti Children and Youth Concern Nepal (JCYCN)	Youth and children
Blue Diamond Society (BDS)	LGBTI/MSM
Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB Nepal)	Dissemination of community issues, and their monitoring
The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasting (AMARC - Asia Pacific)	Internationalisation of the issues and their monitoring
Centre for Ethnic and Alternative Development Studies (CEADS)	Indigenous nationalities
SOLVE Nepal	Relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction (linkage with micro-finance)
Federations, Alliances: NGO Federation of Nepal Dalit NGO Federation (DNF), Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), and Federation of Community Forest Users' Group Nepal (FECOFUN) Other federations COCAP RtFN	Policy Advocacy

Jagaran Nepal

Established in 2002, Jagaran Nepal a nongovernmental organization believes in empowering women and marginalized communities for their increased participation in decision making process for ensuring women right, sustainable peace and governance. Jagaran Nepal envisages a society with prosperity, equality and social justice.

Monitoring Team

SN	Name of Team Leaders	Districts	Local Resource Person (LRPS)
1	Govinda Chhantyal	Nuwakot	Yam Kumar Khati Chettri
2	Gorakh Bogati	Rasuwa	Hem Nath Khatiwada
3	Subash Khatiwada	Dhading	Navaraj Chathkauli
4	Naren Khatiwada	Gorkha	Kishor Jung Thapa
5	Naresh Karki	Sindhupalchok	Khil Bahadur Shrestha
6	Pratigya Neupane	Dolakha	Hom Pathak
7	Samip Ghimire	Valley	

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End Notes

ⁱhttps://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/nepal_earthquake_2015_revised_flash_appeal_draft_as_of_11june_10h.pdf (Retrieved 15 February 2016).

ⁱⁱ They are Bhaktapur, Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Kathmandu, Kavre, Lalitpur, Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, Sindhuli, and Sindhupalchok.

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Disaster%20Risk%20Management%20in%20South%20Asia%20-%20A%20Regional%20Overview.pdf> (Retrieved 15 February 2016).

^{iv}<http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/nep143046.pdf> (Retrieved 15 February 2016).

^v**The Natural Calamity (Relief) Act, 1982**, is the first Act that recognizes earthquake, fire, storm, flood, landslide, heavy rainfall, drought, famine and epidemics as disasters.

^{vi}**NSDRM** has identified five priorities to be forwarded under the Nepal Flagship program for immediate action: 1) School and Hospital Safety – Structural and Non-structural Aspects of Making Schools and Hospitals Earthquake Resilient; 2) Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacity; 3) Flood Management in the Koshi River Basin; 4) Integrated Community Disaster Risk Management Program; and 5) Policy/Institutional Support for Disaster Risk Management.

^{vii}The **CNDRC** is a 36-member committee chaired by Hon. Home Minister which coordinates all the central level disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts and directs the district and local committees on all matters related to relief and rehabilitation works, supplies, etc.

^{viii}The Government of Nepal has formulated the Nepal **National Building Code (NBC)**, 1993 targeting safer construction practices across the nation. The Municipal and VDC authorities are identified as key implementers of the code with technical support from the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction.

^{ix}The Building Act and Regulations and the Building Code provide the legal framework for implementation by local government, especially in urban areas.

^xThe main aim of the **LDRMP guideline** is to mainstream disaster management into local sector's development areas by mobilizing local resources and ensuring local community participation following bottom-up approach.

^{xi}The Ministry of Home Affairs has formulated **District Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Guideline** under the guidance of CNDRC aimed at formulating emergency preparedness for response at all districts. The DPRP piloting process was started in 2007 as a contingency plan for effective response under the chair of the Chief District Officer.

^{xii}The **NDRF** includes actions to be taken to save life and property, maintain law and order, care for sick, injured and vulnerable people, provide essential services (lifeline utilities, food, shelter, public information and media), and protect public property immediately after the onset of any disaster.

^{xiii}The Key role of **NRRC** is to support the government in identifying the program areas on disaster management, resource mobilization and its implementation.

Acronyms

CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DPRP	Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HAMI	Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
LDRMP	Local Disaster Risk Management Planning
MRT	Mandatory Rules of Thumb
NBC	National Building Code
NDRF	National Disaster Response Framework
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
NRRC	Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium
NSDRM	National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster risk Reduction
VDC	Village Development Committee

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