



Life After Devastation: Findings from the ground

AUGUST 2016

Message from HAMI Convener

This report “**Life after Devastation: Findings from the Ground**” is a testimony of the life after the major disasters in Nepal. We thank our consultant Mr. Manoj Pandey who rigorously worked to provide insight and expertise that greatly helped to develop this report. These testimonies would not have been possible without his sincere dedication in a provided limited time frame.

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This report is amongst the rare document that depicts the picture from the major disasters in Nepal that took place in decade (2008-2016). Hence, this can be a significant source for the government, nongovernmental offices and concerned stakeholders in understanding the updated post-disaster context of Nepal and this further helps to shape and strengthen policies for the effective humanitarian support in future.

Thank you

Min Bahadur Shahi

Convener, HAMI

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Summary

Disasters have inflicted pain, trauma and unimaginable losses in thousands of families throughout the country. Inadequate and slow recovery and reconstruction of survivors have further deepened the pain and left families with uncertainty. Often these are demonstrated as frustrations and anger against the government by the disaster survivors.

This report is a compilation of stories of disaster survivors of 2008 Koshi flood, mid –western floods in 2014, Jure land slide in 2014 and earthquake 2015. Altogether, 11 cases are documented from the field visit conducted in 9 districts, including Banke, Bardiya, Dolakha, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sunsari, Saptari, Sindhupalchowk and Surkhet.

These cases provide evidence that even after years of disaster, survivors continue to live in temporary shelters made of iron sheets. They seriously lack basic services like electricity, water, sanitation, education and health. In many cases, living in temporary shelters for years has deteriorated health of family members, especially elderly, children and pregnant and lactating mothers. Education of children has degraded. In some cases children discontinue schooling to share the burden to earn extra income for the family. Safety and security of women and girls is a major concern as they are living in camps and shared rooms. Apart from tangible impacts there also exists a tremendous psychological aftermaths which cannot be quantified.

The major findings of the report are summarized in the following points below.

- Nepal has undertaken several disaster rescue operations, mainly on floods, earthquake and landslides. However, such operations have not much addressed the sufferings of the disaster survivors. The rescue, relief and recovery initiatives are intertwined with complex political influence, low community participation and dissatisfaction among the population.
- The effort made from the government seems inadequate in protecting the rights and dignity of disaster survivors. Although, few initiatives have been taken to relocate flood affected families, it has still not been effective due to the lack of systematic planning and participation of the communities.
- It is increasingly difficult to live in temporary camps especially for elderly people, women and children as it lacks proper sanitation, healthcare, water supplies. Furthermore, lives inside the shelters are challenged by the unfavourable weather conditions.
- Delay and inadequate recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of disaster survivors haven't left them in uncertainty, disappointments and with frustrations.
- The sustainable recovery, reconstruction, reintegration and resettlement are jeopardized by the ineffective local governance, political interest, and in some cases, due to the growing demands of the affected communities.
- Disaster survivors' required adequate support to revive their livelihoods. Loss of arable lands and business after disaster left many families struggling to regain their livelihoods and income. This has also ended up in relying menial works such as crushing stone to earn extra income to feed the family.
- Majority of the affected families are unaware about the essential government supports, policies and decisions. The families are oblivious about the requirements and documentations to receive the relief support, subsidies and support amount.

1 Introduction

1.1 Disaster in Context

For centuries, Nepal is witnessing increasing number of losses and casualties from several types of natural and human induced disasters such as floods, landslides, fires, epidemics, glacier lakes outburst floods (GLOFs), thunderbolts, earthquake and so on. This makes Nepal, one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. Among all the disasters, epidemics, floods, landslides, fires are the most recurrent and earthquake is the most intensive disaster. (*The Government of Nepal, 2015*)

Along the period from 2008 to 2015, , Nepal coped with number of major disasters such as the Koshi flood in 2008, series of avalanches in the mountains, floods in western Nepal in 2014, the landslide in Jure, Sindhupalchowk in 2014 and the devastating earthquake that sabotaged 31 districts in central Nepal.

The Koshi flood in 2008 had left estimated 50,000 people homeless and other several thousands in Indian Territory. According to agriculture ministry officials of Nepal, around NPR 300 million rupees (US\$4.3 million) worth of crops, mainly paddy, were being lost in the Koshi flood alone. Farmers in the affected areas lost their vegetable fields, fisheries and crops such as banana and sugarcane. (Adhikary, 2008). The disaster survivors of Sunsari district still felt trauma when putting the incident in words.

Furthermore, landslide in Sunkoshi River in August 2014 in Jure, Sindhupalchowk district killed 156 people, is the worst landslide in Nepal. The landslide blocked Sunkoshi River creating a high dam across it. The landslide-dammed lake has created havoc amongst the local residents and people living in the downstream and upstream riverside areas.

In the same year, heavy rain between 14th and 16th August 2014 caused massive floods and landslides in 18 districts in western Nepal. It is estimated that a total of 34,760 families (173,800 people) have been affected, of which 5,936 families (29,680 people) are displaced, more than 150 people lost their lives and several injured. Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet and Kalikot were the worst affected districts.ii.

The devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake of 2015 (and its aftershocks) is the worst natural disaster that Nepal faced in more than 80 years. It killed nearly 9,000 people and 22,000 were injured in the incident. The earthquake fully destroyed more than half a million houses and 270,000 houses were partially damaged leaving tens of thousands of people rendered homeless. Infrastructure including schools, health facilities, roads, temples and heritage sites have been fully damaged or destroyed.iii. It is estimated that approximately 8 million populations are directly affected from the earthquake, out of which 1.1 million children and 2.8 million populations were in need of urgent assistance.iv.

The aforementioned disasters have retarded economic development of Nepal over the last decade. Millions of populations have turned homeless; thousands of acres of land are turned to river banks and damaged infrastructures and transportation routes. Apart from the tangible losses, the psychological impact on the affected families and the impact of the disasters in socio-cultural fabrics is huge and not measurable.

Disasters are inevitable human means are able to control them in advance. However, it is distressful to see the wretched lives of affected families even after the years of disaster. Even after years, majority of disaster survivors are still living under temporary shelters without proper sanitation, education, nutrition and healthcare.

1.2 .Objectives and Scope and Relevance of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the present status of survivors hit by major disasters in Nepal. The cases are published and are shared with wider audience to contribute on discourse to humanitarian accountability aimed at contributing protect the rights of survivors.

The scope of this assignment is apparent as the government has been putting its effort to support the relief and recovery process for the disaster survivors. This research report is assigned to the following extent.

- Case studies collection to assess the present situation of the disaster survivors in the selected areas of Nepal.
- Produce a standard compilation of cases and analyse gaps on humanitarian assistance for addressing the rights of disaster survivors. Drawing the findings and recommendations the key stakeholder dialogues and participant interviews of the disaster survivors.

1.3.Limitation of the study

In undertaking the assignment, the following limitations of the study were noted:

Time and resource constraints: Due to the time constraint field works were shortened to the extent possible. Similarly the case studies were also limited to 11 which might not represent all the cases for the extensive size of disaster survivors population.

Some families hesitated to respond clearly: There are/were several consultations, research and interviews taking place with the affected population, as a result, they were anxious in responding their situation to the outsiders as no significant initiatives had been taken to support their miserable condition.

1.4. Methodology of the Study

This study was conducted using a mixed method approach. The survey tools used in the assignment consisted of unstructured questionnaire with the disaster survivors, Key Informant Interview (KII), and Key Stakeholders Dialogue (KSD).

- The questionnaires for this survey were designed to capture the current situation of disaster affected population. See Annex 1 for the framework of questionnaires

In addition, comprehensive checklists were also developed for KIIs and KSDs. These discussions were intended to explain and support the findings obtained from the quantitative survey.

For the purpose of this study, the study areas were divided into three clusters. Following table illustrates the study areas and the clusters categorized for the study purpose.

Table 1: Clusters and Areas of Study

Clusters	Cluster I	Cluster II	Cluster III
Disasters	Flood (Flood in Western Nepal 2014, Koshi Barrage flood 2008 and Bhotekoshi Flood 2016)	Flood and Landslide (Landslide and Flood in Jure, Sindhupalchowk in 2014)	Earthquake (Devastating earthquake and its aftershocks in 2015)
Area of Study	Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Sunsari, Saptari, Sindhupalchowk	Jure, Sindhupalchowk	Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dolakha

2. Case stories

This section explores the present situation of the disaster survivors, the condition of their settlement, level of income, relief and recovery support received through case stories.

Life after Floods



Figure 1: Shelter of flood affected community in Girighat, Surkhet

Girighat temporary shelter camp lies beside the highway in a community forest in Hariharpur VDC, Surkhet. Approximately, 174 families relocated mostly from ward no 1,3,4,5,9 are residing in the camp after their village got flooded in 2014. Government has decided to provide NPR. 50,000 per family to buy land and additional NPR. 75,000 to rebuild home. They think that the allocated money is not enough, either to buy a land or to build a new house.

“It is funny that government has allocated NPR. 50,000 per family to buy a new land. Can anyone buy land for that price? It is also impossible to build home at NPR. 75,000. It seems that the government is playing with our sentiments and pain”- Narendra Bahadur KC, secretary Girighat temporary shelter struggle committee.

Although, almost half of the families received the cash to buy a land, very few of them spent the money for the intended purpose. The victims have received immediate cash support from the government that would cover food for around 10 days and additional NPR. 5000 per family was provided during the Dashain festival. Apart from the cash, government distributed essential food supplies for almost two weeks. However, NGOs have been running the programmes in trauma healing, sanitation, healthcare and reducing violence against women since the initial days. It was seen that the NGOs played an important role in distribution of relief materials in the aftermath of the disaster.

Apart from Girighat camp, there are few other temporary shelter camps in Surkhet where the flood victims of 2014 are living.

Case Study 1: Traumatized family living in camp with no place to go



Figure 2: Saha Bahadur Khadka with his granddaughter

Saha Bahadur Khadka, 68, living in a temporary shelter with 7 members of his family in Girighat temporary camp, Haripur VDC, Surkhet survived the flood after two days of staying on a tree. He had broken 5 of his ribs and had gone through trauma and mental disorders. He had also lost his livestock and land in the 2014 flood. He told that the shelter where he is living is in the middle of the jungle and is inappropriate for settlement. Humid temperature and lack of proper sanitation has made it more difficult. He is also worried about the quality of education for his grandchildren. Like other members of his family, Khadka crushes stones to earn for his family.

“I wish to go back to my community and live my remaining life there but it is not possible as we have no land left and no safety measures to avoid similar floods in the future”, Mr. Khadka shared.

Case Study 2: Living a lonely life



Figure 3: Nandakali Nepali sharing her tragic memories from the devastating flood.

Nandakali Nepali from Girighat camp, Surkhet; shared her tragic memories from the devastating flood. She lost her husband, son, daughter in law and a grandson in the flood and wished that the government took timely actions for sustainable rehabilitation and shelter. She further expressed about the negative impact on her health from crushing the stones, which is the only option available to earn for her living. Nandakali received series of counseling from the NGOs that helped her to recover from the depression caused by the tragedy.

“There’s no one left in my family, so I can’t go back to the original community as it reminds me of everything. I don’t have any land, home or sense of safety and security. I don’t need money; I just want government to provide me a land in a safe space to live” she demanded.



Figure 4: Shelter of flood affected families in Gulariya, Bardiya

There are 42 flood affected families who are living near Gulariya, Bardiya district in a temporary camp since last two years. The entire community was displaced from nearby village called Rampur Tapu. Like other families in Surkhet, they are living in a settlement with poor facilities for healthcare, sanitation and safety. The settlement usually got worst during monsoon.^v

Case Study 3: Uncertainty



Figure 5: Uncertain life

As the monsoon starts, the people of Holiya VDC, Banke are uncertain about their lives. They wait for the warning siren to escape from the possible floods. The whole community gets flooded every year. Harsa Kumari Bahun, 73, from Holiya-5, lives with 9 other family members. She shared, *“We always have to shift our location when the flood comes and return back to the same village after the normalcy.”* With this uncertainty, they have to rebuild their homes every year. Laxmi Kumari Mauriya, 12, is in grade 8. She feels that the flood every year has created negative impact in her education. She and her friends have to shift their school when they flee from their villages in safe locations. During this time, they feel neglected and bullied in the new school.



Figure 6: Koshi Barrage

Disaster survivors of west Kushaha, Haripur, Sripur, Laukahi, and Bokraha VDCs of Sunsari district are still demanding support from the government even after 8 years of the disaster.

According to District Administration Office (DAO) Sunsari, 7,500 families are directly affected from the 2008 flood and other several thousands are affected indirectly. Government categorized the affected land in terms of level of damages. Compensation amount of NPR.250,000 per bigha, NPR. 2 00,000 per bigha and NPR. 150,000 per bigha was distributed to affected families based on the degree of damage made by the flood.

Furthermore, 1400 landless families were identified, out of which only 235 families were relocated. The relocated families still find their settlement unsuitable as they have been facing wild elephant threats and as a result many have also left ^{vi}.

Case Study 4: Sand Everywhere



Figure 7: Shripur VDC: the ground turned into sand after the Koshi flood

The picture above shows the house of Roshni Khan in Shripur VDC, Sunsari district. Ms. Khan explained how her home compound, land and the entire place she could see from her eyes slowly turned into sand. For Khan and the villagers, it is difficult to even walk around with bare eyes as the sand got into their eyes and things got worse when there was a storm. Number of children with eye infections is increasing in the village. Khan recalled how her land was enough to feed rice for her family and sell the remaining yield. However, now they could only produce 'parwal'(pointed guard) and had to buy rice instead.

"The most productive land has now turned into a river bank. We can't grow rice anymore. The only crop we can grow is watermelon or pointed guard/green potato. (widely understood by the word 'Parwal' in Nepali)."-Bimala Devi Yadav-Farmer, Shripur VDC, Sunsari.

Case study 5: Triple whammy: Jure landslide, earthquake and the flood



Figure 8: Ramkaji Shrestha,-72 and Ganesh Maya Shrestha,-63 sharing their melancholy.

Ramkaji Shrestha-72 and Ganesh Maya Shrestha-63 who lost their only son in the earthquake in 2015, were living in a semi-permanent home in Barahbise, Sindhupalchowk. The house was made by their daughter and son-in-law after the earthquake. On 5th July 2016, the flood in Bhotekoshi river took away half of their land and home. The couple is now staying in a rented room nearby. Ramkaji Shrestha shared that they lacked financial sources to pay the rents and the land flooded by the river was the only portion they had as their property. The couple anticipated the immediate support from the government and non-governmental stakeholders.

Life after Earthquake



Figure 9: Children gather around in the open field of a damaged school in Sindhupalchowk

The case studies and consultations were made in Nuwakot, Rasuwa and Dolakha districts to explore the current situation of survivors of Nepal 2015 earthquake.

“People have lost their near dear ones, house, property, job and children’s education. It is a very difficult situation for the survivors but we are trying to keep their spirit up, hope alive and make them believe that one day their lives will return back to normal. Therefore, we are not only helping to build up their shelter but are also helping to build up their trust, hope, and courage for a peaceful life”. Deepak Poudel, a NGO activist from Rasuwa.

Case study 6: How long should we wait for the government?



Figure 10: Chewang Donwup Tamang at his kitchen

Chewang Donwup Tamang-65, a resident of Dhunche, Rasuwa lives with 6 of his family members including his wife, son, daughter in law and two grandsons. Donwup worked for 25 years in District Administration Office (DAO) as an office assistant; his son is currently working in Kathmandu as a laborer who is the sole bread earner of the family. Apart from this, they now own seven goats and a small land for their livelihood.

Donwup had lost his home including the cattle from the devastating earthquake. He had just finished building his house. It costed NPR 700,000 which he managed from a loan. All stored food grains had been spoiled and mixed in soil after the earthquake. He and his family survived on relief materials in the first month provided by various organizations and the government. Now, he is currently staying in a tent made out of corrugated iron sheets of the damaged house. He is worried about the health of his young grandson and his wife who is suffering from asthma and is scared that their health condition will get worse in the upcoming winter. He is also concerned about the loan that he had taken to build his previous house. He is in a constant fear of losing his only possession: the small portion of land and few cattle, if he fails to payback his loan on time. He doesn't know how much financial support, he is going to receive from the government and is also not sure if he is going to get it.

Moreover, the basic sanitation is another major concern for this family. The family somehow managed to make trench latrine which is covered by the plastic for an alternative to a wall. Donwup's daughter in law is giving birth to another child after next 3 -4 months and this will be another major challenge for them.

Expressing his frustration, he told, *"We have no government in Nepal. Where did the billions of dollars collected from other donor countries go? It's been 16 months and we are still living in the same traumatic life here. How long should we wait for the government to help us?"*

Like Donwup, many people in affected communities are seen to be constructing homes on their own.

Case study 7: Uncertain livelihoods after losing the occupation



Figure 11: Himal Bishwokarma with his family at his temporary rebuilt hut

Himal Bishwokarma, -32, was a well-known metal worker in his community before the earthquake. He is living with his four family members, a wife and two sons in Dhunche town. His business was going very well and he had just paid his loan to his neighbor that his father had taken ten years ago. His house was completely destroyed by the earthquake. Himal had lost his whole business, buffalos and goats, when his business collapsed. He still remembered those helpless days when he didn't have enough food to eat and tent to stay .

With the assistance from the several NGOs and government, Himal began to rebuild his house from the remaining iron sheets of previous house. Himal had collected NPR 35,000 till date from the government and some material from different NGOs. He had invested all the money for the maintenance of his tent to protect it from monsoon and winter season. He knew that he is going to get NPR 200,000 as a reconstruction grant but he was not sure when. Moreover, he had become frustrated with the delay in the reconstruction process as monsoon and winter were always a major challenge for him and his family. Himal and his family don't own the land, all his income came from his metal-works. With the disturbance in his business for six initial months, he is depended on the loans received from the neighbours.

His sons couldn't attend school for a year after the quake and his young son is still traumatized as he starts running and crying if he feels even a small shake. He angrily stated *"by this speed of delivery, government will take another 20 years to get our lives back to normal."*

Case study 8: Being a woman: daily lives of women and children under temporary infrastructures



Figure 12: Naradevi Pandey's earthquake victim identity card

Narandevi Pandey's belongs to a poor family and is a single mother living with her 18 year old daughter. Just a year before the quake; her family had managed loan to build a new house which got collapsed in the earthquake. She couldn't think of any option to pay back the loan in time. All grains were destroyed and mixed in the rubble; all her cattle had died. She also didn't own much land.

With the support from the local people,, she managed to make a tent made with steel-tin including plastic and some wood. The tent has only a room with two beds and few blankets distributed by international aid groups. A narrow space to the house served as a kitchen, where Narandevi, cooked on firewood. During the monsoon, she could hardly sleep without getting wet. Her husband could not surpass the winter. "Winter is the most challenging period for the people who are suffering from asthma, it is a challenge for me too", she said. Her husband died six months after the earthquake. The nighttime is particularly frightening for women and children. At night, she's scared about her safety. "The doors are weak, and anyone can break in." Though her daughter holds a school leaving certificate, she has decided to quit her education after her family couldn't support her further. As she needs to earn to support her mother, she has been looking for jobs.

The government had issued earthquake victim family identity cards, which would record the relief grants given to the survivors. With tears in her eyes she showed her identity card which was protected with two layers of plastic. If she loses it, she may not get anything from the government," Narandevi has been waiting for NPR. 200,000 from the government to rebuild their homes, and a reconstruction loan with little interest. She received 35,000 Nepalese rupees till date which she invested to fulfill her basic household needs. Narandevi said that her neighbors and she would regularly visit the local government office to ask if the financial help is happening soon. The last time they went was two months ago. She now gives up, because she knows the answer is always the same.

Case study 9: Post-disaster and its impact on education



Figure 13: Monika KC (12) at her school

Monika KC, 12, studies in 6th grade, in Buda Bhimsen Secondary school in Bhimeshwor Municipality-6, Dolakha. She commented that studying at home has become difficult for her after the earthquake, as her entire family had to share the temporary shelter that had only two rooms. *“I feel disturbed to go through books and homework”*, said Monika. The situation got worst whenever there was a heavy rainfall, as the sound of the clattering of the tin roof and the water leakage disturbed their night sleep. Head teacher, Mr. Rajan Karki added that the class performance of students after the disaster have also degraded. He further stated that one of the main reasons behind the poor result of the school leaving certificate (SLC) this year is the quality of living after the earthquake.

Life after Landslide Altogether, 10 families who survived from the Jure landslide were relocated in Nepal Orient Magnetite Colony in Khadichaur, Sindhupalchowk. The government provided NPR.40,000 per person who died in the disaster and later NPR. 100,000 for each affected families. The disaster survivor families in Jure were relocated in a comparatively descent colony where two family shared an apartment.

Case study 10: Struggle for livelihoods continues



Figure 14: Urmila Karki with one of her daughter (Ashika) telling their survival story.

Urmila Karki and her family (husband and two daughters) are the survivors of the Jure, Landslide in 2014. Government had relocated the survivors in Nepal Orient Magnetite Colony, Khadichowk; few kilometre south to the affected area. Two families shared one apartment. The Karki family lost 10 of their family members in the landslide. Her daughter Ashika (seen in the picture) shared that she is afraid to go to school as she lost many of her classmates.

Ms. Karki said, *"My daughters can't sleep at night specially when it's raining. The rain reminds us of that deadly night". The survivors of Jure landslide and floods are expecting their relocation and land from the government. Ms. Karki worried about their daily expenses as her husband's income was the only way to support the family. "Had there been some land, our life would have been much easier"* She added.

Case study 11: Memories of deceased family members



Figure 15: Binita Lama showing the pictures of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law

Binita Rana was in her cosmetic shop which was far from the village when the landslide happened. Luckily her son was with her but her husband, who was a driver, was out in work. Binita, her husband and their son are the only survivors from their family. They lost 18 of the family members and nearest relatives. In the picture above, Binita talked about her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. They could only manage to get the photographs of two of the deceased family members. Like other affected families, they were going through trauma. *“Every bad weather reminds me of that deadly night”*, said Binita.

The survivors of this particular disaster are struggling to manage their daily lives with limited income and resources. The main concern for the affected families is their resettlement. The survivors felt that the resettlement and recovery process for the landslide didn't seem complex compared to other flood and earthquake survivors as they were relatively less in number.

Reflections of Key Stakeholders

Consultations were organized with key stakeholders in Dolakha district, Sunsari district and Surkhet district to discuss about the present situation of disaster survivors and relief and recovery efforts undertaken till date. Consultations were organized in the presence of the government officials, civil society organizations, journalists and representatives of disaster survivors.

Discussions of the consultations were summarized in the points below.

- There are serious flaws in survivors data recorded for the relief and recovery support. Real victims families are not listed and others who don't need support are listed because of their power and political affiliations. This inconsistent and inaccurate data have created confusion in distribution of allocated support.

- There is no cumulative planning from the government for the post disaster management and preparedness. Local authorities are not capacitated to make immediate response and reconstruction.
- Visible communication and coordination gaps exist between the government and non-government organizations; as a result there is duplications in works. Similarly, there are communication gaps between the government agencies at the national, district and VDC levels. This has turned to be one of the important factors for delay in distribution of the assistance.
- Survivors are not aware about the important decisions of the government. They are unaware about other subsidies and supports that the government announced apart from the support amount.
- Human rights of the affected families, particularly women and children are completely ignored. Most of the families are still living in indecent conditions even after years of disaster. In Dolakha district, over 20 women who were raped and harassed after the earthquake were rescued. The temporary houses and collective stay has contributed for violence against women.
- Community participation in rebuilding process is very low. Recovery and reconstruction programme were designed centrally and rolled out through districts and VDCs without consultation with the communities.
- Delays in reconstruction and recovery had further created frustration, uncertainty and mistrust with the government.

Hirallal Regmi, Local Development Officer (LDO) from District Development Committee (DDC) Surkhet, opined that “sustainable resettlement is a main concern to address the need of flood affected families today. As per the decision of cabinet of the ministers in March/April 2015, NPR. 50,000 for land and additional NPR. 75,000 for new home are allocated, out of which 128 families out of 971 have not received the amount. Mr. Regmi further explained that few families are living in temporary settlements in expectation of the land from the government in a outskirts of district headquarters where they can have better opportunities”.

The view of DDC is criticized by the survivors. They said that the allocated amount is not enough for relocation and resettlement.

Journalist Govinda Khatri explained that the role of medias have been strong and influential in covering the news about the disaster and the initiatives made for its recovery. He further highlighted that relief and rescue was effectively done but the recovery and resettlement process is taking more than the expected time. Poor coordination is seen among all the stakeholders”.

Laxman Yadav, member of Koshi flood struggle committee shared that over 5,000 “bighas” of land is directly affected from the flood. The most fertile land has now turned to be a sand pit after the flood which has affected the income and livelihood of the affected families. Other participants in the KSD in Sunsari agreed that the farmers are going through most difficult times after the flood. They showed their outrage towards the government for not providing any sustainable land to recover their productivity. Mantun Kumar Yadav, a farmer from Shripur VDC shared loss of productivity is not only the loss for farmer; it is the loss of the whole country”.

Lakhan Lal Shah, Chairperson of NGO federation Sunsari emphasized that the the relief and recovery process is discriminatory towards the poor, dalits and landless families. The initial support of NPR. 50,000 provided by the government was only sufficient for the short term. But the compensation amount of the land was only obtainable for those who possessed land and was inaccessible to the landless people who had been working on other’s land for ages. They haven’t got any compensation according to Shah. Mr. Shah further explained that recovery processes was designed from the centre level with no involvement of the community, the implementation of the recovery process has thus become ineffective in addressing the expectation of poor and marginalized population.

Accountability and Transparency in Post disaster Humanitarian Support

Disasters due to natural hazards are becoming more frequent and more devastating in almost all parts of the world. This situation calls for better disaster preparedness and greater readiness to minimize adverse impacts of disasters. Once a disaster strikes, the prudent management of its aftermath can facilitate quicker recovery and restoration of normal life for the affected individuals and communities (SPARC, Global, & Essex, 2015). It is the responsibility of the government to be accountable to the people and to be transparent while working during crisis period. In the aftermath of major disasters in Nepal, neither the elected bodies nor the local authorities equipped to respond to the disaster were placed. Confusions were seen in the ground among the affected populations on how to document and process in local authorities to receive humanitarian support, the importance of victim cards and the duration of service deliveries from the government, consistency in data. None of these issues were carried out effectively in the ground as a result the victims are still waiting for support even after years of disaster.

“After the disaster, affected families have faced unnecessary bureaucratic hassles to get the support that is promised by the government. This is primarily because of the absence of elected representatives” -Nanimaya Thapa, a social activist from Sindhupalchowk.

“Both the government and non-government organization claim themselves to be transparent but the public are not clear about their transparency. They don't know how much resources are used for their recovery process and when will they receive the promised support from the government”- Chiranjivi Maskey, Journalist from Dolakha.

“It was right after the earthquake; we heard from the radio that the government would provide the necessary financial resources and other forms of subsidies within few months after the disaster. Months passed by; a year passed by, but they haven't made it clear if they are going to support us or not, so that we could start on our own. I also thought to build house with my own resource but am still in a dilemma about the standard that is to be fulfilled. Engineers could come anytime and disapprove the design of my house which may make me inelligible to get any amount from the government” –Ram Bahadur Nepali, Dolakha.

“Several media reports and public feels that there is a mismanagement of funds during the humanitarian response but none of the organizations and actors involved are punished or investigated yet. Further, district authorities don't have any documentation that indicated the total amount invested in disaster response initiatives”-Lakhan Lal Shah, Chairperson-NGO Federation.

Mr. Roshan Adhikari from DAO Dolakha opined that the lack of trust of the earthquake victims towards the government offices is because of the following reasons; i) delay in the formation of National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), ii) lack of updated data and iii) some ambiguity in “National Reconstruction Guidelines”.

With the delay in distribution in the grant amount for earthquake victims, flood victims in West, lack of communication with the government and the affected population and lack of monitoring mechanism in the affected areas, it is observed that affected families don't find the government authorities accountable in humanitarian support.

The actual outcomes of various interventions depend on a range of factors such as resources, planning, coordination, quality control and monitoring. So, the life chances of potential and actual disaster victims depend on the performance of a whole range of institutions. Such planning and coordination were not observed during the extensive field surveys and consultations.

Road to Recovery: From Devastation to Rebuilding and Rehabilitation

In last two decades Nepal saw several disasters rescue operations such as Koshi flood 2008, mid western floods and landslides 2014, Jure landslides 2014 and earthquake 2015. The relief, recovery and reconstruction works are intertwined with complex political influence, low community participation and dissatisfaction among the disaster survivors. However, such operations did not bring end to the sufferings of the affected families.

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) report in 2006 argues that the effectiveness of medium-term recovery and long-term reconstruction is constrained by the lack of planning, coordinated management and targeted funding of the response in the post-disaster recovery phase. Relief effort is focused on meeting the most immediate needs in terms of medical treatment, food, shelter and basic services, and is inadequately concerned with longer-term recovery issues. Humanitarian relief is often very effective, but seldom leads to rapid, effective and productive medium-term recovery and long-term reconstruction (Lloyd-Jones, 2006).

Almost eight years after the flood, survivors in Sunsari district and Saptari district are still struggling to recover productivity of their land. Loss of productive land has severely impacts on food security and livelihoods of these families. Flash floods hit Surkhet district, Bardiya district and Banke district in 2014. Survivors' families are still living in temporary settlement at camps. Downtrodden tents and inadequate water, sanitation and other facilities in these camps had made the life of families miserable. These families still fears of flooding every monsoon. In 2015, the devastating earthquake, survivors, continues to face daily hardships as recovery and reconstruction lags behind.

As in every disaster, many organizations and individuals had supported survivors during rescue and relief operations. The government had mobilized its machineries to protect life and property individuals and families. But very few organizations continue their support on recovery and rehabilitation of survivors after several years of disaster.

The above cases showed that for dignified rehabilitation of disaster survivors' required adequate support to revive their livelihoods. Many survivors in Surkhet district are forced to do hardship by crushing stones to earn money for their living. The earning is not sufficient to feed the family. In case of Jhure survivors, families were relocated and resettled but earning income remains a primary challenge for them.

Post-Disaster Human Rights: Issues on the Ground

The constitution of Nepal has guaranteed basic rights to every citizen. These rights include, the right to live with dignity, the right to housing, the right to food, the right to information among others. It is a duty of the state to respect, protect and fulfill these basic rights guaranteed in the Constitution. However, in case of disaster survivors, not adequate measures are undertake by the state and other concerned stakeholders to protect these rights.

Right to live with dignity: Majority of disaster survivors are living in pathetic conditions even after years of disasters. These families are still living in camps in temporary shelters made of iron sheets and do not have access to water, sanitation, health facilities. Mental trauma among survivors is high. Often they reported fears and life threaten on rainy days. Women and girls are facing additional challenges as sharing of rooms and toilets between families in the camps expose them to physical harassment. Cases of rape and physical assault had been reported in these camps.

Right to food: Disasters had eroded fertile agriculture land. The land becomes unproductive and the production is not sufficient to feed the family. Children gets mal nourished. Families were forced to work in menial works such as crushing stone to get extra earning to buy food. Loss of

productive land not only impacts the particular family but also will affect national food security.

Right to Education: In many cases, children were dropped out of school after disaster. Families cannot afford the education. Children either support the family by rearing younger siblings while parents are at work or they started working too get extra earning for the family and skip schools. It is difficult for children to concentrate on studies in shared rooms with family members.

Right to Housing: Government assistance for rebuilding houses for survivors of floods and earthquake is inadequate to build a decent house required for the family. It is a duty of the state to ensure appropriate shelter to families that cannot build houses on their own means on top of the government support.

Right to Healthcare: The healthcare support for the survivors is inadequate. As the settlements lack proper Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, it is found that the areas are prone to communicable diseases and viral infections.

Right to Information: As reflected in HAMI report entitled Nepal Earthquake 2015: Building Resilience, Rebuilding Lives (Findings from the Ground), similar observations are found in disseminating information about government assistance. Proper and timely dissemination of information is crucial for informed decision making by affected families and also speed up recovery and reconstruction works.

Nepal being party to the various international laws and the United National treaties and conventions, international human rights watch groups are regularly monitoring the government determination towards addressing the basic rights of its population, especially those in need of humanitarian support.

Conclusions

Disasters have inflicted pain, trauma and unimaginable losses in thousands of families throughout the country. Inadequate and slow recovery and reconstruction of survivors had further deepened pain and left families with uncertainty. Often these are demonstrated as frustrations and anger against the government by the disaster survivors.

The aforementioned cases had proved that even after years disaster survivors are continue living in temporary shelters made of iron sheets without proper access of basic services like electricity, water, sanitation, education and health. In many cases, living in temporary shelters for years had deteriorated health of family members, especially elderly, children and pregnant and lactating mothers. Academic performance of children had degraded. In few cases children discontinue schooling to share the burden to earn extra income for the family. Safety and security of women and girls is a concern while living in camps and shared rooms.

For a dignified rehabilitation of disaster survivors' required adequate support to revive their livelihoods. Loss of arable lands and business after disaster left many families struggling to regain their livelihoods and income and ends up in getting menial works such as crushing stone to earn extra income to feed the family.

Throughout the study it was observed that apart from tangible impacts (death, loss of property and belongings) there also exists a tremendous psychological aftermaths which cannot be quantified in physical terms.

The effort made from the government seems inadequate in protecting the rights and dignity of disaster survivors. Few initiatives are seen to relocate the flood affected families but have failed as that lacked the systematic planning and participation of the communities. Whatever, the politics or complexities lies behind, it is the duty of the government to ensure the dignified life of those affected from the disaster.

List of Abbreviations

- DAO : District Administration Office
DDC : District Development Committee
HAMI : Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative
I/NGO: International/Nongovernmental Organization
KII : Key Informant Interview
KSD : Key Stakeholders Dialogue
NRA : National Reconstruction Authority

Annexes

Annex 1: Framework of the questionnaires

The questionnaires for this survey were designed to capture the current situation of disaster affected population in the following specific areas:

- Current issues the communities is facing
- Accountability of government fulfilling the minimum criteria of human rights on the case of disaster survivors
- Non state actor's roles
- Disaster preparedness and resilient development by the government
- Community understanding on government plans and policies on recovery and reconstruction
- Community participation and engagement in the recovery and reconstruction process
- Budget on post-earthquake reconstruction
- Coordination and service delivery mechanism
- Identifying gaps in the process of humanitarian assistance from the government
- Post disaster and its impact on women and children

Endnotes

- i Retrieved August 2, 2016 from <http://www.dpnet.org.np/index.php?pageName=newsdetail&nid=161>.
- ii The information is compiled with reference to, Nepal: Landslides and Floods Information Bulletin n°1 (as of 17 August 2014), the online source of Relief Web International. Retrieved August 1, 2016, from <http://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/nepal-landslides-and-floods-information-bulletin-n-1-17-august-2014>.
- iii Retrieved August 5, 2016 from http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/nepal_earthquake_2015_revised_flash_appeal_draft_as_of_11june_10h.pdf.
- iv Retrieved from Mercy Corps Nepal on 6th August 2016 from <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/nepal/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-nepal-earthquake>.
- v Retrieved from setopati.net on 6th August 2016 from <http://setopati.net/society/2731/>.
- vi Based on the interview with community people and participants of Key Stakeholders Dialogue.

Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative (HAMI) formed on 11 May 2015, after the devastating earthquake in Nepal is the convergence of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working with the right holders. The common cause of this convergence is monitoring the humanitarian accountability during the time of humanitarian crisis. By way of continuous efforts of evidence based advocacy and lobby, HAMI monitors the attempts and activities made so far and to be made in future by the government, international community, non-government organizations and private sectors. HAMI is an effort of the CSOs as a paradigm shift from the perspective of "I or for me" to the "we and us". CSO Federations and alliances play an active advisory role for the HAMI. Its mission is to mobilize peoples' opinion to obtain informed standard humanitarian support by creating a constructive critical mass for the sake of the continual improvement and for addressing and redressing their agendas before state and non-state actors including international communities.



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