

Governance of Local Disaster Management Committees in line with SOD in Bangladesh

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Due to its geographical location Bangladesh has always been prone to natural disasters such as tropical cyclones, floods, droughts, tidal surges, tornadoes, river-bank erosion and many more. The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were asked. Questionnaire, KII and district gathering consultation tools were used to collect information from respondents in both the government organizations and NGOs. A total of 51 Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) in five districts that were vulnerable to flood, river-bank erosion, drought and cyclone were taken as sample to analyze the current situation of the disaster management committee. The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Surprisingly, the study has found that only 38.9% DMC members are informed about Disaster Management Act and 36.76% are aware about their roles and responsibilities in the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD). Although the selected districts are extremely prone to disasters and District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs), Upazila Disaster Management Committees (UzDMCs) and Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) are holding regular meetings as per the SOD to mitigate the problems. The scenario has been found that the committees are the pillars of exchanging and coordinating the different departments to act collaboratively. 43.80% of DMCs have Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) according to the Risk Reduction Action Plan. It was found that 23.3% of DMCs have developed volunteer groups and 26% of DMCs have arranged community awareness building programs. The study has also found that 34% of Union Parishads have incorporated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into their Annual Development Plan (ADP). It is alarming that even though Bangladesh is one of the prime victims of climate change, encountering severe and frequent disasters like Sidr, Aila and Mahasen, 66% of the sample Union Parishads did not have DRR integrated into their ADPs. Based on the gaps recognized in the study, it can be concluded that the functionality of the DMCs needs to be improved through capacity building, training, and materials such as a guidebook to simplify the SOD etc. in order to levitate the current Disaster Management System. Empowering the DMC members by increasing their level of understanding in Information Technology and by linking them to the national level will ultimately lead to more and improved governance system of Disaster Management Committees.

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