



How Can Governments Help Integrate CBDRM With Development Schemes?



The essence of Community Based Disaster Risk Management is making communities resilient against disasters and proactive action from governments can make a world of difference. Here are some examples and suggestions.



After a flooded Kosi river rendered thousands of people homeless in [Bihar in 2008](#), SEEDS led an advocacy programme that emphasized the importance of building homes which aligned with disaster risk reduction (DRR) techniques. Bamboo, a locally available sustainable resource, was then used to construct houses. The model that SEEDS showcased resonated with the Bihar government and funds were sanctioned under the Indira Awas Yojana in order to build similar houses for people who live in the flood-prone areas.

Inclusion of the core ideals of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) in government development schemes increases the efficacy of the plans and helps build societies resilient to disasters. The first step towards scaling up CBDRM practices — as explained by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) — is to increase political commitment to the cause.

Following their intensive work with vulnerable communities across India, SEEDS and its partner organisations, came up with models and advocacy suggestions to strengthen existing development schemes. A few takeaways from those activities are listed below:

How to Protect and Preserve Water Resources



Uttarakhand-based Abhivyakti has partnered with the central government to implement Jal Jeevan Mission 2024 which aims to provide safe drinking water to all houses through tap connections. One of the key aspects of this programme is to ensure sustainability of the source of water and also preserve it through practices like rainwater harvesting, grey water management, among others.

To ensure all water resources are actively protected, it is important to make communities aware of the potential dangers facing their water sources and how to battle them. This is why Abhivyakti integrated SEEDS' CBDRM resources with the Jal Jeevan Mission programme laying the path for successful advocacy around the inclusion of disaster risk reduction components in government development schemes.

For several years, the organisation has been helping communities build ground water recharging systems like recharge pits, tubewells, recharge wells in urban areas. They also helped set up rainwater harvesting systems like percolation dams, contour bunds, gully plugs in rural areas.

Abhivyekti partnered with SEEDS to increase awareness about these models of water conservation. The ideas were embraced by residents of several villages across Uttarakhand and bolstered the state's strong tradition of community-based water preservation.

"We have worked extensively to enhance traditional and natural conservation systems in Uttarakhand. For example, kuls are channels found in mountainous areas that carry water from glaciers to villages. One work we do is line kuls which are embedded in muddy soil with rocks so that the water stays in the stream," Geetanjali Dutta of Abhivyekti said.

How to Make Building Structures Disaster Resilient



Vijay Kumar from Nav Jagriti in Bihar was initially apprehensive about how receptive institutions like hospitals will be if approached for collaborations on CBDRM training and awareness. However, when he approached district administrations and hospitals in Bihar, his worries were put to rest. They arranged for training sessions for anganwadi and ASHA workers on CBDRM issues. "The workers told us that they have learned valuable lessons in disaster preparedness and response and would apply the knowledge in course of their work with communities," Kumar said.

As a part of SEEDS programme of institutionalising sustainable CBDRM practices and mainstreaming them, Kumar's Nav Jagriti also submitted proposals to the government to survey the vulnerability of hospitals to floods. "Under the National Health Mission, there is a provision of funds to make hospital structures safer. We advocated that a survey of hospital and health center buildings be undertaken under that provision and changes and renovations be made accordingly. The buildings have to be constructed at a height more than the average height flood waters reach," Mr Kumar said.

Tirtha Prasad Saikia of NEADS, Assam practiced advocacy for a similar aspect of institutionalising sustainable CBDRM. “We advocated for key DRR and CBDRM components to be included in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the government’s project to provide affordable housing for the poor,” Mr Saikia said. “Housing structures need to be raised to the highest flood levels in Assam. We suggested that issues like these be taken into account while planning and implementing housing schemes,” Mr Saikia added. The response from the government has been favourable and officials have informed that they are keen on embracing these suggestions.

How can panchayats integrate CBDRM activities with their work?

Swapan Panda of Kajla Jana Kalyan Samity (KJKS) in West Bengal — a key regional partner in SEEDS and GNDR’s programme for institutionalising sustainable CBDRM — said that they advocated the introduction of funds for CBDRM in panchayat budgets.

“We held awareness sessions and explained that a part of a village panchayat’s annual spending should be dedicated to boosting CBDRM practices,” Mr Panda said. Eight of the 10 panchayats who attended the awareness programme confirmed that in the new financial year they would include CBDRM in their budgets and said this would help them prepare for floods better. The rest are in the process of discussing the issue. A similar approach of mobilising gram panchayats into mainstreaming CBDRM was taken by Kerala’s Foundation for Development Action (FDA). FDA’s Ramesh Krishnan said several awareness programmes were held educating panchayats on ways to allot work associated with CBDRM activities under the MGNREGA scheme.

“In the severely flood-prone areas we explained to the panchayats how MGNREGA work can be allotted for several short construction projects that can make the villages more resilient to floods. When we spoke to panchayats from villages in drought-affected areas, we explained MGNREGA work can be allocated for work like traditional water body renovation,” Mr Krishnan said. Mr Krishnan terms the response from all four panchayats as ‘excellent’. “They are working towards facilitating this and keep communicating with us about the developments,” he said.

