

## **Workshop Report**

### **Linking Science and Policy into Planning for Existing and Evolving Risks of COVID, Climate Change and Disasters: Identifying Challenges and Opportunities**

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#### **Summary of the project:**

COVID 19 not just highlighted the gaps in the existing planning for disaster risk management at different scales but also exposed several challenges that require rethinking in terms of linking science and policy advancements into planning for existing and evolving risks. In order to better understand the key challenges and opportunities, a workshop is planned and conducted that brought various stakeholders on one platform to discuss the real world challenges and solutions for the known and unknown risks. Discussions opened new avenues for incorporating science and policy advice across different groups.

#### **Background of the project:**

COVID 19 brought forth unprecedented situations that caught most responders in a dilemma to follow guidelines or do what they already know. Several conflicting views and responses emerged that need assessment, evaluation and assimilation into existing learning in the domain of planning and implementation of risk management for disasters, pandemic or climate change. Tremendous challenges were faced in the heavily populated cities, where risk communication mainly came in the form of crisis information with a little time and scope to make any plan or changes in the planned strategies. COVID19 not only exposed the existing challenges but also pointed towards the escalating risks to disasters in Indian cities.

Urban areas in India have indeed become hotspot of disasters ranging from COVID, flooding, cyclones, earthquakes, fires and so on. Although, there is a mandate for planning for disaster management at the school, institution, city and national level, much of these plans remain disconnected from the new and emerging risk scenarios as well as advances in the science and practices of disaster risks reduction and climate change. An important gap behind this reason is an inadequate integration of emerging trends, science advice and latest policy developments in ongoing disaster risk management at various scales.

Several challenges have been noted by experts in terms of knowledge, resources, coordination, and scale of operations along with some more deep-rooted issues of trust, culture and communication that need attention and interactions of varied stakeholders to overcome these challenges. An open interaction of different stakeholders may help to identify key challenges and create avenues for collaboration and opportunities for bridging the gap. Therefore, a workshop is planned to bring different stakeholders including academics, policy makers, and members of CSOs and NGOs to explore an effective integration of science and policy into ongoing response and planning for evolving risks from COVID, climate change and disasters.

### **Workshop Aim & Objectives:**

This workshop aims to explore the integration of science and policy at different scales of planning for evolving risks from COVID, climate change and disasters by engaging different stakeholders. The workshop will fulfill following objectives, wherein the participants will

- △ Explore various gaps and key challenges in planning for new and evolving risks in the existing disaster risk management by different stakeholders
- △ Distinguish the determinants of success and failures of organizational planning for disaster response and identify opportunities to integrate lessons in order to guide the future direction for planning, mitigation, and adaptation to new and emerging risk scenario.
- △ Produce a synthesis of learning from various stakeholders participating in the workshop.

### **Program Overview:**

**Date:** Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Time:** 9.30am – 5.30pm

**Mode:** Hybrid (Online and Physical participation)

**Venue:** The Suryaa Hotel, New Friends Colony, New Delhi

The workshop followed an interdisciplinary approach by addressing various issues of disaster risk management planning at different levels. It had speakers and participants from different background who offered different perspective and help to find solutions in a collaborative manner.

### **Speakers:**

The workshop had some of the leading practitioners as the speakers, including:

1. Prof. V. K. Sharma, Senior Professor, Disaster Management & Climate Change, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, and Vice Chairman, Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, Sikkim)
2. Prof. Chandan Ghosh, National Institute of Disaster Management, Delhi
3. Prof. Subhkanta Mahopatra, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi
4. Dr. Anshu Sharma, Director, SEEDS, Delhi
5. Nakul Kumar Tarun, Director, Zone4Solution, Delhi
6. Dr. Jaideep Sharma, AIIMS, Delhi
7. Dr. Nova Ahmad, North-South University, Bangladesh
8. Dr. Kabita Shah, Banaras Hindu University

### Session Details:

Time	Tasks
9.30 - 10.00	Welcome and registration of the participants
10.00 - 10.10	Introduction of the participants
10.10 - 11.30	The relevance of science, policy and planning of existing and evolving risk for disasters Speakers: Prof. Chandan Ghosh (NIDM), Prof. Subhkanta Mahopatra (INGNOU) and Dr. Anshu Sharma (SEEDS)
11.30 - 11.45	Tea break
11.45 - 12.15	Science and Policy in the domain of climate change and disaster risk reduction Speakers: Prof. V. K. Sharma (IIPA)
12.15 - 1.00	Questions and Answers
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.00- 4.00	Case Study by Dr. Kavita Shah (BHU)
4.00 – 4.15	Tea break
4.15 – 5.00	Sharing of best practices in different sectors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Response to COVID-19: Dr. Jaideep Sharma (AIIMS)</li> <li>2. The use of technology: Dr. Nova Ahmed (North South University)</li> <li>3. DRR in schools: Nakul Kumar Tarun (Zone4Solution)</li> </ol>
5.00 – 5.30 pm	Group activity and acknowledgement of Future actions and opportunities

### Participants:

Nearly 41 people registered and 21 people participated in the workshop in the midst of high level of pollution and COVID-19. The list of people who

registered and those who eventually participated in the workshop both physical and online is attached in the Appendix. The participants included members from academic, non-government organizations and private sectors.

**Questions discussed & explored:**

1. What are the best practices of linking science, policy and planning disaster risks?
2. How institutions can plan and integrate the risks from disasters, climate change and COVID-19?
3. What are the possible opportunities and resources they have?
4. What are their current challenges?
5. What actions can individual institutions can take now to help prepare for changing risk scenario?

The discussion is proved to be useful for all the active participants. They not only saw the various challenges that appear in the science policy advice but could also see the opportunity to further collaborate in managing the disaster risks.

Some of the **key challenges** identified by the participants included:

1. A culture of safety is missing in India
2. A need for a more bottom up approach to address local vulnerability
3. Lack of ownership of the problems at the community level

Some of the **opportunities** identified by the participants included:

1. Revisiting plans for evolving uncertainty and risks. Currently they are more reactive.
2. Specific action plans for deprived areas
3. Setting up models and museums for the best practices of disaster management

Some of the areas for further discussion and **future workshops** include:

1. Yamuna River Cleaning as a case study
2. Organ donation before, during and after disaster
3. Outdoor workshops

**Expenditure:**

The itemized expenses are given in the table below and bills are attached in appendix.

Table 2: Itemized expenditure for the workshop

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expense (INR)</b>	<b>Expense (EURO)</b>
<b>I. Direct expense</b>	<b>Venue, lunch &amp; internet</b>	27730	330
	<b>Projector, sounds</b>	5000	60
	Stationary & printing	3500	42
	Travel cost (flight and local travel)	10474	125
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Direct expense</b>	<b>45204</b>	<b>557</b>
<b>II. Indirect expense</b>	Accommodation of speakers	8469	100
	Honorarium and flowers	2000	24
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Indirect expense</b>	<b>10469</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>55673</b>	<b>681</b>

### **Conclusion:**

Both speakers and participants note a need for such workshops to enhance both awareness and actions in this direction.

### **Attachments**

1. List of participants (pdf file attached)
2. Bills (pdf file attached)
3. Photographs and testimonials (Google drive)
4. Recordings of the session (zoom link)