

Final Report on Decentralized Disaster Risk Governance in Nepal

GROUND REFLECTIONS



ActionAid International Nepal
Kathmandu

Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal
Red Cross Marg
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ActionAid is a global federation committed to ending poverty and injustice in hundreds of communities and millions of people throughout the world. With forty-five national members and country programmes worldwide, ActionAid dedicates most of its resources to working with the most disadvantaged and excluded women, men and children—siding with them and making long-term commitment to advance their human rights and transform the work in which their children grow up. ActionAid Nepal employs local, national and international lobbying activities to transform public policies and practices in favour of the vulnerable and marginalized to meet their urgent and long-term needs.

In the four years of practising federalism and decentralization of disaster risk governance, different local governments have delivered on their core responsibilities as mandated by the Acts. COVID-19 and other disasters have further helped realize the need for and importance of decentralized systems and their stewardship in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian actions. It is also critical to reflect on the achievements, challenges and missed opportunities as well as opportunities ahead to guide the newly elected local governments to make optimum use of available resources to deliver the rights of communities and people vulnerable to disaster risks. In this context, ActionAid Nepal carried out research, Disaster Risk Governance in Nepal: Ground Reflections, with technical assistance of DPNet–Nepal. I hope that the insights will be informative to policymakers, development partners and, most crucially, to the various departments of the Government of Nepal. The findings, it is hoped, will also be useful in bringing the voices of the most marginalized and disadvantaged individuals into the policy formulation process.

I would like to thank Mr Ram Kumar Gurung and Mr Govinda Bahadur Rimal for designing the tools, facilitating the survey and generating the study report. I thank Dr Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet, for his guidance during the project. I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation Mr Pratap Maharjan, Mr Saroj Pokharel and Mr Sher Bahadur Chhetri of the ActionAid team for organizing, coordinating and contributing to the research report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an assessment study, Decentralized Disaster Risk Reduction Governance in Nepal: Ground Reflections, conducted in 16 local levels across three provinces to assess the status of implementation and effectiveness of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) and climate change (CC) policies and plans at *palika* level. The objectives of the assessment were: to review the roles and responsibilities of the local levels as stipulated in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017; to document the challenges experienced and the opportunities perceived by the local governments while discharging their responsibilities related to DRRM and mainstreaming DRRM in development plans; to assess the changes perceived by the vulnerable communities after the decentralization of disaster risk governance in Nepal; and to document how the decentralization of disaster risk governance shifted power to the local and vulnerable communities, promoted transparency and accountability, and promoted youth and women leadership in DRRM.

The study used both secondary and primary data. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and observations based on pre-defined checklists or semi-structured questionnaires at provincial, municipality and community levels. The secondary data consisted of relevant policies, plans and study reports, as well as the websites and the BIPAD portals¹ of the municipalities concerned.

¹ BIPAD portal is a one-stop platform that allows visualizing all kinds of disaster related data sets, managed by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

FINDINGS

All 16 municipalities covered by the study have allocated funds for DRRM, implemented DRRM activities, and trained their staff and volunteers to some extent. Similarly, the local governments have carried out rescue and relief in disaster-affected areas.

Altogether 44 per cent of the studied municipalities have formulated and implemented Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plans; however, these plans are not fully mainstreamed into the local development planning process.

The majority of the municipalities (75%) have not practised emergency mock drills and simulations; 18 per cent have established disaster information management systems; 19 per cent have established emergency operation centres (EOCs); and 19 per cent of them are equipped with fire brigades and trained staff.

Although policy documents are available at central level, formulation and operation of required laws and policies is quite low in provincial and local levels. Altogether 56 per cent of the municipalities have prepared local DRRM Act, whereas the remaining municipalities have not prepared local DRRM Acts or plans due to lack of technical capacity. Those who have not done so rely on the Act and policies of the federal government and act on the decisions of the local DRRM committee while executing DRRM activities. The local Acts that have been formulated are also not contextualized and are mostly copies of the model or federal DRM Act. Altogether 44 per cent of the municipalities have prepared DRRM plans. Similarly, 37 per cent of the municipalities have prepared DRM fund mobilization guidelines, and 19 per cent have prepared disaster response plans.

As there is organizational representation rather than that of groups or communities, it was difficult to measure the representation of women and vulnerable groups. There is no special mechanism, hence no guarantee, for the participation or representation of women and vulnerable groups in local DRM Acts. A few local governments have, however, made provision for the representation of women and disadvantaged groups in ward disaster management committees (WDMCs).

The DRM activities carried out during the last three years could be categorized as “preparedness”, “response”, “build back better/reconstruction”, and “DRM governance/accountability”. The GoN and other humanitarian organizations practiced the Cash Transfer Programme during the post-disaster emergency response and reconstruction phase. As all local governments spent a large portion of the DRM fund on COVID response, they could not spend the allocated budget on capacity-building and preparedness activities.

Municipalities have tried to harmonize DRR/CC plans by developing Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP). However, these efforts not integrated in the local level planning process. Municipalities have also started preparing DRRM strategic plans to harmonize disasters and climate change.

Formulation of DRM laws and policies at the central level has created an enabling environment to contextualize policies and plans at local level. There are opportunities for engaging local people, including vulnerable communities, in the formulation of plans and policies. Similarly, integrating DRRM and CCA issues is possible at local level. DRM strategic plan and LDCRP, incorporating both disaster and climate change issues, have started being developed.

The challenges in formulating and implementing the DRM policies and plans include limited knowledge and skills of local government representatives and bureaucrats; understaffing and high staff turnover; priority to infrastructure building over DRM; and limited budget.

The urban poor or inhabitants of informal settlements are considered illegal residents and are excluded from the planning process and basic services. There is no formal mechanism to involve urban poor and other residents in the development planning process. Most of the municipalities have no specific safety net and capacity-building programmes focusing on vulnerable communities.

Local governments are more focused on infrastructure development activities and less on disaster risk reduction. Although the government is committed to localizing the DRM Acts, policies, strategies and plans through technical backup, institutional setup, and directives, how these Acts and policies will be transferred to the new federal system is not clear. The existing policies generally discuss higher-level approaches, such as institutionalizing DRRM, but they do not set out specific strategies for how this should be done to benefit the communities at risk. The local governments that have already developed local Acts and guidelines have allocated budgets for capacity-building training and vulnerability assessment besides disaster funds. There are no specific DRR activities focusing on vulnerable communities and areas.

DRM institutional structures, with defined scope and activities, have been set up at different levels of government; however, their involvement in system strengthening is low. There is no community-level DRM structure except in donor-funded projects. Limited staff and resources are the main factors for underachievement. The federal and provincial governments have no capacity enhancement plan except a few project interventions, which, too, are not sufficient to cover widely and effectively. There is no follow-up mechanism for formulating and implementing the DRM Acts and policies at province and local levels.

There is not much focus on the quality and accountability aspects in relief support and response at local level. The local levels do not have the basic knowledge of the Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standards. Provincial

governments have, however, formulated standard guidelines on rescue and relief support for disaster-affected families, quarantine operation and management and follow the standards on support package.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study team has summarized the gaps, primarily in the formulation and implementation of the DRM laws, policies and regulations, and has made some recommendations for the federal, provincial and local governments to improve the disaster risk governance in Nepal.

Province/Federal Government:

- Roll out the recently enacted DRM Act, policy and regulations on disaster management at the local level with the technical support of the federal and provincial governments.
- Redesign and streamline the structure of LDMCs/Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) with gender and social inclusion policies to ensure the representation of women and other vulnerable groups.
- Provide technical and financial support to pilot new technology and skills, such as shock-responsive/adaptive social protection, anticipatory/early action.
- Mandate DRRM role to the Ministry of Home Affairs/National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority and integrate sectoral DRM actions in other ministries/departments. Enhance the coordination role for better planning and budgeting.
- Map the policies, plans and guidelines on DRR/CC developed by different ministries and departments to identify and avoid duplication and gaps in the sector's policy landscape.
- Formulate an integrated planning tool for DRR/CC endorsed and owned by the ministries concerned, viz Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Ministry of Home Affairs, and departments.
- Orient local governments and develop their technical capacity to administer the tools and formulate an integrated plan, as well as the existing LDCRP, LAPA, etc.
- The federal and province-level ministries should have strong commitment and coordinate the integration of DRR/CC. Set up a follow-up mechanism to assess the progress over time.
- Extend partnership with bilateral donors, UN agencies, INGOs/NGOs and banks for strengthening the legislative and institutional frameworks on DRRM and identifying innovative funding streams or mobilizing the existing funding streams to invest in the most vulnerable communities.
- To speed up the localization of the BIPAD portal, communicate minimum data requirement from the local governments while conducting household or critical infrastructure and service to incorporate information from perspective of risk and making those data compatible to the BIPAD portal.
- Amend the DRM Act and policy to ensure the representation of vulnerable groups, such as women, people with disabilities, youth, elderly, etc.
- Ensure accountability (including participation, transparency and feedback) at all levels (vulnerable communities, government authorities, sectoral departments and ministries) through a follow-up mechanism and performance indicators to mainstream DRR and humanitarian actions.

Local government

- Invest in institutionalization of an inclusive DRR structure at palika, ward and community levels.
- Allocate adequate resources for orientation and refresher training on the national legislation, policies, institutional mechanisms, humanitarian standard and assistance modalities for municipality office bearers and key staff.
- Operationalize LDMC, CDMCs and task forces, developing an annual plan that promotes youth and women leadership. Direct communication and visible actions engaging community should be carried out to mark their presence and establish ties in the community.
- Along with project-funded actions, allocate resources for initiatives of entire DRRM cycle through Disaster Management Fund instead of being response centric. Adequately finance to translate LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA into action, identifying additional funding streams, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), polluters pay principle, etc.
- Integrate and mainstream DRR/CCA in the sectoral and annual plans and budgets of municipalities for adequate financing to implement LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA and for resilience development.
- Promote and ensure community-led DRR activities by aligning with LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA for sustainability of project-led and government (co)-financed DRR actions for sustainability.
- Promote community's traditional knowledge and skills for DRRM.
- The local governments should identify the private sector, which for partnership in the DRM programme.
- Document and widely share the best practices.
- Pilot new approaches and techniques, such as cash transfer, risk transfer through insurance, etc.
- Amend and revise the local Acts and policies to ensure the representation of women and other vulnerable groups.
- Develop and ensure functioning of a transparency and accountability mechanism of local government at municipality, ward and community levels for effective and efficient engagement of community and vulnerable groups in the entire process of DRRM for improved governance.
- For effective operation of EOC, fill up required staff vacancies and train the staff in required skills such as the operation and updating of the DIMS/BIPAD portal.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Nepal is a signatory of international and regional commitments on climate change, viz United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2016–2030) and Sendai Framework for DRR (2015–2030). Disaster risk management (DRM) began to receive greater attention since the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002–2007). With Nepal having become a federal democratic republic with three tiers of government in 2017, the Constitution has assigned various roles and responsibilities of climate change (CC) and disaster risk management (DRM) to the local levels and the concurrent responsibility to the federal and provincial governments. This restructuring of the system of governance has generated ample opportunities for institutionalizing a decentralized system of CC and DRM in Nepal.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many local governments established and utilized disaster management funds. Apart from these, local disaster and climate resilient plans are being formulated either independently or with the support of development partners. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) reports of more than 100 emergency operation centres (EOCs) having been established at local and district levels. This is a milestone in strengthening the DRRM actions at local level.

The local governments realized the need for decentralized leadership in DRR and humanitarian actions in the aftermath of the COVID-19 and other disasters that occurred recently in Nepal. The period of four years of federalism and rolling out of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Acts and policies have provided an opportunity for the local governments to decentralize the DRRM governance. The Acts and policies mandate local governments to formulate contextual policies, plan budgets and ensure meaningful participation of the most vulnerable communities so that their needs can be addressed effectively and efficiently.

The local communities suggest that DRR actions are inadequate, and the most vulnerable communities may not have been fully reached. In different forums, representatives of vulnerable communities express their concerns about their non-participation and inaccessibility to DRRM-related information and resources with the local government. Different studies and local government authorities acknowledge that there are lists of actions that must be taken and activities that need to be improved by the local government for DRRM governance. With multiple priorities of local governments, different local government authorities admitted having prioritized DRRM initiatives less. Therefore, there are some underlying challenges that need to be documented and addressed.

In the final year of the local governments, before the election, it is critical to reflect on the achievements, challenges and missed opportunities as well as opportunities ahead to guide the governments to make optimal use of available resources to deliver the rights of communities and people vulnerable to disasters effectively and efficiently. In this context, this study, Decentralized Disaster Risk Governance in Nepal: Ground Reflection, has been commissioned by ActionAid International Nepal and Disaster preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet).

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The key objective of the study is to assess the status of implementation and effectiveness of DRRM and climate change policies and plans at the Palika level. Its specific objectives are:

- To review the roles and responsibilities of the local level as stipulated in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.
- To document the challenges and opportunities experienced by the local governments while discharging the responsibilities and mainstreaming DRRM in development plans.

- To assess the changes experienced by the vulnerable communities after the decentralization of disaster risk governance in Nepal.
- To document how decentralization of disaster risk governance has supported shifting the power to the local and vulnerable communities, promoted transparency and accountability, and promoted youth and women leadership in DRRM. The team tried to capture the engagement of the youth and women in DRRM as well as their leadership roles.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the team had informed the officials of each sampled municipality in advance, it could not meet some of them. Therefore, only key municipal officials, such as chief administrative officer (CAO), ward chairpersons or DRR focal persons, were interviewed. The subjective nature of the responses and differences in understanding the questions among the respondents of different technical expertise and knowledge of DRR resulted in some limitations of the study. Moreover, as all municipalities had heavily invested their DRM

fund in COVID response for the last two years, the study team could not study the DRM activities in depth. Though the study team employed a systematic sampling technique, viz multi-staged sampling, the sample size of the municipalities was small due to resource constraints and, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized across other municipalities.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The study report is structured in six chapters:

- The first chapter describes the background, objectives and limitations of the study.
- The second chapter deals with the literature review.
- The third chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the study.
- The fourth chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the assessment and the findings of the study.
- The fifth chapter briefly summarizes the conclusions derived from the study and provides key recommendations.

CHAPTER II

**LITERATURE
REVIEW**

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has promulgated a few laws and policies related to climate change and disaster, the major ones among them being the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, Local Government Operation Act 2017, National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction 2018, and the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action (2018–2030). Nepal has been actively carrying out activities related to climate change management ever since it became a party to the UNFCCC in 1994. Climate change adaptation (CCA) projects identified by the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), developed in 2009, are in operation. These projects have remarkably reduced the risk to vulnerable households and communities as well as increased their adaptive capacity (MoFE, 2019).

The local governments have the discretionary power to allocate funds for DRM as per the local-level disaster management Act and directives, aligning with the federal policies. The Local Government Operation Act 2017 mandates to prepare disaster vulnerability maps, identifying areas vulnerable to disaster, along with conducting of DRM programmes and plans and establishing a DRM fund at local level.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 envisages that disaster resilience is possible through the protection of life of people in general; protection of public, private and personal property; and the protection of natural and cultural heritage and physical structures by managing all activities of disaster management in a coordinated and effective manner (MOHA, 2018). The act reinforces the government's efforts to take DRM initiatives to a new height. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act stipulates creation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council as the highest policy-making body in the country, along with the executive committee and specialist committees to provide technical expertise on DRM planning, response and recovery. Similarly, provision is made for provincial, district and local-level disaster

management committees (DMCs). The DRM Act also recognizes a separate entity, viz the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), to take charge of DRM in the country. All three tiers of government are required to set up disaster management funds for response and distribution of relief. The constitutional provisions regarding shared responsibility of the three tiers of government have provided legal backup for institutionalizing DRM at national and sub-national levels. Similarly, National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 aims to contribute to substantially reducing the natural and non-natural loss of lives, infrastructure and property due to disasters (MoHA, 2018).

The Local Government Operation Act 2017 mandates to prepare disaster vulnerability maps that identifies areas vulnerable to disasters, along with implementation and conducting of DRM programmes and plans, and establishing DRM funds at local level (LCN, 2017). The Climate Change Policy 2019 envisages to effectively conduct climate change adaptation and mitigation activities by integrating the climate change issues in the policies and programmes of all three levels of government (MoFE, 2019). The GoN has prepared the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) to assess climate vulnerability and systematically respond to CCA issues by developing appropriate measures (MOE, 2010). In 2010, National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) was published. To support its implementation at the erstwhile village development committee (VDC) level, now Palika level, the GoN developed a national framework for Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA). The LAPA framework provides a way to integrate local people's adaptation needs for climate change resilience into local to national planning systems. The framework ensures that the process of integrating climate change resilience into local planning is bottom up, inclusive, responsive and flexible. However, many of the LAPA interventions are focused on core development activities rather than on climate risk-targeted options (OPM, 2019).

The roles and responsibilities of the focal ministry are clearly defined, and there is an organizational structure in place for implementing DRRM activities in a coordinated manner. A dedicated desk has been set up in the federal ministries and departments, and a DRR focal person has been assigned at each level of all tiers of government. In the provinces, a separate DRM unit exists under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law. Substantial progress has been made in devising an institutional framework for responding to DRR, but there is need for institutionalization and also strengthening of the capacity of different levels of stakeholders (Gyawali et al., 2020). The National Urban Development Strategy (NUDS), promulgated in 2017, defines five broader sectors, viz physical, social, economic, cultural, and environmental, and specific indicators for promoting the resilience of urban areas (MOUD, 2017). The National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 envisages contributing to sustainable development by making the country safer, climate adaptive and resilient to disaster risks (MOHA, 2018).

The capacity of the key staff and elected representatives at municipality and ward levels of the local governments should be built in

respect of multi-hazard-based disaster risk mapping, and such information should be included in their DRRM legal and policy documents. It must be ensured that DRRM is mainstreamed, which can be done through access, representation and meaningful participation of vulnerable populations, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and marginalized and minority communities, in the development planning process of local governments (IOM, 2020).

EOCs are required to be established at national, provincial, district and local levels for effective response during and after a disaster. Owing to lack of equipment or trained staff, local emergency operation centres (LEOCs) could not be established (IOM, 2020). There are significant barriers to gender-inclusive disaster risk governance, which include widespread poverty, patriarchal culture, dependency on men, lack of skilled human resources, and insufficient budget (Thapa et al., 2019). Engagement with vulnerable populations takes time and effort. With a few exceptions, there is limited evidence of municipal engagement with the most at-risk vulnerable populations (IOM, 2020).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 STUDY DESIGN

- The study team reviewed the policies, plans and guidelines prepared by the local governments, delving if they were contextual and inclusive and ensured the participation of vulnerable communities in the plan and policy preparation processes. Furthermore, the team tried to explore if the local governments had adequate policies and plans on DRRM and climate change to implement the DRM initiatives at their respective levels.
- In the course of reviewing the documents, the team studied the annual budgets and plans of two years of the sample local governments and their budget allocations for the activities, projects and programmes related to the DRRM and climate change, as well as their alignment with the plans and policies and relevancy to vulnerable communities for resilience building, linking with how this has contributed to promoting the core principles of human rights-based approach.
- During its visits to the local governments, the team documented the institutional challenges and opportunities in the areas of coordination, communication and financial and human resources experienced by the local governments while discharging their responsibilities, mainstreaming DRRM in development plans, implementing the plans and policies, and comprehending and adapting emerging modality of Cash and Voucher Assistance, Anticipatory Actions, Shock Responsive Social Protection, etc.
- The team also reviewed the existing humanitarian mechanisms in place and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations. It reviewed how visible and invisible powers in the community were promoting or hindering the engagement of vulnerable and affected communities in accessing their rights.

3.2 SELECTION CRITERIA OF MUNICIPALITIES FOR STUDY

Out of the seven provinces and 753 local governments, three provinces and 16 local governments (1 metropolitan city, 2 sub-metropolitan cities, 6 municipalities, and 7 rural municipalities) in three provinces, viz Madhesh, Bagmati and Karnali, were selected for the study. Multi-staged sampling technique was applied to select the provinces and local governments. The sample selection criteria were determined based on the deaths per incident in two years (1 January 2020–30 December 2021, bipadportal.gov.np). The provinces with the highest, medium and low deaths per incident were selected. The details of disaster incidents, deaths and deaths per incident of all provinces are shown in Table 2. Study areas were selected through the random sampling method, using the names of rural municipalities, municipalities, metropolitan and sub-metropolitan cities listed in alphabetical order. Sample numbers were selected according to a random starting point but with a fixed periodic interval, calculated by dividing the population size by the desired sample size. The list of selected rural municipalities, municipalities, metropolitan and sub-metropolitan cities is given in Annex 3. The sampled municipalities and metropolitan cities were selected considering the available time and resources for the study.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The study was conducted using both secondary and primary data. The current policies, plans, study reports and other relevant documents were reviewed. Primary data was collected through key informant interview (KII), focus group discussion (FGD) and observation techniques based on pre-defined checklists or semi-structured questionnaires. Information and data were collected through FGD, KII and observations at the provincial, municipality and community levels (Table 3).

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, HUMAN DEATHS AND DEATHS PER INCIDENT DURING TWO YEARS (01/01/2020–30/12/2021) BY PROVINCE

Province	Number of disaster incidents	Human Deaths	Deaths per incident	Remarks
Province 1	2075	187	0.09	
Madhesh	1530	106	0.07	Selected for lowest deaths per incident
Bagmati	1104	176	0.16	Selected for average number of deaths per incident
Gandaki	788	205	0.26	
Lumbini	1310	163	0.12	
Karnali	409	111	0.27	Selected for highest deaths per incident
Sudur Paschim	783	136	0.17	

Source: <https://bipadportal.gov.np/>

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF KIIS AND FGDS BY RESPONDENT TYPES

SN	Respondents by type	KII	FGD	Total	Remarks
1	LDMC/Municipality	16	-	16	Rural municipality: 7 Municipality: 6 Metropolitan/Sub-Metropolitan: 3
2	Civil society organizations	3		3	1 in each province
3	Vulnerable groups (including elderly, women, men, disabled)	-	16	16	Rural municipality: 7 Municipality: 6 Metropolitan/Sub-Metropolitan :3
4	Youth/women/urban poor	-	7	7	Youth: 2 Women: 3 Urban poor: 2
5	Province government	3	-	3	Madhesh, Bagmati and, Karnali provinces
6	Federal government	2		2	MoFAGA, MoHA/ NDRRMA
	Total	24	23	47	

CHAPTER IV

**FINDINGS AND
ANALYSIS**

4.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DELIVERED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 provides for establishing an institutional set-up and assigning roles and responsibilities of DRRM to the three tiers of government. The Local Government Operation Act 2017 mandates to identify vulnerable areas and develop and implement DRM plans and programmes. Similarly, the Climate Change Policy calls for integrating climate change adaptation issues in the local-level planning process. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 lays down 16 major roles related to execution of DRM-related activities and services at local level to the local governments. The study found that these roles and responsibilities were not being implemented or delivered in a uniform manner by different municipalities.

All the municipalities have carried out some relevant activities relating to (i) allocation of disaster management budget, (ii) implementation of disaster management activities in coordination with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and volunteers, (iii) monitoring of DRR activities conducted by public organizations and business enterprises, (iv) identification and categorization of disaster-affected households and distribution of identity cards to them, (v) provision of rescue and relief in disaster-affected communities, (vi) acting on the decisions of the federal and provincial DRM committees, and (vii) performing other disaster management functions as prescribed.

The extent to which these roles have been fulfilled is a matter of concern. For example, the local authorities stated that, although training in DRR was imparted to certain local authorities and municipalities, the municipalities did not have skilled human resources that could independently assess the exposure and vulnerability of the communities and prepare DRR plans and policies. No systematic database was available on the number of

people trained in DRR in these municipalities. The training events were mostly organized by donor-funded NGOs/CSOs to support local governments, along with imparting some conceptual understanding by the federal or provincial governments during orientation of elected representatives. Similarly, municipalities had carried out a few joint actions on planning and implementation of DRRM with support from donor-funded projects. For instances, Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP) was prepared in Tirhut Rural Municipality, Saptari, with support from Koshi Victim Society and Himalaya Conservation Group, which was funded by the European Union and OXFAM. Japan International Cooperation Agency supported preparation of Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, whereas the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS)/ Strengthening Urban Resilience and Engagement (SURE) project supported DRM activities in Godawari municipalities.

The local governments have set up disaster management funds. They have internalized the importance of the DRM fund due to having experienced different types of disasters, such as COVID-19, floods and earthquakes. In the past two years, 16 local government allocated NRs 394.2 million (US\$3.15 million), of which they have spent NRs 276.61 million (US\$2.21 million), ie 70 per cent. The funds were mainly spent on COVID-19 and other humanitarian responses. The spirit behind mobilizing this fund throughout the DRR cycle is not acknowledged by the local authorities, which is clearly exhibited by their minimal spending on risk mitigation, prevention and disaster preparedness activities.

Only seven municipalities which have prepared LDCRP have identified the areas and communities that are exposed to various hazards, using participatory tools. Municipalities have identified vulnerable communities and areas based on past incidents and geographic and socioeconomic conditions. No vulnerability assessment has been done at the household level. However,

municipalities identified the affected households once a disaster happened, using the vulnerability criteria for response.

All these municipalities have conducted COVID-response projects. Furthermore, eight municipalities have implemented disaster preparedness and mitigation activities with their own resources. Some such examples are: stockpiling of search and rescue materials (Godawari), repair or construction of embankments (Surunga, Manara Sisawa and Kalaiya), landslides/gully control (Thakre), and landslide control/prevention-retention walls (Naukund and Helambu). Only 50 per cent of the municipalities have initiated DRR activities with their internal funds. It indicates that DRR activities are mainly implemented by projects/CSOs/NGOs, and local governments are lagging behind in such activities.

The local governments have accomplished the tasks as assigned by the federal and provincial governments whenever a disaster occurred, for which provision of rescue and relief was made in disaster-affected areas. These activities are, however, *ad hoc*, with minimal engagement of DMCs. Task forces have not been formed in majority of the sampled municipalities.

DRR institutions, such as local (LDMC) or ward (WDMC) or community disaster management committees (CDMCs), are foundation for disaster risk governance; however, only 37 per cent of the sampled municipalities had formed such committees. Task forces were formed in six municipalities after relevant training, but they are not in regular communication with the municipality nor are they provided any refresher training. Majority of the task forces remain active only till they are supported by projects or development partners. DRR focal person has been assigned in each municipality; however, they are also assigned other roles. Dedicated disaster management and environment sections exist only in Lalitpur, Hetauda and Kalaiya.

Along with limited awareness among municipal authorities, attitudinal barriers prevented formation of DRR institutions. There are DMCs at Palika level, and all the decisions are made by the municipality and the committee. This poses a question on the need and relevance of WDMCs.

Altogether 63 per cent of the municipalities did not have WDMC or CDMC because the local representatives did not prioritize disaster response as a primary task, or because of shortage of resources, including required staff, or due to lack of technical know-how.

Altogether 44 per cent of the municipalities, viz Tirthut, Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund, Shankharapur, Godawari, and Lalitpur, had formulated and implemented disaster management plans in coordination and collaboration with different CSOs or NGOs. However, the plans had not been fully mainstreamed and integrated into the municipalities' annual plans and budgets.

Box 1

“Palika has formulated a local DRM Act and disaster relief distribution guidelines. We realize the importance of formulating other required DRM plans and guidelines but are not able to develop them due to our limited technical expertise. We are making decisions on ad hoc basis as per the immediate need and urgency. We cannot stop supporting disaster-affected people just because of the absence of certain policies.”

- Nima Gyaljen Sherpa, Chairperson, Helambu RM

Building Codes are foundation stones for resilient physical structures. Altogether 37 per cent of the municipalities, Kalaiya, Hetauda, Naukund, Shankharapur, Godawari and Lalitpur Metropolitan City LMC, have formulated and effectively implemented Building Codes. In other municipalities, Building Codes are followed mainly by those who are constructing houses with bank loans. Building Codes are often neglected in rural municipalities. Municipalities have not developed or effectively implemented Building Codes due to non-dissemination of the Codes, shortage of technical staff and human resources to implement and monitor compliance of the Codes, and low commitment towards enforcement of policies.

Majority of municipalities (75%) have not practised emergency mock drills and simulations as required. Only 18 per cent of the municipalities (Lalitpur, Godawari and Shankharapur) have established disaster information management systems. However, these municipalities do not update disaster-related information in the BIPAD portal on regular basis. Database of disaster events, affected households, households receiving relief, response and other services, along with DRR actions, is not systematically maintained in any of the sampled municipalities. Only 3 of the sampled 16 municipalities have certain level of record keeping of disaster

incidents and information on the households supported by the municipality. Though there are dedicated information technology officers, they are not well oriented on the reporting mechanism in the BIPAD portal.

Only 3 (19%) of the municipalities, viz Lalitpur, Godawari and Shankharapur, have established and are operating EOCs. The main reasons behind not establishing EOC are lack of resources, including trained persons, and dedicated role not being assigned to operate EOCs. Similarly, 3 (19%) of the municipalities, viz Kalaiya, Hetauda and Lalitpur, are equipped with fire brigades and trained staff. However, firefighters need to be trained in the latest fire safety measures. Firefighters have got specialized training in Lalitpur Metropolitan City and Makawanpur Sub-metropolitan cities, whereas they have received only operational-level training in Kalaiya Sub-metropolitan city.

The performance of roles and responsibilities was observed to be very weak in the municipalities of Madhesh and Karnali Provinces. This could be due to lack of common understanding of assigned roles and responsibilities among the federal, provincial and local governments. Similarly, they were not focused on strengthening DRRM system and structure. Table 4 summarizes the role and responsibilities discharged by the local governments.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DISCHARGED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

		Tirhut RM	Surunga Mun.	Gobazar Mun.	Manara Sisawa	Kalalya SMC	Jagarnathpur RM	Hetauda SMC	Thakre RM	Naukund RM	Helambu RM	Shankharapur Mun	Godawari Mun	Lalitpur MC	Nalgad Mun	Kushe Khalanga RM	Triveni RM	Total	Percentage
1	Formulate and implement the disaster management plan	√	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	7	44
2	Allocate DRM budget	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
3	Implement disaster management activities in collaboration with GOs/NGOs/volunteers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
4	Train local-level officials, employees, volunteers, social mobilizers and communities in disaster management	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
5	Enforce the Building Codes and other approved directives while constructing physical structures	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	—	√	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	6	37
6	Form disaster preparedness and disaster response committees at ward or community level	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	6	37
7	Conduct emergency mock exercises for immediate relief and response	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	4	25
8	Provide rescue and relief in disaster-affected areas	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
9	Monitor activities carried out by public organizations and business enterprises	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
10	Develop and operate disaster management information system/ BIPAD portal and prior warning system at local level	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	3	19
11	Establish and operate EOCs at local level	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	3	19
12	Maintain and update the record of documents lost, damaged or destroyed due to disaster	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	—	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9	56
13	Identify disaster-affected households, categorize them and distribute identity cards	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
14	Maintain the fire brigade and other equipment in ready position	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	—	—	3	19
15	Carry out other functions as per the decisions of federal/provincial DRM executive committees	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
16	Carry out other functions as prescribed in the area of disaster management (relief and response on flood, landslides, earthquake, epidemic)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100

4.2 DRRM POLICIES AND PLANS FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Policies and laws are important legal instruments that define the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government. The study found that policy documents are available at federal level (Annex 1); however, formulation and operation of required laws and policies in provincial and local governments is quite low. The local governments are expected to prepare at least Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, Local Disaster and Climate Resilient Plan, Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan, Disaster Management Fund Guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedure for EOCs.

The study found that 56 per cent of the municipalities (Kalaiya, Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund, Helambu, Shankharapur, Godawari, Lalitpur and Nalgad) had prepared Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. The remaining municipalities had not prepared Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act and plan owing to lack of technical capacity. Those who had not prepared the local Acts and policies rely on the federal Act and policies and act on the decisions of the local DRRM committee while executing the DRRM activities.

Altogether 44 per cent of the sample municipalities (Tirhut, Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund, Shankharapur, Godawari, and Lalitpur) had prepared and implemented LDCRP plans and 19 per cent had prepared disaster preparedness and response plans, considering fire, landslide and earthquake as major disasters, in coordination and collaboration with different organizations, CSOs and the private sector. The plans have been endorsed by the municipal councils, but they are not fully mainstreamed into the local development planning process. Other development priorities are prioritized over the priority actions mentioned in the disaster management plans.

Unlike in the past, when a ceiling was fixed to ensure budgeting for DRR actions, the local governments are not obliged to budget for DRR despite DRR being defined a priority area for budgeting. Consequently, in most of the local levels, these plans are merely limited to paper and rarely translated into action, raising questions on their rationale and contribution to DRR.

Similarly, 37 per cent of the municipalities (Hetauda, Naukund, Helambu, Shankharapur, Godawari, and Lalitpur) have prepared DRM fund mobilization guidelines. Decisions made by LDMCs adhering to the guidelines have helped these municipalities to effectively mobilize the available resources for disaster response.

The model guidelines developed by MoFAGA have been adapted without proper analysis of the context. None of these municipalities have defined the minimum relief standard. In fact, the elected representatives and municipal authorities express their limited understanding of the Sphere Standards, Core Humanitarian Standards and other relevant guiding principles for humanitarian actions and DRR. The municipalities which have not prepared

Box 2

“There is low level of physical facilities and resources in municipal office, particularly in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management section. This hampers the execution of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience Plan.”

- Anand Kumar Yadav, DRR focal person, Tirhut Rural Municipality, Saptari

DRM fund mobilization guidelines conduct LDMC meetings and recommend or endorse activities and budget for disaster relief and response activities. With the recommendation of LDMC meetings, municipalities have to release funds for the recommended activities or responses.

Among the 16 sampled municipalities, only 3 municipalities, viz Shankharapur, Godawari and LMC, (19%) have set up LEOCs and formulated standard operating procedure (SOP). Generally, IT officer is given the responsibility of day-to-day operation of local EOC. However, due to multiple priorities, LEOCs do not seem to have functioned or discharged their responsibilities as defined in the SOP, eg information management, coordination with stakeholders, implementation of plans and policies, and capacity building of stakeholders. Additionally, DRR is least prioritized by municipalities, there is limited data availability, and there is no investment in risk assessment and development of DRR and humanitarian mechanism. The priority of officers concerned has been on routine actions rather than on strengthening LEOCs. LEOCs were established with support from different projects. Once the project phased out, neither the community nor the federal or provincial government has held the local government accountable for their functioning. Local governments feel the need for LEOCs as an information management and knowledge centre and storehouse for rescue equipment, etc. However, dedicated staff are not assigned and, even if assigned, are not trained to operate LEOCs.

Remarkable progress has been made in formulating and implementing DRRM policies and plans in the local governments where executives and staff are aware and assisted by development partners. Nonetheless, ownership of these plans and policies is found low. In other municipalities, commitment and accountability have been found low on the part of both elected political and executive bodies in relation to formulating and implementing the DRM Act, policies and plans at local level.

Frequent transfer of executive officers and lack of a mechanism for monitoring and support system have also hindered progress. These plans are often NGO-led and consultant-driven, where community participation and representation, along with engagement of ward representatives, are ensured. These plans are hardly referred to by any of the municipalities in any emergencies. LDCRPs are prepared to meet the target rather than being based on a detailed analysis of vulnerable areas and communities. Hence, LDCRPs should focus on vulnerability assessment of areas and communities by potential hazards so that they are guided by this document whenever a disaster happens. Details of progress in formulating and implementing DRRM policies and plans by municipalities are given in Table 5.

4.3 DRM INSTITUTIONS AND STRUCTURE AT LOCAL LEVEL

As shown in Table 6, all 16 municipalities included in the study have formed LDMCs as per the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act and Guidelines. Of them, 56 per cent (Kalaiya, Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund, Helambu, Shankharapur, Godawari, Lalitpur, and Nalgad) have prepared, and have been implementing, local DRM Acts. The federal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act does not clearly mention about the representation of women, persons with disabilities, youth and elderly persons in LDMCs. Similarly, as the local DRM Acts follow the model Act issued by the MoFAGA, they do not ensure the representation of vulnerable people in LDMCs. Hence, the engagement of members from vulnerable groups is limited to representation, where they do not have much influence in decision making. Many of the positions in the LDMC are represented by institutions such as ward chairperson, NRCS, DRR expert, section officer/head, representative of political parties, etc. Hence, representation of women and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups on the committee is not guaranteed. For example, there are 17 members in LDMC of Lalitpur Metropolitan

City, representing organizations and staff. Similar is the case in other municipalities. The scenario is different in the case of WDMCs, where the participation of women and disadvantaged groups is ensured. This is mainly due to the fact that the local DRM Act requires the members to be part of the WDMC. For example, there are 9 members in the WDMC of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Ward no. 9, in which 4 members represent women and disadvantaged groups.

With limited access to DRR information and capacity development initiatives, the elected representative from women and disadvantaged groups have not adequately developed required knowledge and skills for DRR and hence are passive in raising the agenda of DRR in various relevant forums. This is evident in the leadership in the local government, where most of the municipal chairpersons and the chief of LDMC are male; similarly, majority of the ward chairpersons and members are male. Meanwhile, the deputy chairpersons,

who are mostly women, do not have budgetary decision-making power and are not engaged actively in DRM actions.

In majority of the municipalities, the participation of women, youth and vulnerable people in the committees as well as in the preparation of plans, guidelines, standards and policies is inadequate. Consequently, communities' special needs are often overlooked during response and other DRR initiatives. Its recent examples are the construction of isolation and quarantine centres without considering the special needs of women, youth, elderly, pregnant and lactating women, and persons with disabilities and the humiliation and embarrassment faced by excluded groups, such as LGBTIQ and people living with HIV AIDS in quarantine centres and shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic. This indicates that extensive dialogues and legally-binding provisions are needed to ensure the representation of women, youth and vulnerable groups in decision-making positions.

TABLE 5: DRRM LAWS, POLICIES AND PLANS FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

	Local plans and policies	Tirhut RM	Surunga Mun.	Golbazar Mun.	Manara Sisawa Mu	Kalaiya SMC	Jagarnathpur RM	Hetauda SMC	Thakre RM	Naukund RM	Helambu RM	Shankharapur Mun	Godawari Mun	Lalitpur MC	Nalgad Mun	Kushe Khalanga RM	Triveni RM	Total	Percentage
1	Local DRM Act	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	—	—	—	9	56
2	Local DRM fund mobilization guidelines	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	√	√	√	√	—	—	—	6	37
3	LEOC operational guidelines	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	3	19
4	LDCRP	√	—	—	—	—	—	√	√	—	√	√	√	√	—	—	—	7	44
5	Disaster response plan (fire, landslide, earthquake and fire)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	—	√	√	—	—	—	3	19

Nonetheless, there are some municipalities, such as Thakre and Naukund, that have developed gender and social inclusion guidelines to ensure the representation of women and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups across different committees, including DMCs.

Tirhut, Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund, Shankharapur, and Nalgad municipalities have formed disaster response teams (DRT) for first aid, search and rescue, etc. Each DRT consists of three–five trained members, mainly women and youth.

Emergency responses are gradually being more inclusive with lessons learnt from different disasters. During the second and third waves of COVID-19, the municipalities were found to have considered the specific needs of vulnerable people. Though inclusivity is discussed to certain degree in disaster management plans, those are not reflected in action across the sampled municipalities. Except Shankharapur, which has stockpiled some materials to assist birthing, no municipalities have stockpiled hygiene kits, dignity kits and assistive devices.

Disaster response and mitigation actions, such as foodstuff, clothes, WASH, hygiene kits and stationery, have least considered their usability from the lens of persons with disabilities, children and the elderly. Risk communication, which plays a crucial role in saving 'people's lives, has also least considered ethnic and linguistic diversities. Most of the PSA/IEC materials are broadcasted on television or published in the Nepali language, making them inaccessible to persons with disabilities and persons who are not proficient in Nepali. The blanket approach adopted by most of the municipalities should be reviewed to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Urban municipalities, which are complex structures and host people with diverse socioeconomic and political conditions, have

tried to include women and persons with disabilities in DRM actions. However, the urban poor and people living in informal settlements do not have access, representation and participation in urban DRR planning and implementation. Inadequate risk profiling and disaster information management system at local level and at-risk groups are less involved in risk assessment process (not inclusive implementation).

4.4 DRM FUND ALLOCATION AND EXPENSES BY MUNICIPALITIES

At local level, the fund for DRM is generally allocated through annual budget and disaster management fund. Several development agencies also contribute financially towards the DRR initiatives; however, these are not accounted in the government's financial statements. Review of two fiscal year budgets of the municipalities included in the study shows that approximately NRs 394.2 million (US\$3.15 million) was allocated and NRs 276.61 million (US\$2.21 million) was spent on different DRR initiatives. Municipalities have allocated DRM fund ranging from NRs 0.5 million (Nalgad) to NRs 5 million (Lalitpur). During the past three years, very few DRR activities were implemented by the municipalities. However, preparedness activities were implemented, mostly with support from INGOs/NGOs on project basis. Internal DRM funds were utilized by the municipalities mainly for conducting orientations for task force committee members (Tirhut and Godawari) and mitigation and maintenance works, such as gully/landslide control (Hetauda, Thakre, Naukund and Helambu) and maintenance of river embankments (Surunga, Manara Sisawa and Kalaiya). Major chunks of DRM funds were spent on COVID-19 responses, such as operation of quarantine and isolation centres, orientation, awareness and distribution of relief items, such as foodstuff and cash support to vulnerable households. Details of activities implemented by the municipalities using internal funds and project support are shown in Annex 2.

TABLE 6: LOCAL LEVEL DRM INSTITUTIONS AND STRUCTURES

	Local plans and policies	Tirhut RM	Surunga Mun.	Golbazar Mun.	Manara Sisawa Mu	Kalैया SMC	Jagarnathpur RM	Hetauda SMC	Thakre RM	Naukund RM	Helambu RM	Shankharapur Mun	Godawari Mun	Lalitpur MC	Nalgad Mun	Kushe Khalanga RM	Triveni RM	Total	Percentage
1	LDMC	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	16	100
2	WDMC/CDMC	—	—	—	—	—	—	√	—	√	√	√	√	√	—	—	—	6	37
3	Disaster Response Team (DRT)	√	—	—	—	√	—	√	√	—	—	√	—	—	√	—	—	6	19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, disaster management funds were established by all sampled municipalities, but only 37 per cent of them developed DM fund guidelines. In all municipalities, the funds were mobilized mainly for COVID-19 response, although the Disaster Management Fund Mobilization Guidelines clearly state that the fund should be utilized for disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and rehabilitation activities. The federal government had directed diversion of budget to COVID-19 response from other budget headings. The disaster focal person from Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City attributed the cancellation of planned capacity-building events to the government restrictions in the wake of COVID-19. The municipalities were found less active in spending the DM fund as it is transferrable to next fiscal year and is not frozen like other budgets.

Financial and material resources come from the federal government; local governments generate income through taxes and fees in lieu of various services. All the local governments have established disaster management funds by accumulating funds from federal, provincial, district and their own resources. Out of them, 37 per cent have also developed and endorsed fund mobilization guidelines. In almost all municipalities, a major chunk of DRM funds was spent on COVID response activities for the last two years.

As a large portion of the DRM fund was spent on COVID response by all local governments, it is obvious that they could not spend the allocated budget on capacity-building and preparedness activities. The study team explored the DRM activities for the last three years and categorized them under “preparedness”, “response”, “build back better/reconstruction”, and “DRM governance/accountability” (Annex 2). The DRRM activities were designed by the non-governmental and bilateral organizations that contributed to formulating policies and guidelines and strengthening the institutional aspects. It was also observed that the LDMCs were more active in response and less focused on preparedness and risk reduction measures. The budget and expenses were taken into consideration for the last two years; however, the budget and expenses of this fiscal year (2078/79) were excluded as the fiscal year cycle was not complete then. The study found that Golbazaar and Jagarnathpur municipalities spent almost all allocated budget; Tirhut and Godawari spent more than 90 per cent, and the remaining municipalities spent a budget ranging from 40 to 60 per cent of the allocated budget (Chart 1). Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City spent the lowest percentage (19.8%). The main reason for the discrepancies in expenses against the planned budget were flexibility of transferring the DRM fund from one fiscal year to another. Details of budget and expenses by municipalities and fiscal year are shown in Annex 3.

4.5 CHANGES PERCEIVED BY THE VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

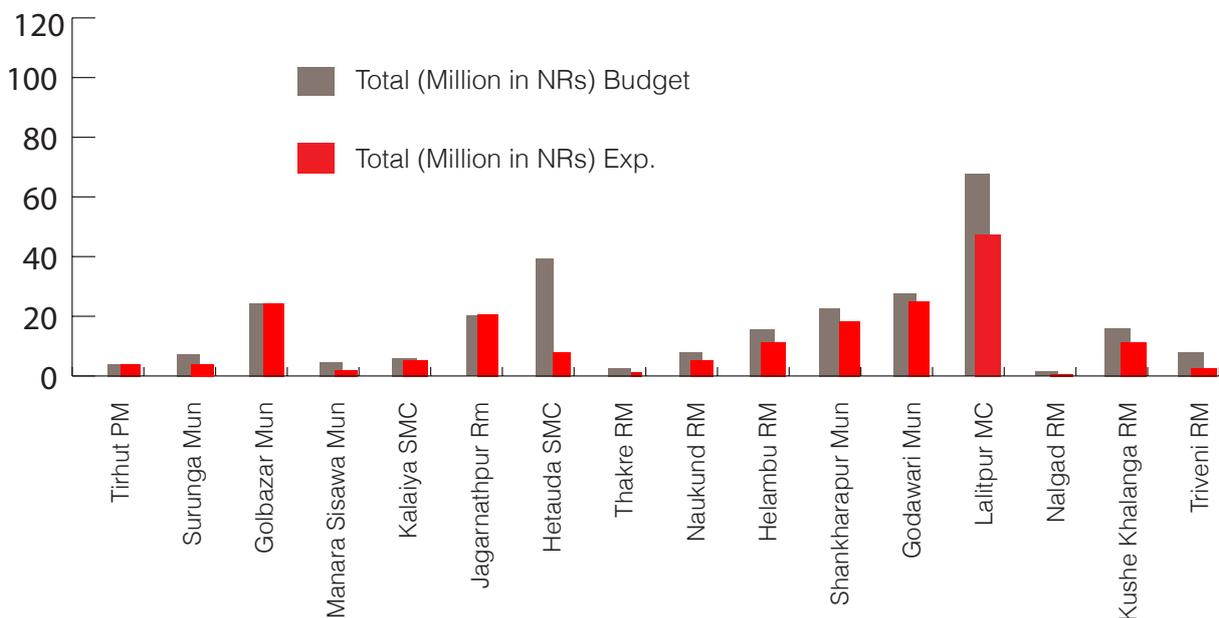
If the existing DRM Acts and policies are not fully implemented and executed at all levels of government, the communities at risk will only get nominal benefits, and no significant impact or tangible changes will be observed on the ground. A previous study also revealed that policy formulation and institutional setup cannot generate expected results unless technical capacity, ability and competence are in place to operationalize the DRM Acts and policies (Nepal et al., 2018).

The respondent communities expressed the view that the most important and useful support was COVID-19 response to needy people. For this purpose, the local governments had also mobilized resources from various sources. Each municipal ward identified the most vulnerable households based on criteria, such as no regular income/wage, disability, elderly and single women, etc and forwarded the list of selected households to the municipality concerned for distribution of relief food items and, in a few cases, cash. They acknowledged that the COVID-19 response had become a bit quicker and more accessible to them.

Communities expressed satisfaction over the quarantine centres built by the local governments in collaboration with development partners. However, voices of dissatisfaction over the quantity of food distributed were received from Nalgad, Triveni and Kushe municipalities. The food stuffs were distributed for a period of two or three weeks. In some of the sampled municipalities, the FGD participants claimed that relief distribution was politically influenced, and many real COVID-19-infected persons or families did not receive any support. More importantly, a large section of daily wage labourers who suffered the most due to loss of income could not receive adequate support from the local governments in the absence of robust database and information on such households.

On the contrary, even though the local governments collected information for providing relief support to the farmers whose paddy crop was destroyed by the flood following the incessant rainfall across the country in October 2021, no one had received any support till the time the study completed its field work in March 2022.

CHART 1 : DRM FUND ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE IN FY 2076/77-2077/78 (MILLION IN NRS)



In the case of informal settlements, those settled near the areas exposed to different hazards expressed that they were not recognized as permanent residents and were not provided any support by the local governments. Local governments refused to include people living in informal settlements in the planning process of the municipality and excluded them from basic services as they considered them illegal residents. On their part, urban poor gave priority to their livelihood to participating in any municipality meetings. In fact, they do not have access to the information on such meetings.

Residents from informal settlements have formed pressure groups and approach local governments to access basic services and participate in the governments' planning process. The local government representatives are not found supportive to them; rather, the ward offices favour eviction of informal settlements. The residents of informal settlements argue that the elected representatives promise to provide basic services during election campaign but do not deliver on their promises; so, they continue to live at risk.

On a positive note, the local leaders from informal settlements coordinate with CSOs for relief support during emergencies, such as the 2015 earthquake and COVID-19. The people in informal settlement are receiving government support based on their personal relations with elected representatives rather than as legitimate urban dwellers.

A few vulnerable communities from Tirhut, Surunga, Manara Sisawa, Kalaiya, and Hetauda expressed that the budget allocation for construction and repair of the gully control/river embankments was very useful in protecting their houses and land from floods. The investment in the conservation of a traditional pond in Shankharapur, Ward no. 6, for fire preparedness was appreciated by the people. In other municipalities, although community people have experienced somewhat "faster" humanitarian assistance,

Box 3

My house caught fire on January 28, 2022. The fire destroyed all food grain and utensils, killed domestic animals and rendered us homeless. The following day, Nepal Red Cross Society, Rajbiraj, provided tarpaulin, kitchen utensils and blankets. After a week, Tirhut Rural Municipality provided NRs 25,000 as immediate relief. Chairperson from Tirhut Rural Municipality also visited the affected families and provided them support. This was great support for us. Now we are exploring other sources to build small houses.

-Krishna Rajak, Resident of Tirhut Rural Municipality-3, Gothi

they have not experienced significant changes in case of government-led disaster preparedness and mitigation actions. This could be attributed to the fact that DMCs are not active, EOCs are not functional, there is little or no communication about the DRR plans and policies that have been developed, and investment in DRR initiatives is low. Contrary to the expectation of having improved community participation in community development and DRRM actions after restructuring of the governance structure and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, majority of the FGD participants expressed that local government had limited community interactions for planning.

Furthermore, the FGD participants from Helambu expressed that, with the formation of local government, development activities had gained pace. Nonetheless, some of the

concomitants of development activities, such as extensive use of heavy machineries in road construction, extraction of sand and rocks from rivers and hills, local government's increased income, and improved access to basic services, have also increased probability of greater impact of hazards.

4.6 ADOPTION OF NEW APPROACHES/INITIATIVES FOR DRRM

The ever-evolving DRR and humanitarian sectors have introduced multiple tools, techniques and modalities for effective DRR and humanitarian actions across the globe. Some of the most pertinent concepts and modalities are the Cash and Voucher Assistance, Shock-Responsive/Adaptive Social Protection, Anticipatory/Early Actions, use of information technology for informed decision making. Many development partners are piloting these initiatives in different parts of the country.

The GoN and other humanitarian organizations practised the Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) during the post-disaster emergency response and reconstruction phase. After the 2015 earthquake, it transferred money through bank accounts for the construction of damaged houses.

Similarly, monetary relief was provided to the households affected by floods, landslides and COVID-19 through bank cheques. Many municipalities, including Manara Sisawa, Nalgad Naukund and Helambu, piloted the CTP for the first time in coordination with different development partners. The authorities expressed their satisfaction with the rapid response as well as the freedom to the targeted households to meet their needs independently and with dignity.² They acknowledged that they did not possess adequate technical skills to independently design and execute the CTP. The study team also found various examples

² Shock-Responsive/Adaptive Social Protection

Box 4

“Before elected representatives came to power, community consultations used to be held on priority plans each year. Although power dynamics did play a role in prioritization of plans, at least some levels of consultation were held. But, now, local elected representatives do not value or hold community consultations. People have lost their opportunity to put forth their demands. Elected representatives now favour their party cadres to prioritize plans. Those having political access can have their plans included in the budget, but we commoners cannot,”

-An FGD participant from Tirhut, Saptari.

of payment or transfer of cash to disaster-affected families. For instance, Manara Sisawa and Nalgad municipalities distributed cash ranging from NRs 10,000–15,000 per household based on vulnerability criteria.

The DRRM policy and strategic action plan recognize CTP as a viable option for effective humanitarian response. Nonetheless, in the absence of government guidelines, the local governments have not been able to adapt their humanitarian response. Apart from CTP, other initiatives such as SRSP/Adaptive Social Protection and Anticipatory Action were not conducted in any of the municipalities.

Development partners are piloting these initiatives in Lumbini and Karnali provinces. Hence, it is likely that the sampled local governments have not received information on

such initiatives. In the absence of guidelines on SRSP and limited knowledge of early actions, these have not been formally introduced by the federal government. It is, however, uncertain if the sampled local governments will be able to adapt these new concepts in a situation when they do not have effective DRR institutions and limited translation of existing plans and policies into practice. The implementation of these initiatives is challenging also because of unavailability of robust data of the at-risk population, limited understanding of DRR and humanitarian response among the community, private sector and local governments, and low prioritization of DRR actions by the local governments.

4.7 HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES

After the Constitution of Nepal defined different roles and responsibilities for all three tiers of government, a number of policy documents have been developed by the local governments. Among them are DRR-related policies and plans. The local governments are expected to prepare at least Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, DRRM Strategic Plan, LDCRP, DPRP, LAPA, and annual plan. In the Nepalese context, many of the disasters are climate induced and multiple disasters occur due to unplanned development activities. Each of the aforementioned documents has room for harmonization. For instance, LDCRP, LAPA and DPRP are plan documents and contribute to DRR and climate change adaptation and mitigation. They should be integrated and mainstreamed in the annual development plans.

With the support of different development partners, 44 per cent of the municipalities have prepared Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, LDCRP, DPRP and/or LAPA. These are mainly driven by the project scope and not necessarily the interest of the municipalities. In fact, local authorities question the need for different documents.

Box 5

“There are multiple plan documents that have been, or are being, or are expected to be, prepared based on the guidelines from different ministries. Unfortunately, once these are prepared, they are hardly referred to again. These have become mere compliance. We spend huge resources on preparing these different documents but with no tangible impact. We are confused about what to prepare and what to use and what not to use. Had there been a single document that addressed the issues of CC and DRR, it would have been a lot easier to formulate as well as implement. The multiple documents are simply demanding resources beyond the capacity of local governments.

Chanda Khadka, Disaster and Environment Officer, Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City

The draft LDCRP guidelines try to integrate DRR and CCA in one plan; however, these attempts are limited to planning and are not integrated into the local-level planning process. This is evident from the fact that 44 per cent of the sampled municipalities have prepared LDCRP/DPRP, but only those that are supported by development partners have implemented some of the plans. An integrated approach to harmonize climate change and disaster risk plan report (OPM, 2019) also highlights that the efforts to harmonize climate change and disaster risk plans at local level are limited to donor-funded projects. The report further

states that no concrete efforts were made by the government to bring the two planning processes together. Utilization of the DM fund indicates that no budget has been invested in disaster preparedness and mitigation. Other municipalities have not prepared any DRM plans and some of the disaster mitigations actions are done on *ad hoc* basis.

MoHA is the focal ministry for DRRM; MoFE is the focal ministry for climate change, and MoFAGA coordinates with local governments to streamline DRR and climate change. Each ministry promotes the planning tools relevant to it, but the local level does not possess adequate skills, knowledge, human resources, and financial capacity as well as interest in developing these plans. Its implementation is a distant goal. Hence, a strong coordination mechanism among these ministries should be in place to harmonize climate change and disaster management. Bagmati and Karnali provinces have developed disaster management strategic plans, which include targets and strategic interventions related to DRR and CCA. Municipalities have also initiated to prepare a DRRM strategic plan; this will also be strategic guidance to harmonize disasters and climate change.

4.8 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DELIVERING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The federal structure defined by the Constitution of Nepal and defined roles and responsibilities of local governments in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 as well as Local Government Operation Act 2017. The local governments are required to contextualize the relevant policies, develop plans and carry forward risk informed development.

As the local governments possess a number of resources for development, it is possible to integrate DRR and CCA in development plans, raise awareness, coordinate and collaborate

with the communities for prioritizing inclusive risk reduction actions in communities. As the local governments enjoy the trust of the community, there is an opportunity for initiating DRR actions in partnership modality with the community, private sector and CSOs. There are opportunities for engaging the most vulnerable and needy communities in the planning process and for including their interests and concerns in the annual plan and budget, for instance, introduction of the Building Codes and bylaws in the municipality. For example, in Shankharapur, the local government introduced a separate building bylaw/code to promote the traditional architecture in the Newar settlements in Sankhu while carrying out post-earthquake reconstruction. This was coupled with different incentives. It also supported implementation of a building by law/code.

As a signatory of the SFDRR, the federal government is committed to developing an appropriate governance mechanism; the local governments can request the federal and provincial governments and development partners for necessary support in delivering on the commitments. The federal government has developed an Act, model guidelines and other documents. For example, MoFAGA and MoHA have formulated DM Fund Mobilization Guidelines and Environment-Friendly Local Development Guidelines for contextualization and formulation of appropriate documents.

Formulation of DRM laws and policies at central level has created an enabling environment to contextualize policies and plans at local level. There are different model policy documents in place; hence, their contextualization could really fill the policy and plan void in the local government. Opportunities exist to engage local people, including vulnerable communities, in formulating plans and policies. Similarly, integrating DRR and CCA issues is highly possible at local level, and work has been initiated to develop a DRM strategic plan and LDCRP. Those documents try to incorporate both disaster and climate change issues.

There is a shift in approach from response to preparedness and risk reduction at policy level; however, integration in developing plans and sectoral policies seems to be low at different levels of government. There is provision of a DRM fund in each municipality; however, it is not clear how to mainstream it into the development planning process. There is no clear mandate in the policy to allocate budget for DRRM. Budget allocation in the DRM sector seems to be on ad hoc basis, and the DRM fund mobilization guidelines and DRM plans are not followed. The local governments focused on COVID-19 response for the last two years and could not make the envisaged progress.

On the other hand, the local governments formed by elected representatives after two decades are expected by community to deliver development. Development is commonly understood as construction of roads and availability of water and other infrastructures. With people's high expectations and local representatives' urge to remain in power, "development" is prioritized over DRR actions. Resource allocation for DRR seems to have suffered from this mindset of both elected representatives and the community.

Since many of the municipalities were either formed or restructured recently, the local governments can establish robust risk governance for inclusive and resilient development.

The COVID pandemic also created a window for local governments and communities to emphasize the need for integrating DRR into development planning. It was another eye opener on the impact of disasters on all aspects of people's lives and evidence that disaster should not be a siloed action in development. Majority of the local governments utilized this opportunity to strengthen the health system in their municipalities with support from government and non-government agencies. Two years down the line, the priorities have again shifted to roads and water supply, and disaster and risks are being less considered in development planning.

Box 6

"There are too many responsibilities in the new federal structure to be fulfilled. We are worried how those Acts and policies can be decentralized without duplication of role. There is duplication of role and resources at different levels of government. We can improve and optimize the resources through system strengthening at different levels of government."

*Rishi Raj Acharya, Under Secretary,
MoFAGA*

The study team also found challenges in formulating and implementing the DRM policies and plans. The challenges include, but are not limited to inadequate knowledge and skills of local government representatives and bureaucrats; understaffing and high staff turnover; priority to infrastructure over DRM; and limited budget. The model documents shared by the federal government are mere papers as the local governments rarely have adequately skilled human resources to comprehend the document and contextualize them to local needs. The elected representatives and bureaucrats had limited understanding of DRR and what should be included in the policy, plans and Acts. The orientation conducted by the federal government was inadequate and the training participants were provided too much information in a very short time. They only picked up what interested them and very few of them were focused on DRR. Majority of the sampled municipalities are understaffed. The municipalities have on average 20–30 staff members with temporary assignment. This is exacerbated by high staff turnover. As a result, the staff members are overburdened with work. Therefore, they are likely to prioritize infrastructure work unless there is some disaster to respond to. This also indicates that though the policy has shifted its approach to preparedness, majority of local governments are response focused.

4.9 BARRIERS/OBSTACLES PERCEIVED BY RIGHTS HOLDERS/VULNERABLE GROUPS/URBAN POOR

Community participation, accountability and transparency of actions are key ingredients for disaster good governance. The local-level DRM structure is not inclusive and does not guarantee representation of women and vulnerable groups. The DRM Act and Guidelines do not have any clause or condition for mandatory representation of women and vulnerable groups in LDMC nor do they reserve quotas for them. . It clearly shows existence of a policy gap to ensure the representation of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process.

Vulnerable groups, such as women, senior citizens, youth and urban poor, are not invited to participate in the formulation of the DRM Act and policies at local level. However, they are invited during the need assessment and implementation at *Tole* or community level. Urban communities are fairly aware of the DRM Act and policies, whereas rural communities have negligible knowledge of the DRM policies. This is mainly due to low interest shown by communities themselves.

Nevertheless, disaster-affected communities, such as those from Helambu, Kalaiya and Manara Sisawa municipalities, have shown their interest in the DRM policies and provisions as they were recently affected by flood disasters. They were waiting for the response of local governments for compensation for the loss of paddy crops and other support. No community-level DRM structure was found in any of the sampled municipalities and communities. Hence, there was little opportunity to put their concerns. Local governments prioritize infrastructure activities, such as water system, road and sewerage, rather than DRR activities. If the messages and information related to hazards and risks are not properly disseminated among vulnerable groups, there is low possibility of their participation in the planning process and sharing their concerns.

Informal settlements in urban areas are challenging. There are no formal mechanisms to involve urban poor and other residents in the development planning process. Most of the respondents claimed that limited support was provided to the most affected people during disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic. All municipalities are focused on the management of isolation/quarantine centres and distributing foodstuffs.

The respondent communities claimed that the governments at different levels were not serious to retain the outgoing migrant workers who had returned home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The returnees had expected the government to explore employment opportunities for them, but this was not observed except in a few instances. There were no specific safety net and capacity-building programmes focusing on vulnerable communities in any of the municipalities covered by the study.

4.10 DECENTRALIZATION OF DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE: HOW POWER IS SHIFTING TO PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 and the Local Government Operation Act 2017 have provision for partnership with private and development agencies in localizing DRRM from federal to provincial to local governments. In the absence of a clear roadmap, the stakeholder engagement in localizing DRRM at local level has not made any significant progress (Gyawali et al., 2020). Sustained commitment at the political level seems to be contingent upon people's awareness of DRM and the degree to which citizens can participate in and monitor the provision of a safer environment. Traditions and experience in decentralized governance and a well-educated populace have been identified as important factors that contribute to progress (UNDP, 2007).

The study further explored the roles of federal and provincial governments in localizing the DRM Act, policies, strategies and plans. There are provisions in the Act and policies but they are not implemented at ground level. The Act and policies generally discuss the higher-level approach, such as institutionalizing DRRM but do not set out specific strategies for how this should be done to benefit the communities at risk.

Those local governments that have already developed local Act and Guidelines were relatively clear on their roles and responsibilities and extended structure at ward level. However, they have only allocated budget for capacity building and vulnerability assessment. Availability of model documents, such as disaster management fund guidelines and LEOC operation guidelines, have facilitated contextualizing the necessary DRR policies at ground level. However, no evidence was found in systematic planning and budgeting focusing on the most vulnerable people and places, except allocating budget for some maintenance work in river embankments in flood-prone Palikas of Madhesh and landslide-prone Palikas of hilly region, such as Naukund and Helambu.

DRM institutional structures with defined scope and activities have been set up at different levels of government; however, their involvement in system strengthening was low. There is no capacity enhancement plan with federal and provincial governments, except a few project interventions, which are not sufficient to cover widely and effectively. Local governments had low technical capabilities, and technical backstopping had to be provided by provinces and districts. There was no evidence of district- and province-level bodies providing such support. The district and provincial authorities have asked to report progress, but they have not provided any support in establishing a data information management system. If a disaster happened, all levels of government were involved, depending on the nature and scale of disaster, such as during responding to the COVID pandemic. The local governments have the authority to allocate DRM fund out of the total development fund received from the federal

government; however, there was no uniformity in allocating DRM fund and activities. Some of the Palikas have started allocating at least 5 per cent of their annual budgets to DRR activities.

The study team also did not find existence of any follow-up mechanism for formulating and implementing DRM Acts and policies at province and local levels. The team did observe the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other supporting agencies in formulating provincial DRM strategy and disaster management strategic plan documents in Bagmati and Karnali provinces. There are DRM projects supporting formulation and implementation of plans and policies at the local level, such as in Tirhut, Godawari, Shankharapur and Naukund municipalities. Other municipalities categorically stated that they needed further support in formulating DRM plans and policies with detailed vulnerability assessment. As vulnerability assessment is not done at household level, they are facing difficulty in targeting the most vulnerable, ie pregnant/lactating women, senior citizens, people with disabilities, children, etc, during response and support.

DRM focal persons in some municipalities have received the DRM localization training implemented by the Local Development Training Academy (LDTA). However, the outcome of the training has yet to be seen. Local governments are still expecting support from DDMC and other supporting agencies in formulating policies and plans and strengthening the institutional set up.

4.11 ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM AT LOCAL LEVEL

As the guardian of people, the local governments should be able to meet immediate needs, such as food, clothes, shelter, as the basic right of disaster-affected people and deliver them with dignity. It should develop an appropriate mechanism for ensuring communication between affected people and agencies or individuals providing humanitarian assistance, participation and inclusion of disaster-affected

communities, feedback, complaints and grievances and their resolution, financial accountability, community-led monitoring, evaluation and learning and hold other stakeholders to account for their actions.

The local governments acknowledge that it is their responsibility to keep people safe from disasters and minimize loss and damage of life and property. They, in collaboration with development partners, have initiated actions, such as DRM planning, implementation of plans, promotion of climate-resilient crops (Nalgad municipality), promotion of livestock insurance and property insurance (Shankharapur), etc. But the local governments have not included these in their annual plans. In the past, people experienced non-participatory decision making and poor accountability mechanism in the local governments. The FGD participants from Manara Sisawa and Kalaiya municipalities claimed that the local government had become more inaccessible to include the priorities of

the community while the political cadres had “captured” the annual planning process. Although the participation of community does not guarantee inclusion of the projects prioritized by the community in the annual plan of the municipality, at least people should have space to share their priorities. But, there is no transparency in the prioritization of plans in annual plan.

In the majority of the study municipalities, due to COVID-19, the municipal authorities were not able to organize social audits for two years. However, the elected representatives did share the progress of development activities with their communities.

People are more interested in infrastructure; there are rarely any requests and questions on the functioning of LDMCs and budget for risk reduction unless the risks are life threatening. It appears the communities are not aware of the accountability mechanism for effective DRR actions in their municipalities.

Despite DRR being defined as a major priority area for budgeting, there is no monitoring mechanism for monitoring by the federal or provincial governments or the community and making local governments allocate resources for DRR actions. In such a vacuum, the local governments have been prioritizing “development” work without much consideration to risk mitigation. This has left the vulnerable and at risk population at the mercy of their own disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation actions.

Citizens should be given the opportunity to understand the DRM programme and principles, monitor DRM activities, and provide appropriate feedback (UNDP, 2007). There is not much focus consciously on the quality and accountability aspects during relief support and response at local level. Majority of the local government authorities do not know about the Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standards.

Box 7

“NDRRMA is a nodal agency for implementing all DRM activities, but it is not able to extend its hand as much as it should. It is not able to interact with the local governments frequently; coordination is lacking; reporting from local governments to NDRRMA via DDMC and province is not intact for long. NDRRMA also needs to be strengthened in terms of capacity enhancement, staffing, equipment, role clarity, and coordination with other ministries.”

- Dr Dijan Bhattarai, Under Secretary,
MOHA/NDRRMA

During the COVID-19 response, the local governments followed the standards on quarantine and operation and management of isolation centres circulated by the federal government. Bagmati and Karnali provincial governments formulated standard guidelines on rescue and relief support for disaster-affected families, quarantine operation and management and followed the standards on the support package accordingly.

In response to COVID-19, the local governments provided food packages, sanitizers and masks to the most needy among the affected families in all municipalities. The selected households were provided relief items based on the need and available budget. The number of households receiving relief support varies, depending upon their immediate need and resource available with the municipality. Those families that do not have regular income and rely on daily wages were recommended by the ward and provided rice, pulses, edible oil, mask and sanitizer by the municipality through the wards concerned.

There was no transparency about the total value and quality of support items in any of the relief support. Dissatisfied voices were raised on quality and quantity of support in Kalaiya and Manara Sisawa municipalities through media, but no concrete action was taken to correct the weakness. The difference in quality and quantity was due to challenges in covering wider areas by humanitarian agencies due to nature of project, targeted areas for intervention, budget limitation in part of both humanitarian agencies caused.

The FGD participants from Jagarnath-4, Suhapur complained that, although they were provided food support by the local government, they were never consulted about their needs and the food was inadequate for them. It was quite unfair for people like them who must earn daily. They were forced to stay at home sacrificing their income and there was no way to manage food for their families. Moreover, if there was some medical emergency at home, they did not have enough money for health care. Had they been consulted, they could have expressed their needs to the government. It is evident that the government did not fully acknowledge the community as an important stakeholder in decision-making regarding relief support.

Normally, community group members and representatives of political parties come through the ward chairperson or directly with chairperson or mayor if there is a serious concern or issue at the community level. The study team did not find the government having any mechanism for collecting feedback during humanitarian assistance. The information on the feedback mechanism of the government is not communicated during humanitarian response. Nevertheless, some exemplary initiatives were taken by some of the municipalities in promoting accountability. For instance, separate monitoring committees were formed in Kushe, Triveni and Nalgad municipalities, which were given the responsibility of monitoring the humanitarian support and development projects.

CHAPTER V

**CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMEN-
DATIONS**

CONCLUSIONS

Based on an analysis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions are reached:

- The DRM Act, policies and regulations are milestones in disaster management. The policy documents are, however, focused on preparedness rather than on response.
- There is a shift in formulating the DRM laws, policies and regulatory framework. The policy framework and institutional setup will not give the expected results unless there is the ability to operationalize those into practice at ground level. There is a low level of priority and technical support to operationalize the DRM laws and policies at province and local levels.
- The investment in DRR/CCA is very low and relies on donor-funded projects.
- There will be more representation of vulnerable groups in the DRM cycle if DRM committees at the municipal and ward level are active. Participation of multi-stakeholders, including the private sector, local people and government at all levels, is required for the effective implementation of policies and plans.
- The provision of institutional setup and structure at different levels is a positive outcome in the DRM sector in Nepal. However, the roles and responsibilities of the different layers of government overlap, which will cause duplication of resources and efforts.
- The private sector is the major responder during response; however, they are not recognized as regular partners in the DRM sector.
- Harmonization of disasters and climate change is an important issue for different levels of government. The local governments are responsible for the

design and implementation of disaster and climate change mitigation efforts at ground level.

- A monitoring mechanism is to be formed and executed for implementing policies and plans on disaster and climate change efforts, focusing on the local level. There are differences in achievement across the municipalities and there is need for mapping out the support mechanism based on requirement.
- There is need for a watchdog which continuously engages with, and makes demand from, local governments for DRR. At local level, communities do not ask for DRR actions but for development and they do not even consider risk mitigation actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made for the federal, provincial and local governments for further improvement of the Disaster Risk Governance in Nepal:

Province/Federal government

- Roll out the recently enacted DRM Act, policy and regulations on disaster management at the local level with the technical support of the federal and provincial governments.
- Redesign and streamline the structure of LDMCs/Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) with gender and social inclusion policies to ensure the representation of women and other vulnerable groups.
- Provide technical and financial support to pilot new technology and skills, such as shock-responsive/adaptive social protection, anticipatory/early action.

- Mandate DRRM role to the Ministry of Home Affairs/National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority and integrate sectoral DRM actions in other ministries/departments. Enhance the coordination role for better planning and budgeting.
- Map the policies, plans and guidelines on DRR/CC developed by different ministries and departments to identify and avoid duplication and gaps in the sector's policy landscape.
- Formulate an integrated planning tool for DRR/CC endorsed and owned by the ministries concerned, viz Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Ministry of Home Affairs, and departments.
- Orient local governments and develop their technical capacity to administer the tools and formulate an integrated plan, as well as the existing LDCRP, LAPA, etc.
- The federal and province-level ministries should have strong commitment and coordinate the integration of DRR/CC. Set up a follow-up mechanism to assess the progress over time.
- Extend partnership with bilateral donors, UN agencies, INGOs/NGOs and banks for strengthening the legislative and institutional frameworks on DRRM and identifying innovative funding streams or mobilizing the existing funding streams to invest in the most vulnerable communities.
- To speed up the localization of the BIPAD portal, communicate minimum data requirement from the local governments while conducting household or critical infrastructure and service to incorporate information from perspective of risk and making those data compatible to the BIPAD portal.
- Amend the DRM Act and policy to ensure the representation of vulnerable groups, such as women, people with disabilities, youth, elderly, etc.
- Ensure accountability (including participation, transparency and feedback) at all levels (vulnerable communities, government authorities, sectoral departments and ministries) through a follow-up mechanism and performance indicators to mainstream DRR and humanitarian actions.

Local government

“ Invest in institutionalization of an inclusive DRR structure at palika, ward and community levels.”

- Allocate adequate resources for orientation and refresher training on the national legislation, policies, institutional mechanisms, humanitarian standard and assistance modalities for municipality office bearers and key staff.
- Operationalize LDMC, CDMCs and task forces, developing an annual plan that promotes youth and women leadership. Direct communication and visible actions engaging community should be carried out to mark their presence and establish ties in the community.
- Along with project-funded actions, allocate resources for initiatives of entire DRRM cycle through Disaster Management Fund instead of being response centric. Adequately finance to translate LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA into action, identifying additional funding streams, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), polluters pay principle, etc.
- Integrate and mainstream DRR/CCA in the sectoral and annual plans and budgets of municipalities for adequate financing to implement LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA and for resilience development.

- Promote and ensure community-led DRR activities by aligning with LDCRP, DPRP and LAPA for sustainability of project-led and government (co)-financed DRR actions for sustainability.
- Promote community's traditional knowledge and skills for DRRM.
- The local governments should identify the private sector, which for partnership in the DRM programme.
- Document and widely share the best practices.
- Pilot new approaches and techniques, such as cash transfer, risk transfer through insurance, etc.
- Amend and revise the local Acts and policies to ensure the representation of women and other vulnerable groups.
- Develop and ensure functioning of a transparency and accountability mechanism of local government at municipality, ward and community levels for effective and efficient engagement of community and vulnerable groups in the entire process of DRRM for improved governance.
- For effective operation of EOC, fill up required staff vacancies and train the staff in required skills such as the operation and updating of the DIMS/BIPAD portal.

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ANNEXES

1. EXISTING LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS ON DRM IN NEPAL

- Constitution of Nepal 2015
- Natural Calamity (Relief) Act 1982
- Local Self Governance Act 1999
- Water Resources Strategy 2002
- Health Sector Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plan 2003
- National Water Plan 2005
- National Strategy on Disaster Risk Management 2009
- National Adaptation Plan of Action 2010
- Wildfire Management Strategy 2067 (2010)
- Fire brigade Operation and Management Working Procedure 2067 (2010)
- Local Adaptation Plan of Action 2011
- Sendai Framework (2015-2030)
- National Disaster Response Framework 2013
- National Strategic Action Plan for Search and Rescue 2014
- Land Use Policy 2015
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017
- Local Government Operation Act 2017
- National Urban Development Strategy 2017
- National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018

- The Public Health Service Act 2075 (2018)
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Regulation 2019
- The Fifteenth Plan (2019/20-2023/24)
- National Climate Change Policy 2019

2. TYPES OF DRM ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FY 2075/76-2077/78)

Preparedness

- Awareness activities on disaster, COVID-19
- Preparation of LDCRP with the technical assistance of KVS/Himalaya Conservation Group (Tirhut RM)
- Fire, and earthquake safety training (Naukund)/Batas Foundation
- Climate Change Adaptation programme through Nepal climate change support programme (NCCSP-2) in Nalgad
- Simulation exercise, school level DRR activities (Godawari)/NRCS through SURE project
- Ward level risk mapping done by SURE project implemented by NRCS (Godawari)
- Stockpile of search and rescue materials; first aid ((Godawari), SURE/NRCS
- Installation of community fire alert sirens (Shankharapur), PRAGATI (ECHO)/Private sector partnership
- Task force training - search-and-rescue and first aid (Shankharapur, Godawari)
- Risk mapping, Emergency health response plan, Simulations and drills on fire and earthquake (Lalitpur)/ SAFER CITY Consortium

Response

- COVID-19 response in all municipalities which include, food items, management of isolation centre, quarantine centre, and equipment for COVID hospital
- Relief distribution for fire, flood-affected households (Tirhut, Kalaiya, Jagarnathpur)
- Ambulance and helicopter service (Helambu)
- Standby fire brigade and response (Shankharapur, Lalitpur)
- Tornado response (shelter/reconstruction) in Kalaiya
- Landslide/gully control (Thakre)
- Resettlement to Melamchi flood-affected families (Helambu)
- Retention wall (Helambu)
- Building code enforcement (Shankharapur)
- Landslide prevention (Naukund, Helambu)

Build Back Better/Reconstruction

- Enforcement of building code (rarely implemented in Rural municipalities)
- Repair/construction embankment/c (Surunga, Manara Sisawa, Kalaiya)
- Orientation on roles and responsibilities of WDMC, disaster response team/task force, volunteer mobilization (Godawari)
- LEOC operation (Shankharapur)
- MEOC Operation, Lalitpur)
- Public audit/Social audit (all)

DRM Governance/Accountability

3. DRM FUND ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE IN FY 2076/77-2077/78 (MILLION IN NRS)

SN	Municipalities	FY 2076/77		FY 2077/78		Total (Million in NRs)		Percentage
		Budget	Exp.	Budget	Exp.	Budget	Exp.	
1	Tirhut RM	1	0.86	5	4.8	6	5.66	94.3
2	Surunga Mun	6	4	5	1.5	11	5.5	50.0
3	Golbazar Mun.	16	16	19	19	35	35	100.0
4	Manara Sisawa Mun	5	2	2	1	7	3	42.9
5	Kalaiya SMC	2	1	6.5	6.5	8.5	7.5	88.2
6	Jagarnathpur RM	20	20	10	10	30	30	100.0
7	Hetauda SMC	32.2	10.5	25	0.85	57.2	11.35	19.8
8	Thakre RM	1.5	1	2.6	0.7	4.1	1.7	41.5
9	Naukund RM	2.6	1.9	9	6.3	11.6	8.2	70.7
10	Helambu RM	2	1.6	20.5	15	22.5	16.6	73.8
11	Shankharapur Mun	18	13	15	13.5	33	26.5	80.3
12	Godawari Mun	10	8	30	28	40	36	90.0
13	Lalitpur MC	38.9	27.23	58.3	40.81	97.2	68.04	70.0
14	Nalgad RM	0.9	0.46	1.5	0.5	2.4	0.96	40.0
15	Kushe Khalanga RM	8.3	5.6	15	11.1	23.3	16.7	71.7
16	Triveni RM	3.9	3.4	1.5	0.5	5.4	3.9	72.2
	Total	168.3	116.55	225.9	160.06	394.2	276.61	70.2

4. LIST OF RURAL/MUNICIPALITIES, METRO/SUB METROPOLITAN CITIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

SN	Province	Rural Municipality	District	Municipality	District	Metropolitan/ Sub-Metropolitan
1	Madhesh	Jagarnathpur	Parsa	Golbazar	Siraha	1.Hetauda sub-metropolis 2. Kalaiya sub-metropolis 3. Lalitpur Metropolitan
2	Madhesh	Tirhut	Saptari	Manara Sisawa	Mahottari	
3	Bagmati	Helambu	Sindhupalchok	Surunga	Saptari	
4	Bagmati	Naukund	Rasuwa	Godawari	Lalitpur	
5	Bagmati	Thakre	Dhading	Shankharapur	Kathmandu	
6	Karnali	Kushe Khalanga	Jajarkot	Nalgad	Jajarkot	
7	Karnali	Triveni	Salyan			
	3	7		6		3

5 (A). LIST OF FGD PARTICIPANTS

SN	Name	Represent from	Position
1	Durga Nanda Rajak	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
2	Siya Ram Safi	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
3	Shiva Narayan Safi	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
4	Krishna Rajak	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
5	Binu Sharma	Tirhut RM -3, GotWhi	
6	Gita Kumari Sharma	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
7	Bechini Rajak	Tirhut RM -3, Gothi	
8	Ajaya Chaudhary	Surunga Municipality Surunga 1, Tedhari	
9	Upendra Chaudhary	Surunga 1, Tedhari	
10	Mahesh Chaudhary	Surunga 1, Tedhari	
11	Birendra Chaudhary	Surunga 1, Tedhari	
12	Sheela Chaudhary	Surunga 1, Tedhari	
13	Sanju Chaudhary	Surunga 1, Tedhari	
14	Bindeshwor Yadav	Golbazar Municipality-2, Lalpur	
15	Abanda Kumar Yadav	Golbazar -2, Lalpur	
16	Runchi Devi Yadav	Golbazar -2, Lalpur	
17	Pramila Yadav	Golbazar -2, Lalpur	
18	Phuljhari Yadav	Golbazar -2, Lalpur	
19	Ramji Prasad Yadav	Golbazar -2, Lalpur	
20	Sushil Kumar Sahani	Manarasisuwa Municipality-4, Sarapamlo	
21	Shyam Sahani	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	
22	Satish Sahani	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	
23	Ram Sewak Sahani	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	
24	Nagina Sahani	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	
25	Jagana Sahani	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	
26	Mira Kapar	Manarasisuwa-4 Sarapamlo	

27	Rajan Shah	Kalaiya SMC-5,Ghusumpur	
28	Shanta Karki	Kalaiya SMC-5,Ghusumpur	
29	Renu Kushwaha	Kalaiya SMC-5,Ghusumpur	
30	Shova Sharma	Kalaiya SMC-5,Ghusumpur	
31	Rohan Kumar Singh	Kalaiya SMC-5,Ghusumpur	
32	Chanda Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
33	Amita Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
34	Shanti Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
35	Badki Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
36	Tara Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
37	Gulabi Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
38	Bhagaratiya Devi	Jagarnathpur RM-4, Suhapur	
39	Ram Hari Sharma	Hetauda SMC-5, Piple	CFUG, Chairperson
40	Devi Prasad Dahal	Hetauda SMC-5, Piple	Tole Dev. Committee Chairperson
41	Kamala Khadka	Hetauda SMC-5, Piple	Member TDC
42	Pampha Lama	Thakre RM-6, Ranibari	
43	Shiv Lal Shrestha	Thakre RM-6, Ranibari	
44	Indra Tamang	Thakre RM-6, Ranibari	
45	Santa Hamal	Thakre RM-6, Ranibari	
46	Sushila Subedi	Thakre RM-6, Ranibari	
47	Amir Maharjan	Lalitpur MC-9, Chaysal	Ward member/DRR focal person
48	Keshar Man Benjankar	Lalitpur MC-9, Chaysal Mankakhala	Member
49	Bindeshwori Shakya	Lalitpur MC-9, Saptakhel Women Group	Chairperson
50	Indra Kumar Limbu	Joint Informal Settlement Alliance, UttarGanga Basti, LMC-9, Balkumari	Chairperson, District Alliance
51	Lek Bahadur Sunar	Uttar Ganga Basti, LMC-9, Balkumari	Alliance Institutional member
52	Himal Lama	UttarGanga Basti, LMC-9, Balkumari	Informal Settlement, Balkumari, Secretary
53	Anar Mochi	UttarGanga Basti, LMC-9, Balkumari	Resident
54	Kumari Tamang	UttarGanga Basti, LMC-9, Balkumari	Resident
55	Kamal Khatri	Youth Network, Kushe-4	Member
56	Kriti Bahadur Shahi	Ward, Kushe-4	Ward Chairperson
57	Laxman Singh	WDMC, Kushe-4	Member
58	Devika Shahi	WDMC, Kushe-4	Member
59	Mohan BK	Disaster affected community, Nalgad-5	
60	Sunil Kumar BK	Disaster affected community, Nalgad-5	
61	Kamal Khatri	Youth Network, Kushe-4	Member
62	Kriti Bahadur Shahi	Ward, Kushe-4	Ward Chairperson
63	Samjhana Kshetri	Disaster affected community, Nalgad-5	
64	Dev Bahadur Chalaune	Disaster affected community, Nalgad-5	
65	Parwati Thapa	Srijansil Tole Wikas Samiti, Triveni-3	
66	Suklal Rana	Srijansil Tole Wikas Samiti, Triveni-3	

67	Hem Bahadur Woli	Srijansil Tole Wikas Samiti, Triveni-3	
68	Gomjen Thokar	Parchhyang Senior citizen Samaj Samuh-3, Naukunda	
69	Tarsang Thokar	Parchhyang Senior citizen Samaj Samuh-3, Naukunda	
70	Chhiring Lama Ghale	Parchhyang Senior citizen Samaj Samuh-3, Naukunda	
71	Lopsang Sherpa	Disaster affected community, Helambu 7	
72	Gelong Lama	Disaster affected community, Helambu 7	
73	Dawa Lama	Disaster affected community, Helambu 7	
74	Jhuma Purkuti	Dalit women member Ward number 1, Godawari	
75	Nani Maiya Karki	Section Officer, Women and Child Development Unit, Godawari	

5(B). LIST OF KII PARTICIPANTS

SN	Name	Represent from	Position
1	Ananda Kumar Yadav	Tirhut RM -3	DRR Focal person
2	Ashok Kumar Singh	Tirhut RM -3	Administrative Officer
3	Rama Nanda Chaudhary	Tirhut – 3	Account Officer
4	Gajendra Sharma	Surunga Municipality	Chief Executive Officer
5	Tek Bahadur Khadka	Surunga Municipality	DRR Focal
6	Indra Pd. Chaudhari	Surunga Municipality	Engineer
7	Sarwan Chaudhary	Kosi Victim Society, Saptari	Project Coordinator
8	Dev Narayan Yadav	Kosi Victim Society, Saptari	Executive Director
9	Dev Nath Sah	Golbazar Municipality	Mayer
10	Sunil Kumar Yadav	Golbazar Municipality	DRR Focal
11	Dinesh Kumar Sahani	Golbazar Municipality	IT Officer
12	Ranajit Kumar Yadav	Manara Sisuwa Municipality	Chief Administration Officer
13	Durges Kumar Singh	Manara Sisuwa Municipality	DRR Focal
14	Ramji Mandal	Kalaiya SMC	DRR Focal
15	Najbullaha Ansari	Kalaiya SMC	Health Section Chief
16	Suresh Kumar Yadav	Kalaiya SMC	IT Officer
14	Jalim Miya	Jagarnathpur RM	Chairperson
15	Dipendra Chaudhary	Jagarnathpur RM	Planning Officer
16	Manjula Aahamad	Jagarnathpur RM	DRR Focal
17	Usha Yadav	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, Madhes Province	Legal Officer
18	Dr Mukti Narayan Sah	Ministry of Social Development	Head, Health Sector
19	Sujit Jha	Ministry of Forests and Environment, Madhes Province	Community Forest Officer
20	Usha Gautam	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, Bagmati Province	Legal Officer
21	Narayan Prasad Pokhrel	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, Bagmati Province	Spokesperson
22	Asruti Pokhrel	Ministry of Forests and Environment, Bagmati Province	Legal Officer
23	Chanda Khadka	Hetauda SMC	DRR Focal

24	Shanti Biswokarma	Hetauda SMC	Section Head, Disaster Response and Waste Mgmt.
25	Rajendra Prasad Acharya	Thakre RM	Chairperson
26	Sabin Singh Chaudhary	Thakre RM	Chief Administrative Officer
27	Sandip Dhakal	Thakre RM	Engineer
28	Mahadev Joshi	Thakre RM	Employment Assistant
29	Harischandra Lamichhane	Lalitpur MC	Senior Engineer/DRR Focal
30	Gum Bahadur Lama	Nepal Informal Settlement Society	Former President
31	Mr Member Thing	Naukund RM	Ward chairperson
32	Mr Krishna Dahal	Batas foundation, Naukund RM	Programme head
33	Mr Nima Gyaljen Sherpa	Helambu RM	RM chairperson
34	Ms. Anita Bohora	Godawari Municipality	Disaster focal person
35	Jyoti Rawat	Nalgad Municipality	Women development
36	Balbir BK	Education & Health unit	Education head
37	Tek Bahadur Raut	Nalgad Municipality	Mayor
38	Keshav Prasad Sharma	Nalgad 3	Ward chairperson
39	Kiran Thapa	Nalgad Municipality	Account officer
40	Juna Shahi	Nalgad Municipality	Information officer
41	Pahalwan Wali	Triveni RM	Information officer, LDMC Member
42	Santosh Sapkota	Triveni RM	Account Officer, LDMC Member
43	Prabhat Kumar Shrestha	Triveni RM	Health Chief, LDMC member
44	Man Bahadur Dangi	Triveni RM	Mayor, LDMC coordinator
45	Bishnu Prasad Shrestha	Shankharapur Municipality	Ward Chairperson-7
46	Dr Dijan K. Bhattarai	MOHA/NDRRMA	Under Secretary and Spokesperson
47	Rishi Raj Acharya	MOFAGA	Under Secretary/ Head of Disaster and Environment
48	Krishna Bdr Rokaya	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, Karnali Province	Disaster Mgmt. Section Head

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