

ABSTRACT

People and environment become more vulnerable when natural disasters strike in a vulnerable community; and for Bangladesh vulnerability to natural disaster is rooted into its geographic location as it is the world largest delta compounded with a series of hydro - meteorological and geo-physical factors. Furthermore the impacts of climate change have triggered the events of acute natural disasters as flood and cyclone in Bangladesh. The vulnerability of these disasters severely compromises with the rural livelihood capitals of at risk community and existing ecosystem.

It is believed theoretically that Ecosystem Management Approach as a better alternative for sustainable livelihood restoration after any disaster. Based on this ground, this study has been carried out in 4 districts of Bangladesh. Two of them are from riverine flood prone and two districts are from coastal-cyclone prone areas.

The study has outlined livelihood capitals of at risk community, their coping and adaptive strategies and the options for ecosystem approach. The information was collected through participatory methods followed by DIFDs livelihood analysis guidelines. This study was aimed to observe the relationship between ecosystem management approach in livelihood restoration initiatives at disaster prone areas through a multi- scale approach that combines local and scientific knowledge.

The study showed that the ecosystems of both the areas have undergone various short-term and long-term cyclical changes due to frequent disasters, unplanned developmental efforts, management practices of local institutions over time. It has also demonstrated the dynamic interaction between livelihood and ecological systems, and the played institutional gaps and changes to cope during aftermath of disasters.

Each time a natural disaster exacerbates its impacts on environmental elements and vice versa, which affects natural processes, alters resource base and increases vulnerability of at-risk communities. Although environment and disasters are inherently linked, but surprisingly the ecosystem management approach is not integrated yet with implementation practices of sustainable livelihood and other disaster risk reduction options. Specific issue-based initiatives on livelihood and ecosystem management focusing on comprehensive risk reduction through developing frameworks are inevitable. This would further strengthen vertical and horizontal integration by engaging related sectors and concerned organizations.