Background

India is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, and much of the country’s geographical area is prone to hazards such as cyclones, floods, landslides, droughts and earthquakes. According to the World Bank, direct losses from natural disasters have been estimated to amount close to two percent of India’s Gross Domestic Product and up to 12 percent of central government’s revenues. In the past three decades alone, the country has faced approximately 25 major disasters. This is in addition to smaller climatic events such as heat waves, cold waves and heavy winds. India’s growing population, diverse geo-climatic conditions, topography, environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, industrialization, and unregulated development practices have also contributed to increasing the intensity and frequency of disasters. The country’s increased exposure to risks requires greater preparedness at national, state and district levels.

For nearly two decades, UNDP has supported national and state governments in developing comprehensive disaster risk management programmes. This included strengthening legislative systems, implementing activities that help communities prepare for disasters, managing urban risk, planning for recovery and so on. Over the past two decades, UNDP’s engagement with India on disaster risk management has evolved from relief and sustainable recovery efforts (such as those provided in the aftermath of Maharashtra earthquake (1993), Orissa cyclone (1999), Gujarat earthquake (2001) and the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004)) to comprehensive disaster risk management (DRM) and then programmes focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Both DRM and DRR programmes were undertaken in partnership with the Government of India with support from a number of partners such as European Union, United States Agency for International Development, Government of Japan, Australian Agency for International Development, Department for International Development, Government of United Kingdom, and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Between 2013 and 2017, UNDP’s partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs focuses on enhancing the resilience of communities to disaster and improving their capacity to respond the emerging challenges of climate change and rapid urbanization.
About the project

The project 'Enhancing Institutional and Community Resilience and Climate Change' will support efforts to strengthen capacities of government, communities and institutions to accelerate implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation plans.

More specifically, the project will-
• Provide high-level national and international technical expertise on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. This will include risk assessment, establishment of early warning systems, design and implementation of mitigation activities, etc
• Provide high-quality expertise to help mainstream disaster risk reduction as per the 12th Five-Year Plan
• Build capacities by working with training institutions that can in turn deploy trainers/resource persons at the sub-district level
• Develop capacities of vulnerable communities with governments support to enhance their resilience to cope with disasters and climate variability
• Set up a Knowledge Management Centre at the national level to promote systematic collection, storage and analysis of all data, and to share experiences through knowledge management initiatives. This Centre would work in close collaboration with the UN Solution Exchange Network

Developments so far

• Communities in Puri district of Odisha are better able to adapt to extreme weather conditions through demonstration of approaches to encourage community-based water resource management. As a result of project interventions crop yield has increased three-fold, better drainage systems have enabled farmers to start farming earlier in the year and close to 2,100 hectares of land was cultivated in 2012, more than three times that of 2011 in Bambbarada village of Puri. In addition, villages have piped water supply and incidences of water-borne diseases are declining
• Five other locations in Puri district identified to renovate and strengthen drainage systems in waterlogged areas. This will enhance the productivity and yields of paddy crop
• Sharing of knowledge enabled through the launch of the Knowledge Network Centre at IIT Kanpur which aims to develop resilience and help communities adapt to floods and waterlogging. (http://www.waterwoes.iitk.ac.in). The Centre encourages communities, policy experts and field practitioners to design better strategies for sustainable management. Training will also be provided in the areas of climate change, water resources, and adaptive water management practices to practitioners from two states- Bihar and Odisha
• A manual on crop water budgeting developed to deal with climate change in drought prone regions. Crop water budgeting exercise involves estimation of the groundwater balance based on the total recharge and draft for the particular monsoon season. The estimation helps farmers make informed decisions on the crops to be sown
• Community institutions strengthened to employ participatory groundwater monitoring systems
• National, state and community level expert group learning exercises conducted in Odisha, with special focus on women and children who face recurring waterlogging and flooding. The exercises were conducted to enable both experts/policy makers and field based practitioners to come up with action oriented recommendations
• Better understanding of hazard risk in Khargone district, Madhya Pradesh through completion of Hazard Risk Vulnerability Analysis in the district
• Enhanced resilience of small and marginal farmers through introduction of crop pattern change (mixed cropping and resilient crops) and soil and water conservation activities
• Panchayat Knowledge Resource Centre set up in Puri district in Odisha provides grassroots information on adaptive water and agricultural practices underway that can build resilience of communities

Looking to the future

• Integrate disaster risk reduction into at least four identified national flagship programmes as proposed in the 12th Five-Year Plan
• Establish climate risk management systems in eight Municipal Corporations
• Strengthen eight state training institutes with master trainers and modules for training disaster management functionaries on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation
• Establish state-of-the-art knowledge sharing system at the national level
• Implement community-based pilot initiatives in 20 villages

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