

INDIA'S POST DISASTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PDNA) NEEDS A SOP DISRUPTION

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Stakeholders & practitioners of disaster risk reduction have practiced and approached disaster from a lens of a Standard Operating Protocol with limited cross sectoral convergence. Unfortunately, whether we like it or no, planetary outcomes and nature's approach to weather events have no protocols. Thus, we need to approach a post disaster scenario from a perspective of organized chaos instead an SOP. Organized chaos to the extent of having multiple scenarios leading into the future, ascertaining risk informed assessment, drawing a social, commercial, economic, environmental determinants of health perspective, mainstreaming future riskscape that will possibly repeat the disaster factoring in climate change crisis.

Let us resign to the fate that our times now and perhaps our generation is dealing with a planet which is more warm, more noisy, more polluted, more crowded, has lesser species that exist, thrives on contamination and altered environmental cycles and is not the same that we inherited. The concern is glaring, because the speed at which we act, and the speed at which nature acts is difficult to gage.

There is an urgent need for India's policy to have a new algorithm to approach disasters with spill over impact on global health outcomes, diplomacy, trade and economy. The assessment that emerges from a Post Disaster Needs cannot be built on historical evaluations over time, but must rise to a new age reality of envisioning and predicting future risks which will help strengthen the recovery and rehab process not just from a short-term perspective but from a perspective to build back better in the true sense of the term.

The human brain controls most of the activities of the human body and also engages in co-ordinating, processing, integrating information from the sense organs with instructions to be received by the rest of the body.

Likewise when we approach Post Disaster Needs Assessment for a community or a bunch of individuals, we need to factor in all aspects of existence, including animals which are often non-existent in most assessments, let alone beautification initiatives for plantations and preservation of natural habitats.

We need to view nature as a social collective in which we co-exist. Climate and nature is a common resource meant for all and belonging to all. At a very high level, it is linked to all essential needs of human life by itself. Can we then not look at PDNA from a perspective of lifestyle, consumption, production, human factors that influence its outcomes during recurrence?

Here's what I would suggest how a PDNA assessment should look like moving forward for India and also for the Indo-Pacific Region:

1. Formulate a cross-sectoral thematic recovery needs
2. PDNA must imbibe a one-health planetary approach
3. Social health must be at the heart of recovery assessment
4. Identify at least 3-5 NGOs in every state who are skilled to conduct PDNA and also on-board new NGOs in every district
5. PDNA must focus on cities differently and rural areas differently with customized sub-national assessments which are built on local geographical priorities
6. A special emphasis on resilience & human development must be factored in with sectoral vulnerability assessments.
7. PDNA must explore ways to incorporate happiness as a social consciousness that can build deeper resilience among societies
8. PDNA must evaluate Fossil Fuels End Game in assessment areas
9. PDNA should look at leveraging technology-based methods to plug existential gaps
10. Assessment must factor in Inter-generational solidarity and build teams to enhance and co-create knowledge transfers for better outcomes.