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Dissertation title:

Disaster Preparedness at Household and Community
Levels: The Case of Cyclone Prone Coastal Bangladesh

Summary

This dissertation studied an extremely cyclone-prone and poverty-stricken area of coastal Bangladesh known as Koyra sub-district in Khulna district. In this context, face-to-face questionnaire surveys with 420 households and 40 community disaster-managers were performed on the behaviors and living status before and after the cyclone Aila that made landfall on 29 May 2009. Based on those survey data, together with extensive and systematic literature survey, the dissertation analyzed, with the help of parametric and non-parametric statistical tools, the key factors of evacuation and preparedness that are considered central to the drastic reduction of deaths tolls by tropical cyclones and storm surges in past several decades in Bangladesh. It was found that the household level evacuation decision was closely associated with credibility of early warning, accessibility to shelters, risk perception, and participation to preparedness training. Furthermore, a significant association also found for households between their participation to preparedness training and the resilience against disaster-shocks measured by consumption and asset changes before and after a cyclone. In the community level survey, it was found that a good number of actions has been carrying out over last five years to enhance the awareness of at-risk people on disaster risks where the implementations of these actions were found inconsistent due to overlapping activities of local stakeholder agencies. Such findings of overlapping implementations provide clear clues to improve local actions. Based on integration of those findings the thesis concluded with several policy recommendations including the importance of local languages, use of symbols for communication, promotion of participation to preparedness trainings and good cooperation between GOs and NGOs.