

Theoretical Analysis of Humanitarian Aid Driven Cyclone Aila (2009) Recovery at Koyra Upazila of Bangladesh

○Md Shibly SADIK, Hajime NAKAGAWA, Rajib SHAW, Md Rezaur RAHMAN, Kenji KAWAIKE

The role of humanitarian organizations in disaster response is growing in Asia with lots of success stories and criticism[1]. With this trend, NGOs have grown to become an important sector for development in Bangladesh[2]. Their contribution in disaster management especially in improving community resilience are published at international level [3]. In contrary, aid effectiveness, accountability, coordination of humanitarian aids in disaster response are being questioned with field evidence[4], [5]. This research was designed to examine the post-disaster recovery in Bangladesh taking cyclone Aila recovery in Koyra as a case. On May 25, 2009, a weaker cyclone (named as Aila) with 4-5 m storm surge struck Bangladesh coast[6]. The damage and people suffering outweighed the impact of any severe cyclone struck in recent time[7]. Humanitarian agencies quickly responded with humanitarian assistances and recovery aids. Nevertheless, people suffering, ongoing vulnerability, and repeated tidal floods are still visible. This situation motivated to initiate a research on examining recovery activities with an aim of developing an indicator framework for measuring resilient recovery. At this initial stage, attempts were made to reconstruct recovery story line and timeline of implemented recovery projects. Thereafter, a matrix of implemented recovery activities was developed. Subsequently, the coordination structure and mechanism prevailed at that time were examined. This research carried out in a mixed mode of literature review based theoretical analysis and field-based stakeholder analysis. The institutional survey, interview of key officials, evidence seeking, document

checking, field observation and Focus Group Discussion were methods applied entirely for this research. The practice helped to understand the overall aspect of recovery from planning to implementation, and the humanitarian aid coordination mechanism at the local level. This understanding ultimately helped to take this study further towards an indicator based diagnostic analysis of recovery from a context of pre-disaster vulnerability reduction which is ongoing. These pre-steps of the ongoing research revealed few findings: i) There are some remarkable shifts in overall disaster management practices (Table 1), ii) Humanitarian aid driven recovery supports were focused on relief and short-term measures, ii) weakness of the NGO coordination structure at the local level.

Table 1: Shifts in Disaster management in Bangladesh

Major Dimension	Focus before Cyclone Sidr (2007) and Aila (2009)	Major transition and Shifts in Post Cyclone Sidr and Aila era
Early Warning, dissemination and evacuation	Sea-Port based early warning system	No change
	Radio and community miking	Use of Multi-media (mass media to community miking), Mobile phone based services
	Self evacuation to cyclone shelters	Volunteer guided evacuation
Disaster Response	Emergency Relief (Cash, food, clothes, medical, etc)	Relief (food and Non food items), Cash for work
	Un-coordinated relief and response operation	National level coordination structure, Joint Need Assessment,
	Emergency Repair of infrastructure	Early Recovery of Livelihoods. Rehabilitation of critical infrastructures
	Cluster Village/shelter home for homeless	House reconstruction support
Disaster Preparedness	Plan and act in post disaster period	Pre-disaste logistic planning and storage for response operation
Overall Disaster Management Approach	Emergency Relief Operation	Pre-disaster preparedness and post disaster recovery
Realizaiton on Missing links	Coordination, Logistic Planning, Preparedness	Pre-disaster Recovery Planning, Humaniterian Coordination at local level. True Application of Resilience Concept in Recovery

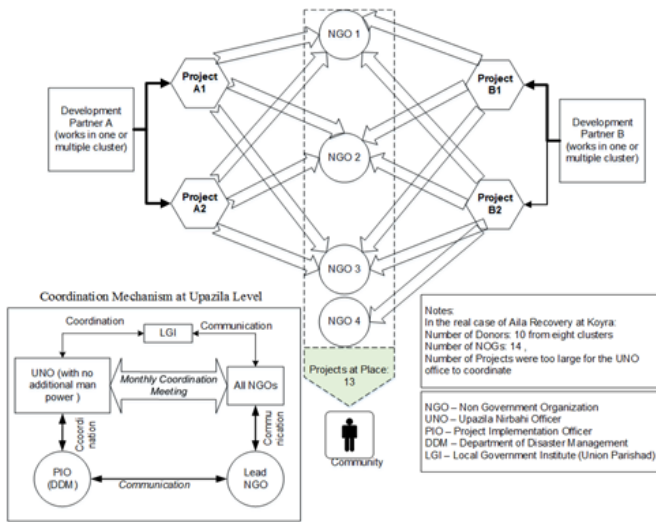


Figure 1: NOG Coordination at Local Level

Figure 1 graphically represents the prevailing NGO coordination structure at the time of recovery. The number of humanitarian aid supported recovery projects suddenly rose to a very high number along with the number of implementing NGOs. The office of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (the top executive office at local government) was the responsible for ensuring coordination. At the post-disaster time, it became a burden for the UNO office to ensure coordination whereas the office campus was inundated and it had its own emergency relief programs to coordinate. Similar to other developing countries, the Local Consultative Group was established to ensure national level coordination of humanitarian aids following the Paris Declaration (2005). Although the role of LCG structure in ensuring coordination is always criticized [8], this research suggests that the LCG should extend their structure to the local level and should work in an integrated way with local government to ensure humanitarian aid coordination at the local level. Otherwise, the criticisms of NGOs for the lacking accountability, coordination, and harmonization with local needs [4], [5] cannot be resolved.

References:

[1] Y. Osa, "Growing Role of NGOs in Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance in East

Asia," in *A Growing Force: Civil Society's Role in Asian Regional Security*, Rizal Sukma and James Gannon, Eds. Japan Center for International Exchange, 2013, pp. 66–89.

[2] M. R. Islam, "Introduction:NGOs, Social Capital and Community Empowerment," in *NGOs, Social Capital and Community Empowerment in Bangladesh*, Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2016, pp. 1–5.

[3] B. Ahmed, I. Kelman, H. Fehr, and M. Saha, "Community Resilience to Cyclone Disasters in Coastal Bangladesh," *Sustainability*, vol. 8, no. 8, p. 805, Aug. 2016.

[4] T. Mahmud and M. Prowse, "Corruption in cyclone preparedness and relief efforts in coastal Bangladesh: Lessons for climate adaptation?," *Glob. Environ. Chang.*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 933–943, 2012.

[5] R. Islam and G. Walkerden, "How do links between households and NGOs promote disaster resilience and recovery?: A case study of linking social networks on the Bangladeshi coast," *Nat. Hazards*, vol. 78, no. 3, pp. 1707–1727, Sep. 2015.

[6] IFNet, "Report: Cyclone AILA, May 2009 - IFNet," *Flood Information*, 2009. [Online]. Available: <http://www.internationalfloodnetwork.org/aila.htm>. [Accessed: 07-Sep-2016].

[7] B. Mallick and J. Vogt, "Population displacement after cyclone and its consequences: empirical evidence from coastal Bangladesh," *Nat. Hazards*, vol. 73, no. 2, pp. 191–212, 2014.

[8] M. Mustafizur Rahaman and N. Ahmed Khan, "The Realities of Aid Harmonisation and Aid Effectiveness: Views from Bangladesh," *Asia Pacific J. Public Adm.*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 107–122, Jun. 2010.