

Disaster Management: A Core Area of Social Work Intervention (A Systematic Literature Review)

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Abstract

A disaster means a misadventure and serious natural or manmade calamities which causes destroyers of human society and loss of human animal life and damages of human property or degradation of the environment and is of such nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area. Disaster obstruct development work devour all the resources essential for the growth and development of a nation. Disasters make the wealthiest nation fragile and have a devastating impact on the lives, property and livelihood of people. Disasters affect every section of the society but some sections are more affected than others because of their vulnerability. Vulnerability is associated with a number of factors such as socio-economic background, gender, social groups and age. At local level disasters compound social exclusion and existing vulnerabilities, disproportionately taking the poor, women and children.

Disaster cannot be stopped but the impact caused by them can be reduced through proper intervention and collective efforts of all stakeholders. One such intervention is the Social Work Intervention in pre-disaster and post-disaster management. Professional Social Workers are the most core resource to create awareness about disasters and its mitigation to the community and work with local administration for effective management of disaster and its impact.

Present paper is based on secondary data will make attempt to explain the role of Social Worker and Social Work Intervention in 4 R Rescue, Relief, Resettlement and Rehabilitation in disaster management at community level.

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1. Introduction

A disaster means a catastrophe, mishap, calamity, or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or manmade causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to and destruction of property or damage to or degradation of the environment, and is of such nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area. (Sect.2 (d), Disaster Management Act 2005)

A disaster is an event which results in loss of life damage or loss of property, infrastructure, environment and livelihood on a scale which is beyond the coping capacity of the affected community. A disaster is also sometimes described as a catastrophic situation in which the normal pattern of life or eco system has been disrupted and extra ordinary emergency interventions are required to save and preserve lives and or the environment.

Disaster obstructs development work and devours all the resource essential for the growth and development of a nation. Disasters make the wealthiest nation fragile and have a devastating impact on the lives, property and livelihood of people. The origin and impact of disasters varies from situation to situation and person to person. Today despite increased investments and advance in hazard management technologies, human and economic losses from natural disasters are on the rise annually worldwide (Hewitt, 1998, Davis 1999).

Disaster affects every situation of the society but some sections are more affected than others because of their vulnerability. Indian Federation of Red Cross define vulnerability as the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or manmade disaster. Vulnerability is associated with a number of factors such as Socio-Economic background, gender, social group and age. A part from these factors vulnerability may also arise when people are isolated, ignorant, defenseless and non-participant in government schemes. Physical, economic and social political factors also determine people's level of vulnerability, poor people are more likely to live and work in the areas exposed to potential hazards, and less likely to have the resources to cope when a disaster strikes.

Methodology:

Present paper is basically descriptive in nature based on secondary source of data. In present paper the systematic literature reviewed into what research exists on social workers role in disaster intervention and its management. A systematic exiting literature related to disaster management and social work intervention was reviewed which is very specific source of secondary data collection followed by all relevant resources of the study are incorporated to ensure the actual role and intervention of social workers in various stages during the disasters. Main aim of this paper is to explain the role of Social Worker and Social Work Intervention in 4 R Rescue, Relief, Resettlement and Rehabilitation in disaster management at community level. The statistical and conceptual data used in it is purely from secondary sources like various reports of the government and organizations and papers according to the need and in the light of the area of the study.

Based on the conceptual background and problem statement the objectives of present paper are as follow:

1. To find information on the role and its interventions in disaster management and to theorize social work and disaster management in better way.
2. To describe the social work practice in the context of disaster management and its intervention levels in Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels.
3. To understand the role of social work in rescue, relief, resettlement and rehabilitation during disasters.
4. To ascertain the roles of social workers in term of intervention during the natural and ma made disasters.

As per the purpose and aim of this paper the following some research questions were prepared to getting the answers of the role of social workers and interventions during disasters by systematic review of existing literature.

1. What methods and intervention levels do social worker used to study and manage the disasters?
2. What is the role of social work in disaster management?
3. How social work professionals been involved in disaster management?

4. What social workers can do in their professional role in disasters at local to national level?
5. How can be social work intervention contributes in disaster management especially in rescue, relief, resettlement and rehabilitation and conceivable interventions in the field of disaster management practice.
6. How can social work intervention in disaster situations be improved?

The secondary source method used to integrative systematic review of literature, qualitative, quantitative documents and statistical information were used for this paper.

Government disaster management plans and survey data of various organizations working for disaster management were used as a main empirical data for the present paper.

Social Work Profession and Disaster Management:

Social work is a dynamic profession that deals with diverse situations and problems that affect humanity. The problems and situations that social workers deal with vary in terms of type, magnitude, and intensity.

Professional Cadres of Social Work must have work at Micro, Mezo and Macro level on priority basis to enhance or restore functioning favorable to that goal (Morales & Sheafor, 1995). Hence, natural and manmade calamities occurs due to some reason which disturbs human life and destroy asset of human being and effects on environment which can be address by proactive professional social workers with active and prompt intervention in such disaster situation.

Social workers are key players in the socio-economic development of their communities worldwide and this should have knowledge related to disaster risk reduction. Disasters by their nature grossly affect the social functioning of individuals, families, groups, and communities worldwide and are therefore a concern for social work. Harding (2007) states that disaster is usually associated with human suffering caused by natural events such as tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods while human created disasters stem from war, the use of sanctions, the conduct of repressive regimes, and economic and social policies. Social work is a profession that aims at

helping individuals and families, groups, and communities to enhance or restore their functioning and or creating societal conditions favorable to that goal (Morales and Sheafor, 1995). The International Federation of Social Work (2000) defines it as a “profession that promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing, it intervenes at the point where people interact with their environment using theories of human behavior and social systems as well as upholding principles of human rights and social justice”. Further it addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society and responds to crises and emergencies including personal and social problems and natural disasters.

The primary purpose of social work continues to the enhancement of social functioning. Social worker enables individuals, groups, families and communities to function more effectively within their various environments. Social workers strive to eliminate discrimination and to create just social environments. The ways in which social workers implement their purpose take different forms, approaches, and methodologies. Workers engage in direct practice with client in such roles as counselor, enabler, broker, case manager, and advocate. They may also assume various indirect practice roles, such as supervisors, managers, administrators, teachers, researcher, and consultants. They work to prevent, resolve, or minimize human problems.

Disasters in Indian Scenario:

India is a country having high level of vulnerability in terms of social and economic. Due to the certain climate change condition India is becoming the disaster risk country around the world. Climate change which leads the serious disasters on earth causes extreme loss of human functioning, destroyers of natural and manmade materials and it creates disturbance of socio and economic life of the human being. Disasters are sometime classified according to whether they are natural disasters or human made disasters.

For example, disasters caused by flood, droughts, tidal waves and earth tremors are generally considered “natural disasters.” Disasters caused manmade accident and environmental degradation and lack of management of natural are classified as “human-made” or “human induced” disasters since they are the direct result of human action.

This happens by people living in ways that degrade their environment, developing and over populating urban centers, or creating and perpetuating social and economic systems. Communities and population settled in areas susceptible to the impact of a raging river or the violent tremors of the earth are placed in situations of high vulnerability because of their socio-economic conditions. This is compounded by every aspect of nature being subject to seasonal, annual and also due to the unpredictability of the timing, frequency and magnitude of occurrence of the disasters.

Types of Disasters:

- Water and Climate Related Disasters: a) Floods and drainage management b) Cyclones c) Tornadoes and hurricanes d) Hailstorm e) Cloud burst f) Heat wave and cold waves g) Snow avalanches h) Droughts i) Sea erosion j) Thunder and lightning k) Tsunami.
- Geological Related Disasters: a) Landslides and mudflows b) Earthquakes c) Dam failures/ Dam bursts d) Minor fires.
- Accident Related Disasters: a) Forest fires b) Urban fires c) Mine flooding d) Oil spills e) Major building collapse f) Serial bomb blasts g) Festival related disasters h) Electrical disasters and fires i) Air, road and rail accidents j) Boat capsizing k) Village fire.
- Biological related disasters: a) Biological disasters b) Pest attacks c) Cattle epidemics d) Food poisoning.

Indian Disaster at a Glance:

Sr No.	Disaster	Year	State and Area	Fatalities
1	Earthquake	1618	Maharashtra Mumbai	2000 Deaths
2	Bengal Earthquake	1737	Bengal	300,000 Deaths

3	Cyclone	1864	Kolkata	60,000 Deaths
4	The great famine	1876-78	South India	5.5million deaths due to starvation
5	Cyclone	1882	Mumbai Maharashtra	100,000 Deaths
6	The Indian Famine	1896-97	Whole India	10 Million people deaths
7	Earthquake	1934	Bihar	6000 Death
8	Bhola Cyclone	1970	West Bengal	500,000 Deaths
9	Drought	1972	Large Part of Country	200 Million people affected
10	Drought	1987	Haryana	300 Million people affected
11	Cyclone	1977	Andhra Pradesh	10,000 Deaths
12	Latur Earthquake	1993	Latur Marathwada Region Maharashtra	7,928 Deaths
13	Orissa Super Cyclone	1999	Orissa	10,000 Deaths
14	Gujarat Earthquake	2001	Bhuj, Bachau, Anjar, Ahmedabad and Surat in Gujarat State	25000 Deaths
15	Tsunami	2004	Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry, Andhrapradesh and Andaman Nicobar.	10,749 Deaths

16	Maharashtra Floods	July 2005	Maharashtra	1094 Deaths
17	Earthquake	2005	Kashmir State	86000 Deaths
18	Koshi Floods	2008	Bihar	527 Deaths
19	Cyclone Nisha	2008	Tamil Nadu	204 Deaths
20	Cloud Burst	2013	North India State Uttarakhand	5758 Deaths
21	Landslide	July 2014	Ambegaon Maline Village Pune Maharashtra	151 Deaths
22	Landslide Flood	August 2018	Kerala	More than 500 deaths 400 billion property damage
23	Flood	August 2019	Sangali Kolhapur in Maharashtra State	29 deaths and 200,000 people evacuated

Source: High Powered Committee Report-1999

As per the above glance its observed that since year 1618 to 2019 there were 23 disasters have been taken place in different parts of country in which 2,225,941 peoples have been died. Bhola cyclone in west bengal was took place in the year 1970 in which larger population have been affected and 50,00,00 deaths have been reported followed by the great famine in 1976-79, Indian famine 1996-1997, drought in country and hayrayana in 1972 and 1987 respectively were largest disasters in the country. In which overall 20,000 lakh peoples have been died. In the year 1882 mumbai cyclone was affected whole population of mumbai and nearby in which around 10,00,00 peoples have lost their lives.

It can be avoided in future by proper intervention and pre disaster training and mitigation through professional group interventions. Therefore the role of social work education institutions are very crucial to train students and prepare them to tackle this kinds of disaster situations with proper skill, knowledge and attitude in which they can lead the disaster management effectively.

Poverty and Disaster Vulnerability:

Poverty and risk to disasters are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. The poor section of the society is worst affected in case of disaster. The situation further aggravates due to the compulsion of the poor to exploit environmental resources for their survival, increasing the risk and exposure of the society to disasters, in particular those triggered by flood, drought and landslides. Poverty also compels the poor to migrate and live at physically more vulnerable locations, often on unsafe land and in unsafe shelters. These inhabitations of the poor at such locations are either due to the fact that there is no other land available at reasonable cost or it is close to the employment opportunities. The inhabitations of the poor people on marginal land are prone to all types of disasters. The type of construction of these houses further deteriorates the condition. These dwellings made up of low cost material without giving much consideration to technical aspect are easy targets of various hazards.

Role of Social Worker in Disaster Management:

Disaster management aims to reduce or avoid the potential losses from hazards, assure, promote and appropriate to victims of disaster. The disaster management is an ongoing process by which governments and civil society plan for and reduce the impact of disasters, react during a disaster and take steps to recover after a disaster has occurred.

Disaster Management Mechanism

Preparedness	Response	Recovery	Mitigation
Planning how to respond during post and pre disaster situation (Early Warning System)	Minimize the hazards occur due to disasters. (Rescue, Relief, Resettlement)	Bring to normal situation by rehabilitating affected people, rebuilding and reconstruct.	Minimize the risk factors and effect of disasters. Risk Analysis, Vulnerable Analysis

Social Worker should be very Proactive to:

- Make sure that community based disaster management will be given priority and prepare community base disaster management plan with active participation of local people.
- Through the Participatory Rural Appraisal with special focus on Disaster management at community level need to identify the risk areas and vulnerable population for pre disaster preparedness. Training and mock drill activity need to undertake by enhancing capabilities of the local community people so that people will play the crucial role as a warning system during pre and post disasters.
- Use indigenous knowledge of local people and linked it with advance and technological education to enhance the security and resilience at community level.
- Minimize risk factors by identifying risky areas and vulnerability at community level and strengthen community level disaster management plan with consultation of Block and district level disaster authority.

Disaster Management programme must be characterized by the following which social worker should promote:

- **Community participation:** Local stakeholders including grampanchayat personals, members, youth mandals, SHGs, Local NGOs , AHSA , Anganwadi workers, Farmers, Old age population have to collectively work together to identify the risk factors at community level and prepare the action plan for risk reduction during the disasters
- **Emphasize on Vulnerability Analysis:** With the help of local stakeholders vulnerable analysis need to be done through transact walk, problem tree, and livelihood assessment to avoid disaster risk.
- **Capability and risk Analysis:** Major priority should be given to identify the risk factors at community level and assessment should be done through developing the local stakeholder's capabilities so that they will prepare disaster magamment plan to avoid the risks during the disasters.
- **Response plan and preparedness plan:** All the community members including local self-government and other agencies need to work together as a Working Together Approach to avoid and manage the disasters by preparing disaster response and preparedness plan at community level.

- **Awareness and Mock Drill:** Awareness generation through rallies, street plays, competitions in schools, distribution of IEC materials, wall paintings by involving local stakeholder.

Cycle of Social Work Intervention in Disasters:

Rescue	Rescue affected people socially vulnerable population children, old age, women's, adolescents, special population, animals etc...
Relief	Give relief to vulnerable population with medical care and other essentials in camps and safe places.
Resettlement	Settlement of the affected people in safer zone areas with proper and adequate facilities.
Rehabilitation	With proper need and appropriate services to improve quality of life

Disaster Management Intervention System:

Social Development			
Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Minimize the vulnerability through investment of social capital	Ensure the fundamental needs and enhance the quality of life of human beings for sustainable life.	Effective programmes for vulnerable population	Constant review of programme and policies to make sure of development of the stakeholders.
Economic Development			
Sustainable and Long term economic programmes for vulnerable	Budgetary allocation for long term activities as well as fund raising.	Administration, Management and distribution of the resources to vulnerable population.	Social Inclusion and integration of victims in local economy and offer employment opportunity at local market.

Empowerment			
Protection of interest of various groups and enhance the capabilities of vulnerable population with addressing social exclusion issues.	Educating the community and empower them to take appropriate decisions in difficult circumstances.	Identify the vulnerable groups and access the assistance.	Enhance the groups of vulnerable in decision making and making them empowered which lead good governance and mass mobilization.
Source: A Social Development Model for Infusing Disaster Planning, Management and Response into the Social Work Curriculum (Elliott 2010)			

Conclusion:

The Professional Social Worker must have knowledge on disasters, disaster concepts, literature, and related interventions. Social work Profession is nothing but assist Individual Groups and Communities to resolve their problems more effectively with proper intervention and improve the quality of life of human beings. Students of social work should have taught various disasters its risks and how to do the intervention in such type of the situations when disasters occur during their course of action. Social Work Education Institutions are supposed to lead in terms of educational development and graduating professionals with adequate skills to work with diverse populations and issues raised at various levels with reference to disasters and its risk.

Social Work Professional Community can play crucial roles in determining the priority focus areas of social work profession to lead constantly into practice at various levels during the disasters by the local to national context. Many of the skills and methods can be applied systematically in various situation and work closely with multi-lateral organizations like UNDP or local to global level organizations. Even social work fraternity can opt global level students exchange programme in terms of development

of competencies in disaster management to understand the various strategically methods in disaster management. They may go to for rescue, relief, resettlement and rehabilitation during the disasters in an around country even other countries to work in situation of disasters.

The professional social workers can performe roles during the disasters are:

- Facilitator in support to community during the disaster in action mode,
- Educator - Educate the people during pre and post disasters,
- Catalystvin mobilizing community for collective action to tackle the disaster situations.
- Advocate - in terms of protect the interest and rights of vulnerable population during the disasters.
- Therapist - Undertaking therapeutic role with community in emotional, psychological traumas resulting from the situation of disasters.
- Consultant –Consultation with external and internal agencies like government and corporates for rehabilitation work of affected community during the disasters.

Its urgent need of hours to be aware of social work fraternity to understand the disaster situation and incorporate disaster management as core part of social work education curriculum by every Institutions to prepared future cadres professional social workers in disaster management which has not done so yet.

Let's Talks about Disaster Management Its Matter! Precaution is better than cure!

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