Current Situation Analysis and Lessons Learnt from Jajarkot Rukum Earthquake: A Field Visit Report

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Gratitude

We extend our sincere gratitude to DPNet Nepal, as well as to all the organizations, personnel, and individuals from Jajarkot and Rukum West, whose invaluable contributions in providing candid opinions have greatly facilitated the execution of this field study.

The Jajarkot Earthquake

❖ An earthquake occurred on November 3, 2023, in Jajarkot at 18:02, measuring 6.4 magnitude.

❖ This earthquake also severely affected Rukum West district. Minor damages were reported in Rukum East, Salyan, Dang, Rolpa, Nawalparasi East, Dailekh, Achham, Baitadi, Jumla, Kalikot, and Pyuthan.

❖ In Jajarkot, 101 people died, and in Rukum West, 53 people lost their lives. Additionally, 366 people were injured, while 26,557 houses were completely damaged, and 35,455 houses suffered partial damage.

Sources: https://dmgnepal.gov.np/ and http://www.drrportal.gov.np/

Field Visit Team Members

1. **Mr. Surya B. Thapa, Chair, DPNet Nepal**
2. **Dr. Meen B. Poudyal Chhetri, DPNet/NCDM**
3. **Dr. Sushila Paudel Ghimire**

The three-member team led by Mr. S. B. Thapa visited Jajarkot and Rukum districts from February 5 to February 11, 2024, to assess the progress of recovery efforts following the earthquake.

Photo source: The study team

The Study Team

Major Organizations and Persons Consulted

1. **Rukmeli Samaj Bikas Kendra:** A FGD was carried out with 11 persons from various organizations including NRCS, NJF, GP, NGOF, OREC, Rukum UNESCO Club, HRPLIC, TPO, RSDC,Nepal Jagaran Manch and so on.

2. **District Administration Office, Rukum West:** Consultation with the Chief District Officer Mr. H.P. Pant

3. **District Administration Office, Jajarkot:** Consultation with the Chief District Officer Mr. Suresh Sunar

4. **Bheri Municipality, Jajarkot:** Mayor Mr. C. P. Gharti

5. **Nalgadh Municipality, Dalli:** Acting CEO, Chair of SMC and RP

6. **Jajarkot Hospital** : Health personnel

Major Questions

Questions were asked on:

> (1) The progress of recovery works
> (2) Current living and livelihood situation of the affected people and families
> (3) The role and response of the Government and Non-government agencies
> (4) Assessment of ongoing needs and challenges faced by the affected communities
> (5) Lessons learnt.

The Focus Group Discussion in Rukum West

Positive Aspect

❖ Immediate search and rescue was satisfactory

❖ Various Government and Non-government organizations worked in good harmony and cooperation

❖ One door policy worked well

❖ Information were collected and disseminated in due time

❖ Local community capability needs to be enhanced

❖ The participants of FGD and also others appreciated the support provided by the Government and Non-government agencies.

Blame Game

- A situation where individuals or groups involved in a problem or emergency situation focus on assigning blame to each other rather than working together to find solutions or address the underlying issues.
- It often involves deflecting responsibility or pointing fingers at others rather than taking ownership of one's own actions or responsibilities.
- The focus tends to be more on assigning fault rather than on constructive problem-solving or reconciliation.
- The term is commonly used in various contexts such as politics, interpersonal relationships, and organizational dynamics.

Gaps

❑ **Inadequate coordination**, technological gaps, and weak policies

❑ **Absence of reliable data** and information sources

❑ **Resource constraints** affecting disaster response

❑ Limited local community capability

❑ Dependency syndrome

❑ Visibility, Populism, Vote Bank

❖ **Collection and analysis of massive datasets** to identify the patterns, trends, and vulnerabilities related to disasters are lacking.

6 People died 😢 here in Bheri Municipality – 1, Rawat Gau.

Reconstruction Work in Progress

Reconstruction in Progress

What lessons did we learnt?

1. Importance of Preparedness: Communities learn the significance of being prepared for natural disasters, including having emergency supplies, evacuation plans, and knowledge about safety protocols.

2. Building Resilient Infrastructure: Concerned authorities realize the need to invest in resilient infrastructure that can better withstand earthquakes, such as earthquake-resistant buildings and other infrastructures.

3. Effective Communication and Coordination: Lessons are learned about the importance of clear communication channels and coordinated efforts among government agencies, NGOs, and communities during response and recovery phases.
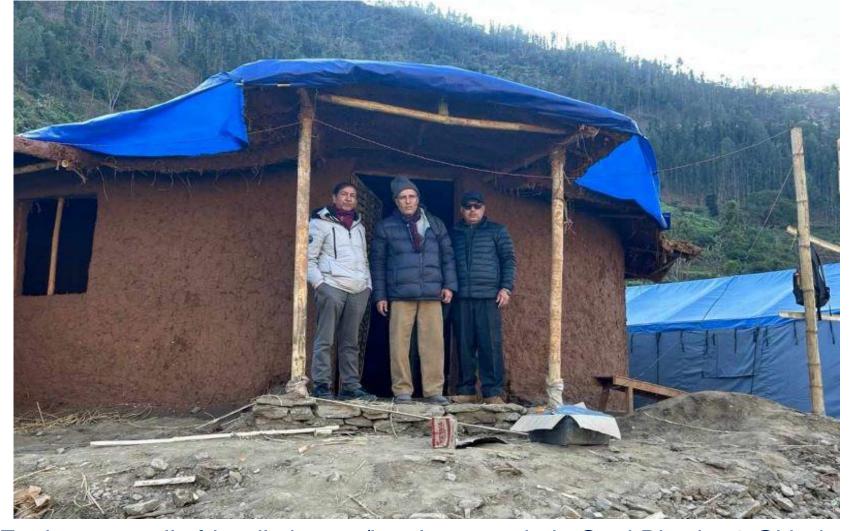
Temporary house made of corrugated galvanized iron sheet : Source of health hazard.

Toilet made of corrugated galvanized iron sheet

Environmentally friendly house/insulator made in Sani Bheri – 2 Githakot :
Innovator Prof. Dr. Jiba Raj Pokharel (Center above)

Made by locally available materials : mud, bamboo, grass etc.

What lessons did we learnt? Contd…

4. Community Engagement: Communities learn to actively engage in DRR efforts, including participating in drills, training sessions, & community meetings to raise awareness.

5. Addressing Vulnerable Populations: Lessons are learned about the vulnerabilities of certain populations, such as the elderly, children, and those with disabilities, leading to efforts to better address their needs in disaster planning and response.

6. Learning from Mistakes: Reflecting on past responses helps identify mistakes or shortcomings, prompting improvements in future disaster management strategies.

7. Long-Term Recovery Planning: Recognizing the importance of long-term recovery planning, including addressing housing, livelihood, and psychosocial needs of affected communities beyond the immediate aftermath of the

What lessons did we learnt? contd…

7. Long-Term Recovery Planning: Recognizing the importance of long-term recovery planning, including addressing housing, livelihood, and psychosocial needs of affected communities beyond the immediate aftermath of the earthquake.

By incorporating the above lessons learned into future disaster preparedness and response efforts, communities can become more resilient and better equipped to mitigate the impact of earthquakes and other natural disasters.

We need well trained, better equipped and fully aware community in order to build a resilient society.

Participants of the FGD and KII were asked to rate the response mechanism, and the average result was 7 out of 10.

Interview @ Radio by DPNet Chair

Interview Link: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/HErrRd9jraG3SMBv/?mibextid=2JQ9oc

Recognition by the Mayor to the DPNet Nepal

DPNet Nepal, Expectation & It's Role(s)

1. **Information Sharing and Coordination**
2. **Training and Capacity Building**
3. **Advocacy and Awareness**
4. **Resource Mobilization**
5. **Community Engagement**
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
7. **Collaboration with Government and NGOs**

By fulfilling these roles, the Disaster Preparedness Network can contribute significantly to enhancing resilience and reducing the impact of disasters on communities and society as a whole. **To attain the above roles DPNet needs support.**

N.B. -- DPNet Nepal's role right after the J eq. and its periodic situation report were highly appreciated.

Way Forward

Applications of Reliable Data-Driven Disaster Risk Reduction Knowledge Services

- **Early Warning Systems:** Enhances accuracy and timeliness of warnings for all types of disasters.

- **Risk Assessment:** Provides better assessments of vulnerabilities, infrastructure, and potential disaster impacts.

- **Resource Allocation:** Optimizes deployment of emergency personnel and supplies through data analysis.

- **Community Engagement:** Empowers communities with information for informed decisions and preventative measures.

- **Research and Policy Development:** Informs policymaking and guides long-term strategies at local, regional, and national levels.

What is Missing?

- Addressing challenges **through policy** and technological measures

- Necessity for **proactive legislation** in disaster management

- Introduction of "**Big Data-Driven** Disaster Risk Reduction and **Space Technology** Knowledge Services"

- Emphasis on **leveraging data-driven** insights and space technology

- Hi-tech **sophisticated EOC** from center to local levels

- Prioritizing DRR by the govt.

Need for a Forward-Thinking Approach

1) Government must **prioritize "Big Data-Driven** DRR and Space Technology Knowledge Services"

2) Building a safer, **more resilient society** in the face of evolving disasters e.g. "Build Back Better"

3) **Strict Compliance** of Rules and Regulations

4) Avail **Adequate Funds** and Resources for DRR

5) **Enhance International Cooperation &** Collaboration

6) Take **Prevention** as the Major Step

7) Develop **Early Warning** System

8) Move from **policy to action**

9) Remember -- **"Bad Implementation of Good Policy is Bad Policy."**

Conclusions

This is high time for –

- **Effective collaboration & coordination** among government agencies, and other stakeholders
- Comprehensive **support (depending on the scale of the disaster) for affected populations** at both national, provincial and local levels
- Integration of **"Data-Driven DRR"** for proactive strategies and response mechanism
- **Safeguarding lives & infrastructure** for the generations to come.

Thank You Very Much For Your Support and Kind Attention!!!