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Locating Community in Disaster Management: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and India

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Abstract

Unlike the traditional top-down reactive way of handling the disaster, the community-based approach to disaster management calls for a holistic bottom-up approach reposing its faith in local communities who are usually caught hapless in the epicenter of disasters. Despite the proven efficacy of community engagement in disaster management, it has few takers in the policy circuit. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis techniques. The present paper with special reference to the community involvement in disaster management in Indonesia and India, concludes that community engagement in addition to institutional cooperation is equally important for the successful mitigation of disaster.

Keywords: community, bottom-up approach, disaster management.

Abstrak

Berbeda dengan cara tradisional top-down reaktif dalam menangani bencana, pendekatan berbasis masyarakat untuk manajemen bencana menyerukan pendekatan bottom-up holistik yang menempatkan kepercayaannya pada komunitas lokal yang biasanya tidak beruntung di pusat bencana. Terlepas dari kemanjuran keterlibatan masyarakat yang terbukti dalam penanggulangan bencana, keterlibatan masyarakat dalam rangkaian kebijakan hanya sedikit yang terlibat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan pendekatan dengan teknik analisis isi. Makalah ini dengan referensi khusus tentang keterlibatan masyarakat dalam penanggulangan bencana di Indonesia dan India, menyimpulkan bahwa keterlibatan masyarakat selain kerjasama kelembagaan sama pentingnya untuk keberhasilan mitigasi bencana.

Kata kunci: masyarakat, pendekatan bottom-up, manajemen bencana.

INTRODUCTION

Community participation constitutes the heart of successful disaster management. It has the potential to salvage the traditional bureaucratically managed reactive model of disaster management by locating the community at the center of the discourse (Hilhorst, 2013). Despite the criticality of community participation in collective problem solving including pre and post-disaster management, it has been consistently ignored by the policymakers (Pearce, 2003). Though the traditional top-down model of disaster management in most of the countries in the global South has undergone a sea change in terms of inter-governmental, intersectoral, and interagency collaborations over the years, the community's role in disaster mitigation is yet to get much acceptability. Consequently, these societies incur a huge loss of economic and human resources (Wise, 2006). As per the reportage of the Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2012 five countries of the world namely China, the United States, the Philippines, India, and Indonesia had sustained major casualties by natural disasters. Even in terms of the affected population, Asia bore 65% of the global share in 2012.

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The magnitude of natural calamities often neutralizes the individual capacity of a nation to withstand the impact of the disaster (Faas, 2016). Hence, collective handling of the disaster is the need of the hour and there has been a concerted effort in the direction of institutionalizing cooperation among the nations in terms of sharing of information, early alert system, humanitarian relief during the disaster, and the post-disaster reconstruction. For example, the ASEAN has ratified a legally binding agreement to collaborate on disaster preparedness and relief under the banner of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) (Haacke, 2009). However, no systematic and institutional effort of roping the community in the disaster management discourse, albeit a few passing references of the values of community participation in the policy documents of several multilateral agencies, has been made so far.

Hence, in addition to the international institutional cooperation, disaster management calls for a holistic bottom-up approach, involving community participation in disaster planning, disaster preparedness and post-disaster reconstruction (Islam et al., 2020). The present paper in the light of comparative case studies of India and Indonesia intends to investigate the role of community participation in disaster management. Before we move on to the nuances of community engagement in disaster management, a few words on the rationale of choosing the case studies deserve some space here (Fakhruddin & Chivakidakarn, 2014). First, the Asian continent is the most disaster-prone areas in the world. Despite the differences in socio-economic realities, both countries share common woes of disaster and resilient community responses to a natural disaster. Secondly, both the countries share a colonial past and the trajectories of these nation-states bear the legacies of the colonial governance. Thirdly, both these countries represent ethnocultural diversity. Fourthly, despite the commonalities between the said countries, no comparative work has been done so far. Hence, this paper a humble attempt to explore the relatively unexplored areas. Futher, the paper with reference to the aforementioned case studies of Indonesia and India argues that community involvement in addition to several other measures has played a very important role in handling the disaster. Though the impetus to community engagement is markedly different in two case studies, they do contribute to disaster management in their own way. In a typical ethnically divisive society like Indonesia, community engagement in disaster management was the product of desperation as governmental aid was unavailable.

The Indian case of voluntary community engagement in disaster management was the product of partisan political consciousness, where the affected people did not wait for governmental help as everything, including disaster management, is determined by political considerations (Sylves, 2019). Hence, the paper concludes that the time come to go beyond the 'one size fits all' approach to disaster management and to rope in community for customizing the technique of disaster management in accordance with local conditions. The paper has the following sections: Section I deals with the theoretical issues of community and community participation in disaster management; section II situates the comparative case studies of Indonesia and India especially their model of community-centric management of disaster; section III analyses the case studies and finally, section IV winds up the discussion with a concluding observation. Where we feel that there are still shortcomings in previous research that will be complemented by this research.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative research methods with content analysis techniques (Urquhart, 2012). To assess the impact of community participation/involvement on disaster management the paper has identified three important components of disaster management based on the framework (Disaster

Management-A Disaster Manger's Handbook) used by the Asian Development Bank: prevention, mitigation and preparedness. For garnering data the paper will resort to the content analysis of the official documents of the international multilateral agencies like World Bank, IMF, ADB and Government documents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community participation Disaster Management -A Theoretical Exploration

The problem of Defining Community Participation

Community participation has become a common policy prescription for collective problem-solving. However, in the beginning, a caveat seems to be in order as the increasing popularity of community participation has nothing to do with its applicability. It was more rhetorical and emotive than practical. In fact, a host of critical issues are associated with the concept of community participation which includes among others who are participating, what is the nature of participation, who is to be included and who are to be excluded? What is the criterion of inclusion and the like. Further, the informal and nebulous nature of community participation often reduces its applicability. Though there has been an attempt of institutionalizing community participation in a few countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, there has been little effort on the part of the development professionals to critically engage the concept on the ground level (Mercer, 2002). Hence, before we move on to the nature and nuances of community participation and its supposed impact on collective problem solving, a brief discussion on the concept of the community deserves some space here. A short excursion to the literature on the community would have demonstrated that there are myriad interpretations of the community. As a catch-all phrase, the word community is open to interpretation depending upon who is interpreting it and with what purpose. Consequently, there are multiple connotations of community available before us, ranging from pure geographical expression, confines to a region; to the 'communities of the circumstances', emerged out of exigencies like a flood, bushfire; to the 'community of interest', formed with an intension of lobbying the government decisions; to the virtual communities, popped up to bridge the physical distance by capitalizing on the information and communication technology. A few like Zygmunt Bauman paints a picture of a community that is a more secure and comfortable place for an individual, especially in an unsecured world, where " all sorts of dangers lie in ambush' (Bauman, 2013). To him "in a community we can count on each other's goodwill. If we stumble and fall, others will help us stand on our feet again. No one will us poke fun at us, no one will ridicule our clumsiness and rejoice in our misfortune" (Bauman, 2013). Even making the interpretation worse there is a group of theorists with a communitarian bent of mind who have been lamenting the erosion of community and community feeling among us. Despite the sudden popularity of community participation in the development discourse there is hardly any concrete modality to translate the idea of community participation into reality.

Community Participation in Disaster Management

Of late Philippines has experimented with a model of community-based disaster management and tried to institutionalize it (Shaw, 2012). Unlike the traditional reactive way of handling the disaster, this new approach reposes its faith in local communities as these communities are usually finding themselves hapless in the epicenter of disasters. Hence, this approach ropes local communities in the acts

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of disaster mitigation by capitalizing on local survival strategies, resources, and capacities to withstand the impact of the disaster. Hence, engaging communities in the fold of disaster management has institutionalized the informal community level survival strategies, which enabled local communities to react to any exigency, independent of outside helps from governments, NGOs. The primary objective of this community-based disaster management is to covert at-risk communities to the disaster-resilient community (Kafle, 2012). The distinguishing features of community-based disaster management can be identified as follows: first, people's participation/community participation constitutes the crux of this approach. Unlike mere recipients of humanitarian assistance and relief, this approach assigns an agency role to the community. Since the fate of the community is directly associated with the proper management of disaster, engaging the community in pre and post-disaster management is expected to bring about a paradigm shift in the discourse of disaster management. Secondly, prioritizing the most vulnerable and excluded group, families and people in the community is another hallmark of this community- based disaster management approach. Though the disaster management calls for wholehearted participation of all the stakeholders of the society, this approach lays special emphasis on the prolixity of the subalterns, since they are the worst affected lot among the disaster-affected population suffering from multiple vulnerabilities. Here, it should be noted that disaster does not affect all sections of society uniformly. In fact, the impact of disaster is felt differentially.

The marginal sections, for example, have to suffer more than their developed counterparts as the resources to prepare for any impending disaster or fight the aftershock of it varies from one section to another (Tierney, 2007). Hence, the disaster response also varies widely. Thirdly, unlike the traditional approach to disaster management, this approach asks for community-specific disaster risk reduction measures to be introduced. According to this approach community's disaster risk measures need to be analyzed in proportion to the community's risk perceptions hazardous exposure, vulnerabilities and capacities so that appropriate disaster management measures can be adopted. Fourthly, this approach instead of introducing any new mechanism accepts the existing coping mechanism, shared values and strategies prevalent in the society concerned. Fifthly, the community-based disaster management approach is inextricably associated with development. Hence, this approach by identifying the root causes of individual and collective vulnerabilities like social inequality, poverty, environmental resource depletion and degradation, intends to enhance individual and communal capacities. In a nutshell community-based disaster management approach ensures disaster-resilient, safe and developed communities. Finally, the community-based disaster management approach posited the community at the centre of the discourse by relegating other actors like government, NGOs to the supportive and facilitating role. Hence, in sum Community-based disaster management approach is "participatory, responsive, integrated, proactive, comprehensive, multisectoral, multidisciplinary, empowering and developmental" (Victoria, 2003).

Obstacles of Community Participation

Despite having the above-mentioned redeeming features, the community-based disaster management approach cannot be a full-proof one. In fact, several shortcomings of community participation, ranging from socio-cultural, technological to logistic, can be identified. Classifying them into two broad categories-external and internal obstacles the said hindrances can be enumerated as follows: whereas the role of development professional especially their bias towards technocratic solutions, broader government orientation towards participation, selective participation and so on have been identified as external obstacles; and conflicting interest group, the gate-keeping role of the local elites are

grouped as internal obstacles. Written in the context of South African urban up-gradation, Lucius Botes and Dingie van Rensberg have come out with a very interesting article entitled *Community participation in development: nine plagues and twelve commandments*, where they have identified major shortcomings and future guidelines for ensuring community participation (Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000).

The first major obstacle to community participation is said to be the paternalistic role of the development professionals. This is perhaps an endemic feature of the externally induced development approaches, which has thwarted the participation of the communities to a great extent. Armed with a paternalistic attitude as a repository of development wisdom, most of the development experts have taken the context of development for granted and adopted a homogenous approach instead.In most cases, development experts try to sell their preconceived proposals and let communities endorse that. Consultations with the communities are mere customary, experts have chosen what is best for the communities. Consequently, the local communities get demotivated. Secondly, the inhibiting and prescriptive role of the state is another stumbling block to community participation. Secondly, the overbearing role of the state in ensuring participation has also demotivated community participation. Though visibly state and its bureaucratic paraphernalia may appear hyperactive to ensure community participation, in reality, it turns out to be a mechanism of ensuring legitimacy to the political system/regime. Examples are aplenty where the state manipulates bureaucratic hierarchy to undermine the participatory spirit of the community. Thirdly, another important impediment to community participation is the tendency among the development experts to blow the success story out of proportion, pushing the failure under the carpet. There is no denying that failures offer critical lessons to be learnt. But concealing them or downplaying them by projecting an inflated story of success, further erodes the participatory zeal of the community. Fourthly, selective participation is another obstacle to community participation. The tendency of projecting a slice of an advanced section of the community over and again as the true representative of the community is a serious challenge to successful community participation. In most cases, development agencies, NGOs, CBOs are showcasing a relatively advanced slice of the community and manipulates development projects.

This is how development agencies buy support and goodwill from the key interest group in the community or what is often coined as 'community renting. Fifthly, the typical hard issue bias of the development experts also causes serious impediments to community participation. Too much preoccupied with the hard issues like technological, financial, physical and material issues, development experts are usually downplaying the soft issues like community participation, decision making procedure, empowerment, organizational capacity building and so on, leading to the failure of developmental projects. Sixthly, the conflicting interest groups with the community over the scarce resources and development benefits may often derail the community participation in development. Seventhly, the gatekeeping role of the local elite is also a major stumbling block for community participation. The local elites with their vested interests try to monopolize the development projects and resist community engagement as that would threaten their control over development projects. Eighthly, the overwhelming pressure for the immediate outcome may also act as a deterrent to community participation. For example, excessive pressure for instant result may often compel the bureaucrats to bypass community involvement and complete the task by themselves as community participation is a time-consuming process. Finally, the lack of willingness among the members of the community to participate may also undermine community participation (Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000). This section presents a comparative analysis of two case studies Indonesia and India. Whereas the earlier is the unique case study where ethnicity and natural disaster juxtapose to determine the fate of the disaster management; the latter case study represents the

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peculiar character of a post-colonial democracy, where everything, including disaster management, is determined by political considerations.

Indonesia: Disaster Management in a multi-ethnic society

The archipelagic state-A snapshot View

As an archipelagic state spreading over 17,000 islands, Indonesia, the home of 500-odd ethnic groups presents a unique kaleidoscope of rich ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. Located in South Asia along the Pacific '*Ring of Fire*' and equator this archipelagic country has been perennially susceptible to frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and so on. According to official data, Indonesia has 129 active volcanos, out of which 70 are potentially dangerous, 23 have been erupting over the last 20 years and 2 are currently active (Masys, 2015). Apart from an unstable geo-morphological formation, Indonesia is also known for its ticklish interethnic relations. It is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world having 500 distinct ethnic groups living side by side with little interactions. Many of these groups prefer to retain their distinct cultural and linguistic patterns. The Javanese, about 40% of the total Indonesian population, are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia confined mostly in Java and Bali islands; followed by the Sundanese with 16% of the total population and the Malay with 3.5 % of the total population. Historically confined to their respective places of domicile these ethnic communities are too sensitive about the retention of their cultural heritage and refuse to intermix with other ethnic groups. Such exclusivity of ethnic communities in Indonesia has simultaneously increased resilience and vulnerabilities. Further, the governmental policy of transmigration to decongest the congested islands like Java by sending off the people to the less crowded islands creates major political furore among ethnic communities.

The Historical Trajectory of the Indonesia as a nation-state

Partly because of the colonial interventions and partly because of Indonesian nationalist mobilizations, diverse populations of the archipelago temporarily bury the hatchet to fight back the common enemy, the Dutch and subsequently the Japanese with a common language Malay (Charney, 2018). However, the consolidation was only short-lived as the interethnic rift remained vivid in the psyche of Indonesian people, which resurfaced soon after independence and a long and messy phase in Indonesian politics and society followed between 1949 and 1967. Caught between the protracted conflicts and recurring natural calamities, this predominantly Islamic country with 88% of the Muslim population has been wrestling with the recurring threat of disaster and ethnic conflicts. However, of late, especially after the devastative tsunami in 2004, the country has started investing handsomely (almost 3% of the GDP) in the infrastructural developments as a part of calamity preparedness. The paper in the context of the devastative tsunami in 2004 in Aceh province of Indonesia, explores how community engagement in the immediate aftermath of the disaster in addition to several infrastructural preparedness has brought a positive difference in the post-disaster reconstruction.

Christened as Mecca's Verandah *(Serambi Mekkah)* Aceh has been a prosperous province with avowed Islamic values (Aspinall, 2007). During the pre-colonial period, this province was an Islamic sultanate and enjoyed very close ties with the Ottoman empire of Turkey. Aceh province has retained its Islamic identity even after its incorporation into the Indonesian nation-state. The central government of Indonesia has granted Aceh province the special region and special autonomy status in 1999 and 2001 respectively. It is the only province in Indonesia that has adopted Islamic law Shari'a. Historically known

as the biggest exporter of the finest pepper, this province had been catapulted into one of the richest provinces of Indonesia when the Western companies found oil (1970) and natural in the northern part of the province. However, the riches that the province produces hardly got reflected in the Aceh society. In fact, Aceh became the third poorest province in Indonesia. The systematic plunder of natural resources by the central government and the Western oil companies with little benefit to the Aceh province had generated a relative sense of deprivation among the average Acehnese people (Rist, 2010). However, the iron rule of the Suharto regime especially the Suharto's *New Order* had left the Acehnese people with no choice but to comply with the dictates of the government. Hence, the suppressed anger, dissatisfaction of the Acehnese people against the neo-colonial regime of Suharto and the Western oil companies snowballed into an insurgency movement under the banner of the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or GAM) in 1976. The Suharto regime took no time to suppress any spark of insurgency by bringing Aceh under the purview of Military Operation Area and resorted to the stern military exercise in 1977. Initially, though the Indonesian army managed to quell the insurgency to a great extent, the ember of insurgency refused to die down till 2004 as the key leaders fled Aceh soon after the military crackdown in 1977 and continued to lead the movement from their hideouts in exiles. With intermittent flare-ups, the conflict continued to the end of Suharto's dictatorial regime in 1998. In 1999 the government of Indonesia formally declared the revocation of the Military Operation Area provision and sought an apology for the military excesses. However, the ceasefire was short-lived as the tension escalated between the government of Indonesia and GAM in 2002 and the government under Megawati reimposed the martial law in Aceh in 2003. A massive crackdown offensive was launched by the army against the leadership of GAM. In the backdrop of a protracted civil war, the massive tsunami of 2004 will be analysed.

The spontaneity of Community involvement in disaster management

The community involvement in disaster management in the Aceh province of Indonesia is, therefore, more a spontaneous phenomenon than an agency-induced event. The Aceh province was one of the worst-hit provinces of Indonesia. The devastative tsunami of 2004 has claimed 131,000 lives in Aceh alone and left more than 37000 people missing and 500,00 people internally displaced. Further, the tsunami had cost the sources of livelihood of more than 600,000 people and their shelters as 140,000 houses had been washed away by the rage of the tsunami (Kennedy et al., 2008). Apart from is fury, the tsunami had also acted as a great catalyst for the thawing of relations between GAM and the government of Indonesia. The unprecedented magnitude of the devastation that the tsunami brought in its wake brought the embattling parties into a collaboration. Though the humanitarian aids were pouring from national and international agencies, a very unique pattern of independent community responsiveness has emerged among Acehnese communities. Due to a protracted civil war in the province, the Acehnese population had virtually lost all its ties with the central government of Indonesia. Hence, the chances of receiving humanitarian assistance from the central government during recurring calamities were rather bleak. In fact, trapped in the war-like situation for almost three decades, the possibilities of receiving international humanitarian aids and their proper disbursement became very difficult. Hence, the Acehnese population started mobilizing their community resources, traditional wisdom, survival strategies to withstand any future calamity. Instead of being passive victims of the disaster waiting for the outside help to come, the Acehnese communities rose to the occasion and started to help themselves based on their prior knowledge and skills. Soon after the disaster subsides, the affected Acehnese communities, especially the survivors started commissioning their reserves of physical and moral strength to scramble together

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the left-outs of their livelihood. Armed with the mentality of 'every man for himself, the affected population responded collectively and worked together for mutual survival.

Interestingly the huge contingents of humanitarian aids that were pouring in within a few days of the disaster failed to bring about many differences in the lives of the survivors as most of these interventions overlooked capacities and the agency role of the community (De Ville de Goyet & Morinière, 2006). In fact, armed with a clinical model most of the humanitarian interventions took a victimhood perspective and ignored local culture, language, customs in the process. Moreover, the aid materials, despite the best intention of the donors, were often found to be insulting for the local culture, pride, or religious belief systems. Further, the aid materials sent for the post-disaster reconstruction also remained unutilized as the aids directed to the Acehnese were specific to the tsunami induced vulnerabilities. But Acehnese vulnerabilities were intersectional which included the vulnerabilities that emerged out of the internecine conflicts as well. The real test of community resilience of the Acehnese people came to the fore when the media hype of tsunami subsided and humanitarian aids stopped coming. In fact, community participation in the true sense of the term had been witnessed when outsider's support dwindled. For example, the incident of the winding up of the operation of a national NGO-the Pulih Foundation may be mentioned. A Jakarta-based national NGO which was working in the school-based psychosocial activities in Aceh province before the tsunami had decided to wind up its operation in the post-tsunami phase owing to the squeezing of funding from outside agencies. However, considering the importance of the psychosocial intervention among the traumatized school children especially in developing their coping skills, the decision of winding up of the Pulih Foundation was uncalled for. Understandably, the decision of the Pulih Foundation was challenged by the Acehnese people and a community consciousness was raised by the Acehnese volunteers to retain the programme independent of central or international assistance. Accordingly, the Pulih Foundation survived and continued with its psychosocial interventions by indigenizing the foundation name with a minor change (Pelupessy & Bretherton, 2015). Hence, the spontaneity community assertion and participation of the Acehnese people vis-a-vis the central government of Indonesia was a seer survival strategy to stay afloat. The civil war-ravaged province had developed this community resilience in course of time as the chances of getting humanitarian aid during disasters and in the post-disaster reconstructions of the Aceh province was rather non-existent. The other case study represents an altogether different reality of the post-colonial society, where the impetus to community participation comes from the both real and imagery neglect of a section of the community on political line.

India: Disaster Management in a "political society

West Bengal-a Typical Example of 'political Society'

India the largest democracy in the world is equally prone to recurring natural disasters. The present study in the light of *Amphan*-the recent super cyclone that had rocked the coastal parts of India has focused on the subnational state of West Bengal to understand the community involvement in disaster management (Prashantham, 2008). Before we move on to the Amphan, a few words on the case study of West Bengal warrants some space here. West Bengal is one of the most politically conscious states of India. The population of the state (about 10 crores) have been politically bifurcated into *Ora* vs. *Amra* (we vs. *they*) binary and the entire socio-political-cultural narratives of the state and society have been revolving around this binary. Thanks to a prolonged ideological legacy of the Left Front this binary has secured a permanent berth in the Bengali society.

When the super cyclone Amphan hit the state of West Bengal on 20th May 2020, it was already reeling under the deadly spell of Covid 19. Since the Amphan made it landfall on 20th May it unleashed a gale of around 190 kmph accompanied by torrential rain and battered mostly the coastal parts of Indian states like West Bengal and Orissa and Bangladesh. Coincided with the pandemic of Covid 19 the state had to deal with a 'parallel disaster'. Travel restrictions due to lockdowns had further complicated the situation as rescue operations and evacuation of the disaster affected people to the safe places got stranded. But thanks to the well-entrenched *Ora-Amra* binary, inculcated deep into the psyche of the people, the Amphan super cyclone could not generate the collective socio-political response it deserved. There is no denying that the state administrative mechanism was badly affected by these no-notice disasters and the state administration with its limited resources had been wrestling with the parallel disasters of Covid 19 and Amphan. But no united response was visible on the part of the community as the politically divisive society immediately interpreted the administrative incapability to respond to the disaster-hit areas immediately as politically motivated and mobilized the community along the political line to fight back the disasters. Hence, the society under discussion is truly personifying prominent postcolonial thinker Partha Chatterjee's coinage, 'the political society' (Chatterjee, 2004).

To capture the essence of a large section of the populace in the postcolonial societies, which sustain their livelihood with illegality and circumvention of the formal law, Chatterjee has developed this concept of political society. Unlike the small segment of culturally refined citizens that constitute civil society, these large number of people are 'right bearers' citizens' only in name. Unlike the modern associational practices that symbolize civil society Chatterjee has demonstrated that political society does not confine to the ' framework of stable constitutionally defined rights and laws'. In fact, people belonging to political society makes their claims on government for basic and subsistence needs via temporary 'contextual and unstable arrangements' based on direct political negotiations. However, the said negotiations, as Chatterjee has implied, takes a detour from the conventional Western discourse of the interface between state and civil society and settles for 'much less well- defined, legally ambiguous, contextually and strategically demarcated terrain of political society'. Government and political parties are making use of this section strategically as they have the power to cast their votes. Hence, there is a strong likelihood that this political society may be manipulated for the sake of political mileage (Chatterjee, 2011). Though Chatterjee's analogy of political society as opposed to civil society has been subject to severe criticism since its publication for his overgeneralization of political society at the rural hinterlands and confining civil society to the urban space, his characterization of political society comes closer to the reality of the case study. Critics have substantiated their arguments by referring to a consistent tradition of civil society as reflected in the burgeoning literature on civil society in India (Edwards, 2013; Gudavarthy, 2012).

Further, critics have questioned the way Chatterjee downplayed the classical theoretical tradition of political society.Among those who have been hyperbole on the perceived empirical short-sightedness and methodological slippages of Chatterjee's distinction between political and civil society, were primarily the votaries of civil society, who have been counting on the numbers of sprouting of civil society be it under the patronage of the colonial rulers or by getting piggyback from the neoliberals. There is no denying that there has been a literal mushrooming of civil society in India with the onset of globalization. But in the typical postcolonial overtly politicized environment a possibility of civil becoming political cannot be entirely ruled out. For example, though critics have been contesting Chatterjee's claim by citing a vibrant tradition of civil society like rural clubs, libraries etc, in reality those visible signs of civility have been inducted into political society. Even the urban space of civility is increasingly getting crumbled in West Bengal as there has been a steady influx of people from civil society to politics. Chatterjee has confirmed

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this trend as NGOs are susceptible to be incorporated in the practices of governability. The informed silence or apathy on the part of those in civil society on several issues of illegality and informality is indicative of that. Hence, interrogating political society of illegality, informality, and manuvre by strengthening civil society is a distant possibility in West Bengal.

Community Participation

Partly because of the inaccessibility to this place and partly because of the perceived apathy among the community along the political lines, the people residing in the coastal areas have developed a typical resilience to the natural disaster. When the super cyclone hit the coastal parts of the state, the entire state administration was stretched beyond its capacity to implement the covid protocol (Mishra, 2020). Consequently, Amphan caught the administration off guard as there was a serious crunch of personnel and resources to respond to the exigencies. The normal civic amenities have been disrupted and rescue operations were also rather slow. Agitations among the survivors for the restoration of water supply and electricity became rampant. This scenario is not confined to the coastal parts of the state alone, but also a similar type of agitation had rocked the state capital Kolkata. Interestingly, the relief operations that reached the affected people were allegedly partisan, leading the local communities to plunge into the rescue and post-disaster rebuilding activities instead of waiting for an outsider to help. Hence, 'communities of the circumstances' seem to have emerged out of the exigencies of the Amphan super cyclone. The capital city of West Bengal had witnessed development such communities as the pandemic-hit decapitated civic administration failed to clear the city roads on time. Apart from the formation of the 'communities of circumstances', the over-politicization of the 'Ora-Amra'(we vs they) binary also engendered a typical community consciousness. The situation in one of the worst-affected parts of the state West Bengal, the Sundarban would have demonstrated the above community resilience (Misra et al., 2017).

The Sundarban, the rich mangrove-covered world's largest active delta at the lower coastal region of West Bengal, the home of more than 5 million people primarily lives on subsistence farming and fishing (Mondal et al., 2021). It is known for its fragile ecosystem as the delta has been perennially subject to natural disasters. However, the binary induced voluntary community participation was not a new phenomenon in the Sundarban region. In fact, it was a product of the political society which had its manifestations in the last few natural disasters that rocked the delta-like cycle *Bulbul*, *Alia.* Due to its typical remote geographical location, this delta has become inaccessible and marooned during natural calamities, and the administration had a tuff time sending any relief to this delta. However, over politicization and the fragmentation of the consciousness along the political affiliation among the people, had promptly interpreted the shortcoming of disaster response on the part of the administration as politically motivated and engendered a typical community resilience to fight the disaster independent outsider's help. Hence, in sum, the feeling of perceived apathy or arguably deliberate apathay on the part of the community vis-à-vis the administration acts as a boon in disguise for these people.

The outcome of the Case Studies

Hence, the comparative case studies of Indonesia and India discussed above have identified a redeeming feature of community participation in disaster management. In the face of global apprehension of the erosion of community feeling among us, such finding is indeed a silver lining for our collective problem-solving. However, the case studies described above represent two contradictory socio-political realities with a common outcome of community resilience. Whereas the civil war-torn multiethnic society

of Indonesia has developed a typical anti-national ethnic community consciousness to withstand the impact of the devastative Tsunami in Aceh province; the 'political society of West Bengal (India)has engendered a typical common-sense community consciousness based on mass political consciousness lying embedded in the political culture of West Bengal.

Concluding Observation

Whatever be the rationale behind the emergence of community resilience, be it the compulsion of salvaging the people deserted by the national government from the disaster; or a perceived bias of the community to have been forsaken by the administration on the political lines, it is a welcome development for disaster management. This spirit of the community has transformed it from a typical dependent status to a self-reliant one. It has not only slackened the extra burden of administration to deal with the disaster singlehandedly; but also liberates the top-down, reactive concept of disaster management from the clutches of the traditional bureaucracy. Further, community engagement in disaster management has also helped to neutralize the so-called tyranny of development experts by sensitizing them about the socio-cultural matrix, of the epicentre of the disaster. That said, however, in no way provide any guarantee that community participation would single-handedly bail out humanity from the scourge of disaster. In fact, no uniform modus operandi of community participation is available. It is more often than not an inchoate and emotionally charged concept. Hence, the spontaneity of community assertation needs to be properly contextualized.

CONCLUSION

The disasters that occurred in both India and Indonesia already had good prevention standards. However, until now, the data still has a high death rate and loss of victims. This is due to the lack of good cooperation between the government and the local community. The government will not have the right time to solve problems that occur if they receive reports late and lack cooperation from disaster-affected communities. improvement of literacy and testing of treatments that can systematically improve the quality of the community to care about the environment and reduce the impact of disasters in their area.

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