External Training: Disaster Risk Reduction

Coimbatore

5 - 8 December 2018

Photodocumentation

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The ideation for the Local Dissemination Workshop (LDW) was sculpted as a pragmatic approach with a combination of site/field study and a participatory seminar by Ms. Ebba Brink vis-à-vis disaster and risk management. Students of Bachelors of Architecture, Masters of Architecture and Master of Planning (Housing and Town and Country Planning) involved in volunteer work to raise funds and provide for tarpaulin sheets as a temporary water-proof remedy for the fallen roofs.

This work spanned across 3 days between 5th of December to the 7th of December. Ms. Ebba and BInUCom team - Mr. Kathiravan Pandian and Ms. Hiranmayi Shankavaram visited the village of Esanur (one of the villages affected by the cyclone) on the 6th of December to comprehend the present-day scenario.

With close to a month into disaster, the affects and effects of cyclone Gaja that hit the lands of the south-eastern coast and the delta regions of Tamil Nadu on 16th November 2018 seems to have brought about a tedious process for recovery both in terms of infrastructure and livelihood. In spite of the early predictions of the Indian Meteorological Department's (IMD) and the Chennai Meteorological Department's warning and evacuation notices, the mitigation schemes or techniques appeared limited. These can be reasoned out with preliminary survey findings as follows:

1. Information on the disaster was provided through loud-speaker announcements in the village.
2. The profile of the village surveyed consists the *Vanniar* community families with agriculture as their primary occupation and their only means of livelihood.
3. The housing typology portrayed 80 % kucha 15% semi pucca and 5% pucca houses.
4. Common amenities were limited with the closest town at 4km called Thirukuvalai. For other facilities people go to Velankanni which is 15kms from Esanur village.
5. Relief camps set up were very minimal which could not accommodate more that 10 to 15 people and were set up at Thirukuvalai and also within the village.
6. Precautionary measures taken by the local people included trimming of the coconut palm leaves, setting the cattle loose etc.
7. With the onset of disaster, destruction was seen with uprooted coconut trees, deracinated electrical lines and transformers, damage to houses, flooding of fields etc.

8. Immediate help was in the form of providing food, clothing by people of the neighboring village especially a self-organized Muslim community. The help from NGOs were mostly absent.
9. The sluggish interventions by the government necessitated many villages to seek help from institutions, self-organized groups or other private and non-profit organizations.
10. Relief was sent by small trucks, lorries and buses from different parts of state.
11. It was observed that the electrical board had begun work in restoring the electrical lines. However, the mitigation measures remained as restoration works rather than improvisations in the infrastructure provision that can work a precautionary measure from future disasters

Further to the visit, Ms. Ebba Brink conducted a seminar (at KAHE campus, Coimbatore) providing an overview of disaster reduction and an analytical toolbox that guide researchers and experts to devise adept solutions. During the seminar, along with a theoretical background on the definitions and stages related to disaster risk reduction, interactive exercises were conducted to understand the play of context (urban and rural) as a primary determinant on the risk reduction works. Also, the theoretical background – similarities and differences of climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction were discussed. The stages of risk reduction through Hazard reduction, vulnerability reduction, and response and recovery preparedness were articulated through studies from Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. The analytical tool box with the aforementioned criteria of risk reduction were further articulated as factors of the physical, social, economic, environmental and political. This tool box was adapted in the case of Esanur with inputs from the students and potential strategies as precautionary measures (figure attached).

Source:

https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/cyclone-gaja-story-devastation-pictures-92084

https://indianexpress.com/article/india/cyclone-gaja-tamil-nadu-puducherry-landfall-live-updates-5447164/

A / B	Hazard avoidance	Vulnerability reduction	Preparedness to respond	Preparedness to recover
Physical		Interl. Terrac. Design intervention	Existing shelters (but too few)	
Environmental		Toddy palm, drought+wind resistant	Cut branches to reduce dam. to house & trees	Use coconut rubble to rebuild
Social			Awareness programme	Help from muslim communities
Economic		Livelihood diversification?	Set livestock loose	
Institutional-Political				

black = existing/used strategies/capacities
green = potential future strategies (building on existing context)

LUND UNIVERSITY

Disaster seen as the aftermath of Gaja Cyclone on the way to Esanur Village

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The students and the faculty of Karpagam Academy of Higher Education at Esanur Village