



ADRC Highlights

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➤ ADRC Visiting Researchers' Report

By Hripsime Vardanyan



I am from Armenia and a visiting researcher of ADRC.

Armenia is one of the Caucasus countries – a region of numerous natural hazards and man-made disasters. Analysis of the loss caused by various hazards revealed that the most catastrophic one in the region is earthquake. The Caucasus countries are in the zone of high seismic hazard of Alpine-Himalayan and Balkan-Carpathian seismic belts.

One of the most tragic seismic events in the recent history of the region was the Spitak earthquake on 7 December 1988 in Armenia. More than 25,000 people lost their lives, 20,000 were injured, and 515,000 became homeless.

The seismic risk has been highly increased by the potential threat of new earthquakes, the secondary hazards caused by earthquakes such as landslides and fires, and rapid urbanization and population growth in the region. Taking into consideration the tragic lessons of the Spitak, other seismic catastrophes, and the continuing activation of seismic process, the seismic risk reduction becomes vital in order to protect the population.

I work in the National Survey for Seismic Protection (NSSP) under the Government of the Republic of Armenia (RA). The basic goal of the NSSP of the RA is to reduce the Seismic Risk in the country. That is why I consider my stay at ADRC, as visiting researcher, is very important for me.

During my three-month-research in Japan, I visited various research institutions and governmental organizations and made two presentations to share my experience and information on disasters in my country with ADRC researchers. I appreciate the valuable experience in ADRC.

With ADRC's support, I was also able to visit disaster-affected areas in Hiroshima and Ehime, where Geiyo earthquake (M=6.4) occurred on 24 March 2001. The visit gave me a good opportunity to inspect a lot kinds of damaged objects and to learn wide range of disaster management, including knowledge of disaster prediction system, earthquake countermeasures, early warning and public awareness, and GIS system. I am sure that my research experience in ADRC will benefit my work once I return to my country.

ADRC's Visiting Researcher Program is unique. It is a coordinating body that provides the member countries with necessary opportunity to study the world's experience of disaster reduction. I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all staff members of ADRC for their kindness, hospitality and readiness to support me whenever I needed in the three months.

➤ ADRC Field Survey of West India Earthquake

ADRC staff members made a field survey in the earthquake-affected sites in Gujarat States (Photos are available on the ADRC website) and visited both the Central & the State governments and some NGOs from

the 15th to 26th of April.

Mr. Masaru Arakida, Senior Researcher, has visited Bhuj, Bachau and Anjar of Kachchh Districts, the central part of the affected sites. As general impression, debris have still been left in many areas except for main roads and it may take some time for reconstruction.

Each of three cities has their own characteristics. In Bachau, almost buildings were collapsed. Anjar is farthest located from the epicenter among the three cities. Some business and livelihood activities have been resumed in half of the city area although many houses remained partially collapsed. Bhuj was reported as the most devastated area. Nearly half of the shops have already restarted their business in the new area of the city. In the old area, some shops are open only during daytime since essential service, such as electricity, is still paralyzed.



Regarding the Government's activities, the Gujarat State Government, in principle, responds to natural disasters, while the Central Government supports the state in the field of coordination with other states and foreign countries. The State Government has recently established the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), headed by the State Chief Minister. The Government has launched the rehabilitation and reconstruction packages which include village relocation policy. Foreign Governments and international organizations are assisting these policies through the central Government.

The state Government encourages NGOs to be involved in the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. The Government has started the scheme of public-private partnership for total rehabilitation of earthquake affected villages, in which both the Government and NGO will share 50% each on the expenses for rehabilitating some villages on the basis of the proposal from NGOs. Some NGOs have strongly supported community-based self-reliance activities for villagers through some of their development programs. Both the Government and village people expect NGOs to contribute their support for reconstruction in affected sites.

ADRC acknowledges the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in earthquake-affected areas is a big challenge for disaster reduction in the Asian region and continues to provide its support in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of Indian Government. ADRC's multinational mission, which consists of counterparts of ADRC's member countries, will be dispatched to India for the field survey in June 2001. The mission report will be made available in ADRC's Highlights right after the mission.

(Mr. Ryosuke Aota & Mr. Masaru Arakida, Senior Researcher)

➤ Announcement

□ Mr. Anil Sinha, an ADRC counterpart of India transferred to the other organization.

Mr. Anil Sinha, former Joint Secretary & Additional Central Relief Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture of India, has transferred to Head, National Centre for Disaster Management & Member-Secretary, High Powered Committee, Indian Institute of Public Administration.

If you have comments or needs for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC in the right box.

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