

Dr. Mohammad Manirul Islam from Bangladesh



My name is Mohammad Manirul Islam, and I have come from Bangladesh where I work as a Senior Assistant Secretary for the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief (MoDMR). I hold BS and MS degrees from the Department of Geography & Environment of Jahangirnagar University, and I recently conducted PhD research on “Problems and Prospects of the Land Tenancy System in Bangladesh: A GIS and Remote Sensing-Based Study.” One of my main responsibilities as Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is to coordinate emergency responders on behalf of the MoDMR and to manage humanitarian assistance operations as well as safety net programs for vulnerable populations. I am also responsible for liaising with regional and international organizations. I also play a role within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), where I am responsible for sharing real-time data related to natural hazards and for developing systems and procedures for establishing an effective Community Alerting System. I also support communications with relevant national, regional, and international institutions, and develop and implement disaster management training, education, research, and awareness programs. I am therefore in a prime position to support the implementation of disaster management programs in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is considered to be one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. A considerable portion of the development initiatives and investment made in Bangladesh are jeopardized by unwanted incidents. The government of Bangladesh therefore acknowledges the cost effectiveness of promoting predisaster mitigation and preparedness over the conventional approach of focusing on response measures taken after a disaster strikes. Thus, priority has been placed on promoting community-level preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation by emphasizing incident communication systems that can ensure the implementation of national and regional strategies and frameworks. The government, in coordination with NGOs and international organizations, has done a commendable job in terms of its cyclone preparedness and flood risk management efforts, but when it comes to most of the remaining major environmental incidents, such as earthquakes, additional work is still needed in the areas of prediction, emergency response, and risk reduction. Due to its geophysical location, Bangladesh is potentially vulnerable to earthquakes. The history of higher intensity earthquakes in this region, along with recent, milder earthquakes, highlight the need to focus on earthquake risks in the major cities of Bangladesh.

My research at the ADRC will focus on the development of an integrated framework for earthquake preparedness in Bangladesh by assessing the applicability of Japanese experiences, as

Japan has extensive experience and a renowned level of technical expertise when it comes to managing different aspects of earthquake disasters. My research will help the government of Bangladesh align its strategies for earthquake preparedness with national priorities and international commitments.

Finally, the VR Program is a great partnership tool by which Bangladesh, Japan, and ADRC can work together to address disaster risk reduction in Bangladesh, and my country is sure to gain short, mid- and long-term benefits from the insights gained through this program.