

Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed KHAN from Bangladesh



My name is Mohiuddin Ahmed Khan. I joined in Bangladesh Civil Service in 1989. I served in different capacities at the field level, including local level administration and city corporation (municipal corporation), and at the policy level in the Bangladesh Secretariat in the Disaster Management and Relief Division of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. I was promoted to the rank of Deputy Secretary in 2006.

Bangladesh is a disaster prone country. Floods are a recurring problem there. Every year, 18% of the country experiences flooding. On average, 844,000 million cubic meters of water flows into the country during the monsoon period every year. As many as 750 small and large rivers flow through the country. The catastrophic Cyclone SIDR in 2007 and Aila in 2008 severely damaged human lives, property, and infrastructures in six coastal districts of Bangladesh. I had been working in a cyclone affected area and engaged in rescue, relief and post cyclone rehabilitation programs as a local level government official. We are facing the challenges of climate change and sea level rise. This has added new dimensions to our natural disaster risks, such as salinity and water logging in some coastal districts. The government of Bangladesh has assigned the highest priority to efforts to address disasters, namely floods, cyclones, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Disaster preparedness, response, and recovery planning programs have been sketched out. As an official of Disaster Management Ministry, my assignment as a visiting researcher with the ADRC in Kobe is to enhance my knowledge, skills and experiences so that I am well equipped to face future disaster challenges.

My research plan at ADRC is to conduct a comparative study on community mobilization to reduce risks before, during, and after disasters in both Bangladesh and Japan. More specifically, I will conduct a comparative study on the planning of community mobilization for disaster prevention and preparedness, post-disaster emergency measures, and disaster recovery and rehabilitation in these two countries. In any disaster, it is the local people ? the community ? that have to respond first. The Visiting Researcher program at ADRC is an excellent opportunity for me to conduct

research on disaster preparedness and disaster reduction. The visiting researcher program covers a wide range of disaster related issues through the organization of various activities, including seminars, symposia, rallies in memory of the great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, and visits to the disaster risk assessment museum, disaster-related organizations, and affected areas. It would not have been possible for me to understand the great initiative taken by the Hyogo prefectural government and the government of Japan in managing disasters had I not been able to participate in this program. Kobe city is the Mecca of disaster management and a center of excellence for disaster reduction and mitigation. I am impressed with the Visiting Researcher Program for creating an opportunity for Japan to share its knowledge and experience on disaster with participants and member countries of ADRC.

The disaster knowledge that I have had gained during my stay in the resilient city of Kobe will immensely benefit my organization and my country, Bangladesh. As a visiting researcher, I came to understand that Japan is a pioneer and champion of disaster reduction throughout the world, and has been implementing an impressive portfolio of disaster mitigation and preparedness measures. The Japanese government's initiative and commitment to mobilizing local communities and the international community to minimize damage and losses from disasters is highly commendable.

I would like to express my gratitude to the government of Japan and ADRC, both its management and my fellow researchers, for the wholehearted support and cooperation that has been extended to me, and for the efforts taken to make my stay comfortable. I would also like to thank the government of Bangladesh for allowing me to benefit from Japan's practical experience.