Ethical Responsibility of Governance for Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction with Development

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The development in the public as well as the private sectors is controlled and regulated, directly or indirectly by the governments at federal, provincial and local levels. If this development goes haphazard and unplanned, without due considerations to environmental constraints and potential hazards; it is likely to cause disasters or may get affected by disasters. Therefore, it becomes an ethical responsibility of the people involved in governance sector to integrate disaster risk reduction with development in their administrative territories through enforcement of appropriate policies, guidelines and regulatory mechanisms. Such mechanisms should address the social, scientific, economic, environmental, and legal requirements that play significant role in planning, implementation of developmental activities as well as disaster management.

The paper focuses on defining the ethical responsibilities for the governance sector for integrating disaster risk reduction with development. It highlights the ethical issues with examples from two case studies, one from the Uttarakhand state and the other Odhisa state in India. The case studies illustrates how does it make a difference in disaster risk reduction if the governments own or do not own ethical responsibilities. The paper considers two major disaster events, flash floods in Uttarakhand state and Cyclone Phailin in Odhisa state, that happened during the year 2013. The study points out that it makes a great difference in terms of consequences and response to disasters when ethical responsibilities are owned by the governance sector. The papers attempts to define these ethical responsibilities for integrating disaster risk reduction with development so that the governments can be held accountable for their acts or non-actions.