

Educational Approach for Risk Reduction in Himalayan Seismic Zone I -Bridging the Gap Between Knowledge and Practice-

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How can we encourage people to take preventive measures against damage risks and empower them to take the right actions in emergencies to save their lives?

The conventional approach taken by scientists had been disseminating intelligible information on up-to-date seismological knowledge. However, it has been proven that knowledge alone does not have enough impact to modify people's behaviors in emergencies (Oki and Nakayachi, 2012). On the other hand, the conventional approach taken by practitioners had been to conduct emergency drills at schools or workplaces. The loss of many lives from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami has proven that these emergency drills were not enough to save people's lives, unless they were empowered to assess the given situation on their own and react flexibly.

Our challenge is to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice. With reference to best practices observed in Tohoku, one of which is known as "*The Miracles of Kamaishi*," our endeavor is to design an effective Disaster Preparedness Education Program that is applicable to other regions in the world, even with different geological, socio-economical and cultural backgrounds.

The two key concepts for this new approach are "community-based understanding of disaster risks" and "personal empowerment to take preventive actions." This approach requires collaboration and participation from people from diverse fields of expertise, cultures, and generations, touching on interdisciplinary areas of study including seismology, geology, community development, education and psychology.

In this presentation, we will introduce how we designed the programs and activities for disaster preparedness workshop held at a high school in the Lesser Himalayan Region in North India, under an Indo-Japan collaborative projectⁱ, and share good practices and lessons learned from this experience.

ⁱProject on Information Network for Natural Disaster Mitigation and Recovery (DISANET) <http://disanet.interliteracy.info/about/?lang=e>

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