International Journal of Social Impact
ISSN: 2455-670X
Volume 10, Issue 1, DIP: 18.02.011/20251001
DOI: 10.25215/2455/1001011
www.ijsi.in |January-March, 2025

Research Paper

Land Acquisition, Social Safeguards, and Community Involvement in Multilateral Development Banks Funded Disaster Recovery Projects

Dr. Vikash Sharma[1]*

ABSTRACT

Disasters have adverse consequences for people and communities, often intensifying vulnerabilities, and inequalities. In response, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank came forward to recover the damaged infrastructure and communities with the goal of long-term "social resilience" and sustainable development. This research paper examines the social dimensions of disaster recovery projects such as land acquisition, social safeguards, and community engagement in MDB-funded disaster recovery programs. This study employs documentary analysis, a qualitative methodology to examined forementioned social dimensions and their role in effecting outcome of the disaster recovery projects. The research paper builds on review of relevant literature, and case studies to demonstrate that participatory development, post-disaster land management and compliance to the safeguard policies can improve the effectiveness of disaster recovery operations. Community participation helps in rebuilding not just the bricks and structures, but also in building trust among community members and implementing agencies in the post-disaster rehabilitation process. However, the study also highlighted challenges when it comes to acquisition of land, implementing social safeguards and ensuring that the community is truly involved. Power disparities, lack of trust between communities and organizations, are some of the challenges that have the potential of creating barriers to the effective teamwork and in turn disaster recovery efforts.

Keywords: *Multilateral Development Banks, Social Safeguards, Land Acquisition, Disaster, Post Disaster Recovery, Community involvement*

United Nations (2016) defined disaster as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts." Post-disaster situations affect over-all well-being of the communities and marginalized sections by damaging basic infrastructure such as roads, school, hospitals, houses, and the economy. The objective of the post-disaster rebuilding primarily is to reestablish the skills and capabilities of the affected communities to build back better so that they can improve their living standards.

[1]PhD (Sociology)
*Corresponding Author

Received: February 21, 2025; Revision Received: February 24, 2025; Accepted: February 27, 2025

The impact of disasters in Asia and Pacific are significant and far-reaching, with approximately 75 per cent of people globally affected by disasters living in this region (UNFPA, 2018). The average number of disaster-affected persons per year during 2015-2021 with illness and housing or livelihood destruction was 150,214,597 persons. Direct economic losses are high with an average above US$ 330 billion/year (2015–2021) and significantly underreported. In percentage terms, this is equivalent to 1 per cent of GDP from reporting countries. On average each year between 2015 and 2021, 142,852 critical infrastructure units and facilities were damaged by the disasters (UNDRR, 2023).

Disasters, either natural caused by the changing climatic conditions and degradation of the environment or triggered by human interference, have an effect which is deep and enduring on communities -- often amplifying existing preconditions of vulnerability and inequality. This research zeroes in on the interplay of some critical social dimensions such land requirements, community engagement and implementation of the social safeguards to establish how these can stimulate the outcome of development interventions in post-disaster settings.

The comprehensive and thorough investigation of the social aspects of disaster recovery projects reveals that addressing land requirement during reconstruction phase, ensuring compliance to the social safeguard and active role of the communities can result into a sustainable, robust, and socially inclusive outcomes. The research paper also discussed at length the challenges of managing required land, involving communities in the project cycle and ensuring compliance to the social safeguards.

Objectives

The study is guided by the following two objectives;

1. To explore the land acquisition management in disaster recovery projects funded by the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).
2. To investigate the implementation of the Multilateral Development Bank's (MDBs) social safeguards and community engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses qualitative research methodology based on documentary analysis to look at land acquisition, social safeguards, and community participation in the disaster recovery projects funded by MDBs. Documentary analysis as a research method for this study can provide a comprehensive reading of all the relevant documents such as policies, laws, project management reports and other relevant sources which can shed light on significant aspects of post-disaster recovery projects. The secondary data was retrieved from official sources, academic information repositories, and reputable organizations to ensure consistency and validity of the data.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Dimensions of the Disaster Recovery Projects

The post-disaster reconstruction and recovery efforts by governments in conjunction with Multilateral Development Banks showed that all the stakeholders had taken social development approach in reconstructing infrastructure and rehabilitating affected communities.

MDBs have very elaborate provisions and policies on how to address such dimensions (land need, community ownership and compliance with safeguarding policies) as well as facilitating sustainable development ensuring that post-disaster constructions can be sustained for long-term and bring social stability. Ignoring these aspects leads to social inequality, marginalization, and unsustainable disaster recovery projects, which will cost the future generations dearly. This approach not only address immediate needs but also` builds capacity for future disaster preparedness and response.

ADB & IDC (2024), in "*Harnessing Development Financing for Solutions to Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific"* highlighted that disaster induced displacement have wide-ranging social implications, including loss of homes, livelihoods, and social networks, which need to be taken into consideration in disaster recovery efforts. MDBs are well positioned to impart critical role in addressing these social dimensions through government initiatives and programs. MDBs provide strategic investments and technological support to the disaster affected regions so that immediate relief and long-term resilience building can be achieved. Availability of relevant data and contextual knowledge make them adapt their interventions based on the need, requirements, and situation of the vulnerable groups.

In "*Post Disaster Social Reconstruction and Social Development,"* Pawar (2016), examined the potential implications of a social development strategy for post-disaster social reconstruction. The author proposed region-specific social policies and strategies for multistakeholder collaboration to address challenges emerged during disaster recovery at the local level. It also underlines the importance of taking an evidence-based approach to the specific goals and social development in offering community solutions.

Brand & Baxter (2020), in "*Post-disaster Development Dilemmas: Advancing Landscapes of Social Justice in a Neoliberal Post-disaster Landscape"* identifies three compounding dilemmas — color-blind neoliberal economic logic, racialized geographical formation and environmental injustice — that contextually shaped post-Katrina redevelopment in New Orleans. These orthodoxies create barriers to social justice by perpetuating existing disparities and desensitizing urban planning to innovative strategies for equitable change. The authors contend that the city holds the potential for transformation, yet is simultaneously stifled through entrenched histories of racism and market exclusion, thus undermining the materialization of the socially just city.

In paper *"Social Interfaces in Disaster Situations: Analyzing Rehabilitation and Recovery Processes Among the Fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu After the Tsunami in India,"* Santha (2018), explains the need for a social interface to understand socio-ecological mechanisms emerged during humanitarian crises by explaining the combination of convergent and divergent interaction with social actors that can result into possible conflicts or cooperation in the rehabilitation and recovery processes of post tsunami in Tamil Nadu. This knowledge is critical for a good humanitarian response and rehabilitation efforts. The article explores how external agents, such as development practitioners and the State affect the routine life of the people in disaster recovery projects. For successful disaster recovery, the paper highlights the significance of addressing the (often complex) relationship between local cultures and formal institutions, which is getting more complicated by power, for successful recovery efforts. This calls for a reconfiguration of power relations and mutual agreement on the

norms and understandings among the different actors in rehabilitation and recovery programs. These programs need such restructuring in order to be effective.

Fewer R. *et al.,* (2023), published a research paper titled *"We Are Not in the Same Boat': Representations of Disaster and Recovery in India"* based on case studies of three Indian states: Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The authors examined as how narrative of the disaster and recovery socially constructed and how they influence the recovery processes, policies, and priorities. The study emphasizes the need of acknowledging different social actors' viewpoints in rehabilitation processes so that the needs of marginalized communities can also be fulfilled.

Ngulube *et al.,* (2024), in "*Factors Impacting Participatory Post-Disaster Relocation and Housing Reconstruction: The Case of Tsholotsho District, Zimbabwe"* emphasizes the significance of meaningful public consultation and involvement of people in post-disaster relocation and reconstruction operations. The author argued that inadequate participation and consultation with local communities results into abandoning of reconstruction sites as their belief system, place attachments, and issues of livelihood were not taken into consideration. It proves that sensitizing project proponents and implementing agencies about the significance of involving communities is indispensable for the successful implementation of disaster recovery and rehabilitation projects.

Social aspects such as land acquisition, relocation and rehabilitation are given top priority by multilateral development agencies to ensure long-term recovery and improving the well-being of affected communities. The inclusion of these aspects helps in designing development programs to better match sustainable development goals and increase community resilience against future disasters**.**

Land Acquisition in Disaster Recovery Projects

Reconstruction of critical infrastructures, such as roads and bridges, is paramount to establish connectivity as it serves the primary means for efficient emergency response, and to supply goods and services that makes economic recovery after disaster possible. Rebuilding of schools and hospitals is also vitally important, because these are the arms with which communities can be provide services and maintain the health and potential of their populace. To rebuild damaged civic infrastructure, require land and determination of the ownership of the land identified for the usage is first step, MDBs safeguard polices required. MDBs through implementing agencies identify the land ownership status of the required land for the disaster recovery project so that assessment of the impacts and resettlement planning can be be ensured timely

The complex legal systems differ greatly from country to country govern land acquisition processes and allow compulsory land acquisition in many different countries. Reflecting upon this issue, Le Masurier *et al.,* (2008) in their article "*Building Resilience by Focusing on Legal and Contractual Frameworks for Disaster Reconstruction"* discussed that legal and contractual systems have an important role in long-term recovery following a disaster. Building a holistic framework for procurement is key to reconstruction. In the absence of such well-developed frameworks, reconstruction will likely be done piecemeal without societal needs in mind. This may include making the changes necessary to put in place the reconstruction efforts, which can thereby help communities build resilience.

Land acquisition after natural disasters is key to rebuilding infrastructure such as roads, bridges, hospitals and schools. This not only facilitate faster recovery but also significantly improves the long-lasting resilience and development. Yet it is often rife with challenges such as legal disputes, societal discontent, issues of justice and compensations. Strategic land use spatial planning and management has been considered as fundamental in resilience and disaster recovery by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2020). Communities may show discontent if they believe that compensation falls short of the worth of their property or the adverse impact projects have on their life. Further, inadequate community involvement during land acquisition might aggravate conflicts, therefore causing sentiments of disenfranchisement and hatred among the communities.

In their article *"Post-Earthquake Land Appropriations and the Dispossession of Rural Women in Haiti,"* Steckley & Steckley (2019), highlighted that while poor land management is a well-known cause of dispossession; in this case, it is exacerbated by the complete lack of community involvement in these post-earthquake land appropriations in Haiti. Ethnographic insights gathered in the field from 2010 to 2013 demonstrate how such factors undermined long-standing inequalities and interfered with women's labor. It shows how land governance can have broader implications in disaster recovery settings. Overall, the study highlights the importance of inclusive practices in disaster recovery efforts to avoid further marginalization of vulnerable communities in the wake of disasters. This issue highlights that strong land governance systems are urgently needed to meet post-disaster situations with through openness, fairness, and community engagement.

Community Involvement in Disaster Recovery Projects

When the project encourages the community to get involved, citizens develop a sense of proprietorship which is critical for the sustainability of the project. This participative process leads not only to the mitigation of adverse impacts but also reinforces social cohesiveness of communities, enabling them to rebuild their social fabric and physical surroundings.

In paper *"Community Participation in Flood Disaster Management,"* Makhfud & Mursyidah, (2024) examines public involvement in flood disaster management in Balonggabus Village. It indicates that the community plays an active role in managing flood disaster, as the community is involved in activities such as cleaning drainage and disaster management (from planning to program evaluation). This shows the importance of collaboration between the government and the community in enhancing disaster preparedness and response, according to the study. The study highlighted the need to consider local context while planning for disaster management.

Typically, theories of participatory development, which provide a well-established framework for understanding processes of involvement and empowerment after calamity, are used for evaluating community participation in disaster recovery. In 1969, the use of Arnstein's *"Ladder of Citizen Participation"* as a tool in this area of study was established. Under this paradigm, public involvement is a hierarchy with top-down decision-making processes and systems that alienate or leave citizens out of decision-making processes (non-participation) at one end, with increasing aspects of citizen empowerment where citizens create and lead recovery activities of interest at the other end. The varying degree of involvement serves to illustrate how communities may transform from passive recipients of

aid to active players in their own reconstruction, and in doing so foster a sense ownership of the recovery process.

Social capital theory introduced by Putnam in 1993 explains the importance of social networks, norms, and trust in building community resilience and support recovery programs. The strength of a community's social ties determines how well it can mobilize resources, disseminate information and stage collective actions in the event of a crisis, according to this view. If a community has high social capital that will facilitate community solidarity and cooperation, and thus will create more inclusive and expedient disaster recovery plans. These theoretical frameworks argued for listening local voices and strengthening interpersonal relationships to create resilient communities adept at negotiating the complexity of recovery and reconstruction. Further, these models also illustrate the potential of community participation in bringing transformation (Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

Social Safeguards and Land Acquisition

Development projects frequently result into involuntary displacements and bring substantial environmental, social, and economic risks due to the destruction of productive systems and livelihoods, exacerbation of poverty, loss of community networks, and the erosion of cultural identity. Given the nature of involuntary resettlement induced by land acquisition, the World Bank issued the Operation Manual Statements (OMS) 2.33 which formulated the policy for projects that require involuntary resettlement before that handling of involuntary resettlement issues in the banks was haphazard (Cernea, 1986) and in 1990, issued another Operational Directive (OD) 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement.

While the previous policy OMS 2.33 and Operational Directive 4.30 were directed more at resettlement connected with big infrastructure projects, in 2002, Bank issued its Operational Policy and Bank Practice 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12). It aimed to draw upon the Bank's experience across various sectors, including relatively small scale land acquisition and less impactful projects. While the fundamental principles of the policy have not changed, OP/BP 4.12 went further to deal with the involuntary relocation issues (World Bank, 2016a).

In 2018, OP/BP 4.12, was replaced with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework to strengthen safeguard policies and deal with the new emerging environment and social dimensions of the projects. It reflects the institution's commitment to sustainable development through a set of Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) that support borrowers' efforts to eradicate poverty and promote equitable prosperity. The Framework includes "the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs), a vision for Sustainable Development, and the Environmental and Social Policy for Investment Project Financing" (World Bank, 2016b).

The ten (10) Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) are the minimum requirements that International financial Institutions (IFIs) enforce on the borrowers for investment project financing (IPF). ESS1 outlines the borrower country's responsibility to assess, manage, and monitor the environmental and social risks and impacts of a project throughout its life cycle. ESS2 suggests to foster good worker-management relationships, equitable treatment of workers, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, and safe and healthy working conditions in projects to enhance the development benefits of a project. ESS3 deliberate upon the requirement of decreasing GHG emission by addressing the issues of pollution and

resource depletion. ESS4 talks about ensuring community health and safety as projects may pose risks in areas affected by changing climatic conditions. ESS5 recognizes the negative effects on communities of land acquisitions and deals with land purchase and forced displacement. ESS6 highlights the need of sustainable development through sustainable resource management and preservation of biodiversity as biodiversity provides fundamental ecosystem services *(ibid).*

With an eye on lowering poverty and advancing sustainable development by guaranteeing their involvement in Bank-supported initiatives without sacrificing their cultural identities, ESS7 focuses on "Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities". Recognizing its function in reflecting values, beliefs, and traditions, ESS 8, linked to Cultural Heritage, offers recommendations to maintain its tangible and intangible elements, thereby acting as a crucial resource for growth. ESS9 relates to Financial Intermediaries; ESS 10 underlines the need of stakeholder participation and communication for improving project sustainability and acceptance. These regulations apply to all Bank-supported projects and are classified as High, Substantial, Moderate, or Low *(ibid).*

Asian Development Bank's (ADB) operational policies include three safeguard policies viz., the Involuntary Resettlement Policy (1995), the Policy on Indigenous Peoples (1998), and the Environment Policy (2002). ADB keeps revising and upgrading its safeguard policies to handle growing ecological and social issues of development in its developing member countries (DMCs) and to adjust to its new lending modalities and financing instruments. ADB updated and revised previous three polices into one in 2009 as Social Safeguards Policy Statement-2009 (2009). The SPS- 2009 talks of avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating adverse effects on the ecology and communities and compensate when the before mentioned is not feasible. In doing so, ADB support clients and borrowers to improve their legal systems dealing with social safeguard and build their capacity also (ADB, 2009).

The SPS-2009 was scheduled for overhaul and updating, and the ADB Board of Directors adopted the Environmental and Social Framework in November 2024. It will replace the Safeguard Policy Statement (2009) (SPS) following its implementation on 1 January 2026 or a later date as will be decided by ADB Management. The ESF comprises four components including (i) ADB's commitment for social and environment sustainability ii) compulsory environmental and social policy requirements mandatory for the ADB; (iii) obligatory environmental and social standards for borrower country /clients; and (iv) a catalogue of prohibited investment activities. Borrowers and clients must adhere to ten Environmental and Social Standards during the project cycle: ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; ESS2: Labour and Working Conditions; ESS3: Resource Conservation and Pollution Prevention; ESS4: Health, Safety, and Security; ESS5: Land Acquisition and Land Use Restrictions; ESS6: Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resource Management; ESS7: Indigenous Peoples; ESS8: Cultural Heritage; ESS9: Climate Change; and ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure (ADB, 2024).

New Development Bank (NDB) started operations in July, 2015 and adopted Environment and Social Framework in 2016. It established fundamental principles, guiding NDB activities on social and environmental management. It consists of two sections. Part, one offers a general policy for handling social and environmental management in operations;

part two, Environment and Social Standards (ESS), lays forth the main obligatory standards about environment, involuntary resettlement, and aboriginal people. This Environment and Social Framework aims to address environmental and social risks associated with projects; manage operational and reputational risks of NDB and its stakeholders; mainstream environmental and social considerations into decision-making processes of all parties; and promote international good environmental and social practices in projects thereby strengthen the country systems. The Environment and Social Framework of the New Development Bank (NDB) is based on fundamental concepts designed to promote inclusive and sustainable development. This entails that historically underprivileged groups—the poor, underprivileged, women, children, and minorities—benefit from development possibilities (NDB, 2016).

NDB incorporates environmental and social sustainability into its decision-making, ensuring that its funding and investments in infrastructure and sustainable development projects mitigate negative consequences on the environment and communities. NDB emphasizes the preservation of natural resources, gender equality, and adopts a preventive strategy to alleviate potential environmental and social damage. The NDB assesses proposed projects in the conceptual phase to ascertain their risk classification, which is revised throughout the processing stage. Projects are categorized into four classifications according to their prospective social and environmental effects: Category A: Significant adverse impacts that are irreversible or unprecedented and may affect larger areas, Category B: less severe impacts that are site-specific, mostly reversible, and easier to mitigate. Category C: Minimal or no adverse impacts anticipated and Category FI: Involves funding through a Financial Intermediary (*ibid*).

Case Studies of Social Safeguards and Land Acquisition

Vigdor (2008), in case study of Hurricane Katrina titled *"The Economic Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Journal of Economic Perspectives,"* discussed that land restrictions posed major challenges for New Orleans in rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. The damage of infrastructure and the topography of the city complicated the reconstruction. Parts were left in turmoil, with a sharp increase in the demand for space to be used for temporary shelter. Insufficient land allocation for displaced citizens by the government delayed rehabilitation; causing prolonged homelessness and disorder among the local populace. This situation demonstrates the direct effect of land availability on the speed and effectiveness of disaster recovery.

Norio (2015), in case study titled *"Long-Term Recovery from the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster,"* argued that subsequent to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, the Japanese government launched a comprehensive recovery plan focused on land use in relation to reconstruction. The most impacted areas were reserved for residential, commercial, and recreational uses. Moving settlements to safer areas as rebuilding progressed required thoughtful land planning and management. This case study demonstrates how strategic land use and planning can potentially facilitate the rebuilding of communities in safer zones, potentially allowing for fast recovery, and ultimately reduce future risk of disaster.

Santos *et al.*, (2016), in *"The impacts of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines: Implications to Land use planning"* discussed the massive destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines, predominantly in the Eastern Visayas region. Poor land use planning and land

conflicts hampered the rehabilitation effort. Damage and legal battles over landownership barred many survivors from returning to their previous residences. The government's ignorance of land requirement led to a slow rehabilitation process and further heightened tensions with displaced people. This condition shows the importance of spatial land tenure problems and clear land use law during disaster rehabilitation.

He. L. *et al.*, (2018), in "*Accumulation of Vulnerabilities in the Aftermath of the 2015 Nepal Earthquake: Household Displacement, Livelihood Changes and Recovery Challenges,"* argued that the 2015 earthquake in Nepal damaged huge infrastructure as well as claimed countless lives. Disaster recovery program face numerous challenges and major one was ensuring the availability of land for rebuilding of community amenities and residences. In rural areas due to unavailability of suitable land for reconstruction, people were provided makeshift shelters that were unsustainable over time. Government and the NGOs working in the area identified suitable land, however the process was derailed by cultural issues. This case study highlights the significance of comprehensive land assessments and community involvement in disaster recovery planning to ensure that land use fulfilled the demands of impacted communities.

Case Studies of the Community Participation

In *"Response and Recovery after the Joplin Tornado: Lessons Applied and Lessons Learned,"* Smith & Sutter (2013), noted that after the EF5 tornado that devastated Joplin in May 2011, the Joplin community came together to develop a comprehensive recovery plan. Joplin Recovery Plan was used to gather input from the residents through community meetings. Local organizations such as the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce were key to facilitating recovery efforts and ensuring that residents supported the recovery process and participated in decision-making processes. This community-led model salvaged not just infrastructure but also community faith and engagement.

In 2011, Morello-Frosch *et al.*, wrote *"Community Voice, Vision, and Resilience in Post-Hurricane Katrina Recovery,"* in which they looked at how significant community groups were for the rebuilding process after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) enabled residents to articulate what they need, offering tools and data to facilitate community engagement. This grassroots involvement yielded a "Unified New Orleans Plan," which emphasized community-led recovery efforts and rebuilding neighborhoods with an eye toward local input and resilience.

Ali & George (2021), studied role of community participation in the process of disaster recovery post Kochi floods in their paper *"Fostering Catastrophe Mitigating via Community Participation-case of Kochi Residents During the Kerala floods of 2018 and 2019"*. The case study approach used here will assist to understand the context of Kochi and the significance of community participation with respect to disaster response. It also implies that even governments policies should be focused on strengthening community recovery and fostering civic participation to minimize occurrence of such disasters in future. While post-disaster involvement has numerous benefits, there are some barriers that limit effective engagement of the community in these critical post-disaster scenarios for example lack of trust that exists between local communities and various governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In *"Shifting Power Through Participation in Post-Disaster Recovery: A Scoping Review,"* Tuhkanen (2023), identifies five functions that participatory process can serve in post-disaster recovery. First, it creates awareness around systemic inequalities, power imbalance and rights. The second, in post disaster operations, ensures that decisions making processes are inclusive and not dominated by the powerful. Third, participation creates collective action which can drive change. Fourth, it reconfigures the relationship between various stakeholders and encourages collaboration and trust building. Fifth, thoughtful participatory processes create institutional mechanisms to ensure continuity and increase accountability and transparency of the recovery efforts. It demonstrates how participatory processes can shift hierarchical structures, and in doing so, lead to fairer recovery outcomes.

In *"Factors contributing to Participation in Community-led DRR Programme in Malaysia,"* Halim *et al.,* (2024), underline the critical role of community involvement in disaster risk management. It highlights unique knowledge and resources possessed by communities which can strengthen disaster prevention efforts, response to disasters, and recovery. The people led approach in managing disasters fosters local resilience and addresses social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities.

Challenges of Land Acquisition, Social Safeguards and Community Participation

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) face several challenges in land acquisition for rebuilding damaged infrastructure and then in resettlement and rehabilitation of groups affected by land procurement. The complexity of land acquisition, adverse social impacts, and the necessity of efficient resettlement and rehabilitation plans further complicates the recovery efforts. Often the process entails juggling the rights and livelihoods for impacted populations with the demand for infrastructure development. With the cooperation of MDBs, the disaster recovery programs are urgent response of the governments aiming to put back life on track by reconstructing infrastructure destroyed.

The challenges of land acquisition present one of the main challenges, MDBs in disaster recovery initiatives must deal with. Many nations have unofficial or poorly recorded land tenure systems that cause conflicts and delays in obtaining required land (Deininger *et al.*, 2010). Another difficulty in land acquisition seems coordination of the implementing agency with the line departments and other interested parties. Recovering from a calamity depends on coordination and acquiring land is a particularly difficult area for coordination given the fractured character of the land sector—responsibilities split across several ministries, organizations, and departments (UN-HABITAT, 2010).

Bartlett (2023), in *"After the Tsunami in Cooks Nagar: The Challenges of Participatory Rebuilding"* shows many challenges of how to include people in disaster rebuilding efforts. Some of these challenges include a restricted scope for meaningful participation, passive participation, and different pressures that hinder proper engagement. Further complicating community engagement are things like local complexities and the need for coordinated action. Despite these challenges, the research highlights the importance of including adults in the participatory reconstruction process alongside children. Investigating women-led community-based organizations in post-disaster recovery, Matsumoto & Ishiwatari (2024), detail the roles these organizations play in socio-economic recovery as well as challenges in achieving long-term sustainability and inclusivity.

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) face the challenge of harmonizing their social safeguard policies with the existing legal frameworks of borrowing countries, particularly in areas such as land acquisition laws. While most countries have established land acquisition laws, many still lack constitutional provisions for resettlement and rehabilitation. For example, MDBs' social safeguard guidelines are highly pro-people, offering protections for individuals facing livelihood or income loss due to development projects which are absence in most of the countries. MDBs take care of even squatters and encroachers (non-titleholders), whereas laws in vogue in different countries have no protection for non-titleholders.

Another difficulty resulting from communication gap and non-awareness of the social safeguard policies of the financial agencies is the preparation of compensation and resettlement and rehabilitation package. Urgency to rebuild in disaster recovery projects might aggravate land ownership issues as communities may have conflicting claims or resentment resulting from past injustices. Furthermore, many countries' legal systems controlling land acquisition can be lengthy and complicated, which is especially troublesome in the wake of disasters when quick response is vital (Kalin & Scherer, 2014). These issues stem from several angles such as participation framework issues, cultural issues, and the balance between inclusiveness and sustainability. Awareness of these challenges is key to improving community participation in disaster recovery activities.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, this study explores the complex interplay between land acquisition, social safeguards, and community engagement in the context of disaster recovery projects financed by multilateral development banks (MDBs). As the above discussion suggests, while restoration of infrastructure is critical to post-disaster recovery, it is also important to ensure the results are sustainable in terms of a social dimension, including land acquisition, compliance with social safeguard policies, and engagement of the local communities.

By applying qualitative methodology grounded in documentary analysis, the study has highlighted the complexity of juggling the pressing need for infrastructure development with the equally vital imperative of safeguarding the rights and livelihoods of affected communities including vulnerable groups. This requires not only the strengthening of existing safeguard policies, but also, as we have seen, the fostering of a transparent, responsible, and compassionate culture among MDBs, governments and local communities. Furthermore, the power relations innate in post disaster environment can aggravate pre-existing power dynamics, making it imperative to carryout recovery programs carefully so that reproduction of injustice and inequalities during disaster recovery can be prevented.

REFERENCES

ADB. (2009). *Safeguards policy statement*. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/ institutional-document/32056/safeguard-policy-statement-june2009.pdf

ADB. (2024). *Environmental and social framework*. https://www.adb.org/sites /default/files/ institutional-document/1008571/esf-policy-paper.pdf

ADB & IDC. (2024). *Harnessing development financing for solutions to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change in Asia and the Pacific*. https://doi.org /10.22617/tcs240454-2

Ali, S., & George, A. (2021). Fostering disaster mitigation through community participation: Case of Kochi residents following the Kerala floods of 2018 and 2019. *Natural Hazards*, 1–22.

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35*(4), 216-224.

Bartlett, S. (2023). After the tsunami in Cooks Nagar: The challenges of participatory rebuilding. *Children, Youth and Environments, 18*, 470–484.

Brand, A. L., & Baxter, V. (2020). Post-disaster development dilemmas: Advancing landscapes of social justice in a neoliberal post-disaster landscape. In Laska, S. (Ed.), *Louisiana's response to extreme weather: A coastal state's adaptation challenges and success*.

Cernea, M. M. (1986). *Involuntary resettlement in bank-assisted projects: A review of the application of bank policies and procedures in FY 79-85*. Agriculture and Rural Development Department, The World Bank.

Deininger, K., Selod, H., & Burns, A. (2010). *The land governance assessment framework: Identifying and monitoring good practice in the land sector*. World Bank.

Few, R., *et al.* (2023). "We are not in the same boat": Representations of disaster and recovery in India. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 92*, 103709.

Halim, B. M. K., Shamsuddin, N., Abdullah, R., & Kamarudin, K. H. (2024). Factors contributing to participation in community-led DRR programmes in Malaysia. *Disaster Advances, 17*(8), 41–48. https://doi.org/10.25303/178da041048

He, L. *et al.*, (2018). Accumulation of vulnerabilities in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquake: Household displacement, livelihood changes and recovery challenges. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJDRR.2018.04.017

Kälin, W., & Scherer, L. (2014). *The role of land in disaster risk reduction: A guide for practitioners*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Le Masurier, J., Wilkinson, S., & Zuo, K. (2008). Building resilience by focusing on legal and contractual frameworks for disaster reconstruction. In Le Bosher (Ed.), *Hazards and the built environment* (pp. 282–299). Routledge.

Makhfud, M., & Mursyidah, L. (2024). Community participation in flood disaster management. *Indonesian Journal of Law and Economics Review, 19*(4). https://doi.org/ 10.21070/ijler.v19i4.1176

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). *Localizing development: Does participation work?* World Bank Publications.

Matsumoto, A., & Ishiwatari, M. (2024). Navigating sustainability and inclusivity: Women-led community-based businesses in post-disaster recovery. *Sustainability, 16*(14), 5865.

Morello-Frosch, R., Brown, P., Lyson, M., Cohen, A. K., & Krupa, K. (2011). Community voice, vision, and resilience in post-Hurricane Katrina recovery. *Environmental Justice*. https://doi.org/10.1089/ENV.2010.0029

NDB. (2016). *Environment and social framework*. https://www.ndb.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ndb-environment-social-framework-20160330.pdf

Ngulube, N. K., Tatano, H., & Samaddar, S. (2024). Factors impacting participatory post-disaster relocation and housing reconstruction: The case of Tsholotsho District, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 1–15.

Norio, M. (2015). *Long-term recovery from the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami disaster*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-10202-3_1

Pawar, M. (2016). Post-disaster social reconstruction and social development. *Environment and Social Psychology, 1*(1), 50–60. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.18063 /ESP. 2015.01.004

Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.

Santha, S. D. (2018). Social interfaces in disaster situations: Analyzing rehabilitation and recovery processes among the fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu after the tsunami in India. In Sunita Reddy (Ed.), *The Asian tsunami and post-disaster aid* (pp. 65–78). Springer, Singapore.

Santos, C. T., Toda, L., Orduña, J. R., Santos, F. D., & Ferrão, J. (2016). The impacts of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines: Implications to land use planning. https://doi.org /10.18783/CDDJ.V001.I01.A06

Smith, D. J., & Sutter, D. (2013). Response and recovery after the Joplin tornado: Lessons applied and lessons learned. *The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy 18(2) 2013: 165-188.*

Steckley, M., & Steckley, J. (2019). Post-earthquake land appropriations and the dispossession of rural women in Haiti. *Feminist Economics*, *25*(4), 45–67.

Tuhkanen, H. (2023). Shifting power through participation in post-disaster recovery: A scoping review. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. Retrieved from* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420923005216

UNDRR. (2020). *Monitoring the implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: A snapshot of reporting for 2018*. https://www.undrr.org/media/46992/download?startDownload=20250213

UNDRR. (2023). *The report of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*. UNDRR.

United Nations. (2016). *Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction*.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2018). *Delivering supplies in crisis situations in Asia*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/18-291-DeliveringSuppliesCrisis-Asiafinalweb.pdf

World Bank. (2016a). *Inspection Panel: Involuntary resettlement*. World Bank.

World Bank. (2016b). *World Bank environmental and social framework*. World Bank.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Sharma, V. (2025). Land Acquisition, Social Safeguards, and Community Involvement in Multilateral Development Banks Funded Disaster Recovery Projects. *International Journal of Social Impact*, *10*(1), 131-143. DIP: 18.02.011/20251001, DOI: 10.25215/2455/1001011