Journal of Military and Strategic Studies

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1

Disaster Governance as Strategic Infrastructure and Non-Traditional Security in the Indo-Pacific: Insights from South Asia for Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy

Bala Raju Nikku[1]

Introduction

The central idea of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) threats is that security is no longer only about protecting States from traditional wars, regional conflicts, and military attacks. Instead, it includes a wide range of non-military risks that threaten the survival, wellbeing, and stability of people, communities, and nation-states. Hence, NTS threats are challenges to the survival and wellbeing of States and their citizens that arise primarily from non-military sources, such as climate change, cross-border environmental degradation, and resource depletion, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking, and other forms of transnational crime. The critical aspect of NTS threats is that they impact people, communities, the institutions of governance, and almost all organs of the State without the use of hard power. These threats become more pronounced where State capacities are weak, and governments are unable to respond to geographic, demographic, ethnic, and

[1] Bala Nikku is an associate professor of social work, Faculty of Education and Social Work, Thompson Rivers University. Email: bnikku@tru.ca

©Centre of Military and Strategic Studies, 2026

ISSN : 1488-559X

socio-political problems. Human (in)security is often multi-dimensional and transboundary; NTS threats cross borders and cultures, requiring cooperation among actors and agencies rather than military force.

This argument has broader implications for middle powers seeking to expand their engagement in the Indo-Pacific. For Canada, whose Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) highlights climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and regional partnerships, the experiences of South Asian countries offer important lessons on the governance capacities needed to address increasingly complex non-traditional security challenges and inspire trust in collaborative efforts.

The Indo-Pacific region will play a critical role in shaping Canada's future over the next half-century. Encompassing 40 economies, over four billion people, and $47.19 trillion in economic activity, it is the world's fastest-growing region and home to six of Canada's top 13 trading partners. The Indo-Pacific region represents significant opportunities to grow the economy here at home, as well as for Canadian workers and businesses for decades to come.[2] The article therefore examines disaster governance in Nepal and India in South Asia as case studies not only at the national level but also as sources of insight for strengthening regional resilience and Canada's evolving engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

This article argues that disasters in South Asia (and the Indo-Pacific) increasingly strain governance systems, disrupt livelihoods, and erode institutional legitimacy. Security scholars further define non-traditional threats as those emanating from non-state actors. The threats are not considered mainstream and have been regarded by security experts as peripheral.[3] For a comprehensive analysis, six broad branches of non-traditional security threats are identified: 1. international terrorism, 2. transnational organized crime, 3. environmental security, 4. illegal migration, 5. energy security, and 6.

[2] Please refer https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng

[3] Jha (2017) work is important as it argues that South Asia's security is increasingly shaped by non-traditional threats such as climate change, disasters, and resource stress requiring cooperative, human-centred regional responses.

human security. As disasters become more intense and frequent, they increasingly serve as non-traditional security stressors that impact regional stability.

Disaster governance is argued to be strategic infrastructure when it is treated not just as emergency response but as a permanent, system-level capability that reduces risk, protects communities, and strengthens societal resilience. Positioning disaster governance as foundational infrastructure, like transportation or energy networks, underscores its vital role in maintaining regional stability and security.

Drawing on evidence from recurring cyclones in India and Nepal's 2015 earthquakes, the article argues that the quality and continuity of disaster governance centred on community resilience are vital for fostering a sense of empowerment and demonstrating the critical role regional officials play in shaping stability and resilience. Unlike conventional donor-aid approaches that treat disasters as humanitarian emergencies or technical management problems, this article conceptualizes disaster governance as a systemic security institution that proactively shapes political stability, economic continuity, and regional order, emphasizing its strategic security role.[4]

Disaster Governance as Strategic Security: A Brief Review

Disaster governance functions as an institution, establishing formal and informal norms, rules, and decision-making procedures that govern how societies anticipate, respond to, and recover from shocks.[5] It acts as a *systemic security* measure by managing interdependencies, i.e., addressing the cascading failures that spread across sectors finance, health)integrating risk management; merging disaster risk management with climate change adaptation to handle complex, transboundary, and uncertain risks; and

[4] Bala Nikku and his colleagues have made important contributions to disaster scholarship. Ranging from analyses of disaster diplomacy in Nepal's 2015 earthquakes (Nikku, Nepali & Dahal 2023) to arguments for Indigenous resilience (Nikku, Nepali & Khatiwada 2021)highlights that disasters are socially created rather than natural, and that resilience must be built through community empowerment, local knowledge, and socially just recovery processes (Nikku et al, 2025), visit https://resilientfutures.trubox.ca/

[5] Tierney (2012) work aligns with other scholars such as Jha (2017), and Nikku (2023; 2025) who argue that disasters are not natural events but socially produced outcomes shaped by governance failures, structural inequalities, and uneven vulnerability; this aligns with non-traditional security perspectives and underscores why India's escalating cyclone risks driven by climate change and shifting storm patterns require people-centred resilience, equitable risk governance, and community-based preparedness.

promoting Resilience by shifting from just mitigating damage to strengthening the ability of systems to withstand and adapt to shocks.[6]

Several strands of past and current research and policy support the framing of disaster governance as a strategic, non-traditional security infrastructure. However, it is critical that disaster governance, defined as the coordination of policies, institutions, and legal frameworks to manage disaster risks, is described by scholars as the foundation of effective disaster risk management, requiring strong legal and regulatory frameworks to keep people safe in an increasingly hazardous world. Resilient infrastructure principles developed by UNDRR emphasize that infrastructure systems must be designed and governed to withstand shocks, and that governance itself is part of this resilience architecture.[7]

Critical infrastructure research shows that failures cascade across systems, making governance structures essential to prevent widespread disruption. The global methodology for infrastructure resilience review highlights how governance frameworks help identify vulnerabilities, strengthen institutional arrangements, and prevent cascading failures across interconnected infrastructure systems.[8] Geospatial information frameworks treat data governance as strategic infrastructure because it enables coordinated action across all phases of the emergency cycle. These frameworks integrate risk information, support multi-hazard assessment, and ensure that decision-makers have the situational awareness needed to manage disasters effectively.

Recovery governance literature and provincial and national frameworks position governance bodies as long-term infrastructure for community recovery and resilience. Governance structures guide planning, resource allocation, and institutional coordination throughout the recovery cycle, ensuring that resilience is embedded in reconstruction and long-term development. Together, these sources and scholarship

[6] Schweizer, Hofbauer, and Einhäupl (2026) work echoes the arguments of Tierney (2012), and Nikku (2015) in showing that disasters stem from systemic and socially produced vulnerabilities, reinforcing the need for integrated and equity-focused governance in the face of escalating climate-driven risks.

[7] UNDRR's 2023 guidance calls for using geospatial data to strengthen hazard mapping, exposure analysis, and anticipatory planning (UNDRR 2023), alongside resilient-infrastructure principles that emphasize risk-informed design, redundancy, equity, and long-term climate adaptation (UNDRR 2023a), together promoting integrated, data-driven, resilience-focused governance.

[8] Visit https://cdri.world/?utm_source=copilot.com

show that disaster governance is not an add-on to infrastructure but a critical form of infrastructure, providing the systemic capacity needed to reduce risk, coordinate institutions, and maintain societal functioning across interconnected systems.

In response to the increasingly complex disaster landscape in the Indo-Pacific, marked by diverse actors, shifting funding, new technologies, and expanding military roles, regional disaster response architectures must become more adaptable and resilient. Non-Traditional Security (NTS) scholarship has expanded beyond military conflict to include climate risks, pandemics, migration, involuntary displacement, and environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods, emphasizing the importance of disaster governance strategies for regional stability and resilience.

To achieve robust regional governance for disasters and other NTS areas, regional policies should focus on six core areas: 1. strong political will and leadership to prioritize preparedness; 2. inclusive engagement of multiple actors across sectors and levels; 3. credible, transparent, and accountable systems to build trust; 4. simplified processes and reduced bureaucracies to enhance speed and coordination; 5. institutionalized knowledge and information sharing to strengthen learning and capacity; and 6. continuous education and training to sustain operational readiness and effectiveness. We further explore these core areas and their status in South Asia, using disaster governance in India and Nepal as a case in point.

South Asia, a dynamic yet disjointed region, faces significant security challenges, making effective disaster governance crucial for regional stability amid its dense population and vulnerability to natural hazards. As a region, it covers just 4.0 percent of the world's total land area but is home to over one-fourth of the global population, making it the most densely populated region on Earth. With more than a quarter (25.2 percent) of the world's people living here, the impact of natural hazards on both lives and property is particularly severe. Limited economic and natural resources intensify competition, underscoring the critical importance of effective disaster management for the region's survival and resilience.

Six out of eight South Asian countries, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, are vulnerable and fall in the category of failing or failed

states on various counts, including the Human Development Index (HDI)[9]. Despite weak socio-economic conditions and diverse political and governance structures, South Asian countries have sought to institutionalize disaster risk reduction over the past decades, but gaps remain. Many countries in South Asia have sought to institutionalize disaster risk reduction over the past decades. However, gaps persist due to top-down governance, corruption, limited community participation, and the exclusion of marginalized voices. Strengthening regional collaboration can foster a sense of shared responsibility among policymakers and security strategists.

South Asia is facing the wrath of natural disasters with greater frequency and intensity. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and building community resilience should become central pillars of non-traditional security (NTS) in the Indo-Pacific, as the region faces escalating climate-induced disasters, health crises, and environmental degradation that threaten human security and societal stability. These non-military and transboundary risks require collaborative, multi-scalar governance approaches that extend beyond national security frameworks to include local communities, regional cooperation, and cross-sector partnerships.

In this context, DRR and governance serve as strategic infrastructure, strengthening societies' capacity to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to systemic shocks. Investing in resilient infrastructure and institutional capacity-building can inspire confidence in regional stability and development efforts**.**

Disasters are increasingly recognized not simply as humanitarian crises but also as systemic stress tests of governance capacity, emphasizing the vital role of disaster governance in regional stability for policymakers and security strategists, including actors in the global North. The cumulative impacts influence economic resilience, migration flows, political stability, and regional security architecture.[10]

---

[9] Hossain, 2013 Also refer to Bizhan, N. (Ed). 2022. State Fragility: Case Studies and Comparisons, Routledge. This book offers a novel empirical contribution in examining a range of distinct but interdependent dimensions of state fragility, not only focusing on questions of state legitimacy, capacity and authority, but also involving the economy and resilience to political and economic shocks, as well as at vital questions of context and diversity. Visit https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003297697

[10] Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2021 report ADB (2021) highlights the region's rising climate-related risks and calls for risk-informed development, resilient infrastructure investment, stronger early-warning systems,

To provide further evidence, a recent World Bank report (2021) highlights that globally, climate-induced disasters, including floods, wildfires, and intense storms in the Indo-Pacific, are no longer episodic but structural. South Asia accounts for a disproportionate share of global disaster exposure due to seismic vulnerability, dense coastal settlement, hydrological variability, and rapid urbanization. In this article, we advance the proposition that disaster governance plays a *critical role* and functions as a strategic infrastructure within non-traditional security frameworks.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and Non-Traditional Security

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) reflects a growing recognition that security extends beyond traditional military concerns to include climate change, disasters, environmental degradation, and human insecurity. Across the Indo-Pacific, climate-induced disasters increasingly threaten livelihoods, critical infrastructure, economic stability, and governance systems, making them significant non-traditional security (NTS) challenges. The IPS identifies climate resilience, disaster preparedness, adaptation financing, and regional partnerships as important priorities for long-term regional stability.

The strategy emphasizes resilient infrastructure, strengthened disaster risk reduction (DRR), early warning systems, and enhanced Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) cooperation with regional partners. It also highlights the importance of multilateral engagement through cooperation with ASEAN, Pacific Island states, and other regional actors to address transboundary risks that no country can manage alone. By supporting capacity building, knowledge sharing, and institutional resilience, Canada increasingly recognizes that effective disaster governance contributes to societal stability, economic continuity, and regional security.

Viewed through an NTS lens, disaster governance functions as strategic infrastructure that strengthens resilience, legitimacy, and regional cooperation. The subsequent South Asian cases (India and Nepal) provide shared lessons on how disaster

and support for vulnerable communities. Access full report https://www.adb.org/what-we-do/topics/climate-change

governance can be operationalized as strategic infrastructure within regional security architectures.

India: Cyclone Disasters and Governance

India is a diverse, most populous country with 1.48 billion people and rising economic and political advancements. The 21st century is known as the Asian century, and India is a regional player and a middle power in a bipolar and multipolar world. Providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) is an essential emergency service for Indian disaster management agencies. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) coordinates with state governments for preparation and response. The IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) provides reliable forecasting.

Northern India faces extreme temperatures and earthquakes, and its eastern coastline, which frames the Bay of Bengal, is vulnerable to cyclones, floods, and sea-level rise, and is exposed to recurrent cyclonic activity. Cyclone events such as Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Titli (2018), Fani (2019), Amphan (2020), and Asani (2022) affected millions of people. They generated multi-billion-dollar losses in India and neighbouring countries in the South Asia Region. Although reported fatalities declined due to improved early warning systems, livelihood recovery remains uneven. Saline intrusion, fishery decline, and damage to coastal and urban infrastructure have caused prolonged economic strain and governance failures at the community level, which are correlated with delayed recovery and increased internal migration of youth and male members to other coastal and urban areas in India.

For example, Andhra Pradesh (AP) is a state on the east coast of southern India. It is the seventh-largest state and the tenth-most populous in the country. AP, a maritime South Indian state, was hit by 61 cyclonic storms between 1970 and 2025. However, the worst was the 1977 cyclone that left at least 10,000 dead when a seven-meter-high storm surge hit the *Diviseema*, a small deltaic island in the Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. The most devastating storm of this century was Hudhud, which left a trail of destruction in Visakhapatnam on 12 October 2014. Similarly, cyclone Titli (2018) made landfall near

Palasa in Srikakulam district as a very severe cyclonic storm. It extensively damaged crops in the Srikakulam district.[11]

Cyclone Fani (2019) affected over 1.65 crore people across 14 districts and damaged over 5 lakh houses. IMD's early and accurate forecasts enabled the evacuation of nearly 1.2 million people to 4,000 cyclone shelters. Effective coordination among disaster agencies, including the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF),[12] minimized casualties. The post-cyclone restoration in the State was completed in record time, as evidenced by the media reports. The cyclone management demonstrated how advanced warnings, community engagement, and resilient infrastructure can drastically reduce cyclone-related deaths. These numbers could have been higher if the state's response had been weak and reactive. Northern Andhra Pradesh was also affected.

Cyclone Michaung (2023) developed over the Southwest Bay of Bengal and made landfall near Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh, on 5 December 2023. Though not extremely intense, it produced very heavy rainfall across Tamil Nadu and southern Andhra Pradesh. There were major disruptions to transportation, power supply, and drainage systems. Reported agricultural losses in paddy, pulses, groundnut, and vegetables due to inundation. In addition, the poultry and dairy sectors were affected by prolonged waterlogging and feed shortages. Cyclone Michaung underscored the urgent need for stronger urban stormwater systems, improved land-use planning, and the integration of climate adaptation into urban planning and development.

The sequence of cyclones Fani (2019), Amphan (2020), Tauktae (2021),[13] and Michaung (2023) reflects India's shifting cyclone risk profile: while the Bay of Bengal

[11] Refer to the work of Raghavan & Rajesh, 2003. To refer further about Andhra Pradesh's cyclone exposure and major events including the 1977 Diviseema cyclone, Hudhud (2014), and Titli (2018) can be Drawn from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and Government of Andhra Pradesh assessments (IMD; NDMA; Government of AP). Visit https://rsmcnewdelhi.imd.gov.in/

[12] The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is a specialized force in India, tasked with the responsibility of responding to natural and man-made disasters. It operates under the National Disaster Management Authority of Ministry of Home Affairs and was established in 2006 with the aim of strengthening disaster management capabilities in the country

[13] Source: https://science.nasa.gov/earth/earth-observatory/cyclone-tauktae-strikes-india-148325/

remains the traditional hotspot, the Arabian Sea is now experiencing more frequent and intense storms, driven by warming sea-surface temperatures. These events highlight the importance of advanced forecasting, early warning systems, localized advisories, timely evacuation, and resilient infrastructure and informed communities, which together have significantly reduced casualties even as economic losses remain high. Sustained investment in climate-resilient agriculture, coastal protection, and urban flood management is essential to strengthen national resilience.[14]

India is shifting its focus from reactive relief to proactive disaster risk reduction (DRR) following the 1999 super cyclone. This approach, centred on the Disaster Management Act of 2005, has been instrumental in minimizing mortality. Overall, Indian cyclone disaster governance has evolved from a reactive, relief-based model to a proactive, preemptive strategy, significantly reducing fatalities despite an increase in severe, climate-driven storms. The eastern coast, particularly states like Odisha, has set global benchmarks in risk reduction by focusing on early warnings, community preparedness, and structural improvements.[15]

The Indian experience demonstrates that cyclone governance is not merely a humanitarian function but a strategic security capability. Effective early warning systems, evacuation mechanisms, and resilient infrastructure reduce the risk of social disruption, mass displacement, and economic instability. In this sense, disaster governance contributes to the State's accountability and legitimacy towards citizen safety and security, much the same way as conventional security institutions do. India's deployment of disaster diplomacy and HADR operations further illustrate how India's disaster-response capacity has become an instrument of regional influence and strategic positioning within the Indo-Pacific.

---

[14] Scholars such as Ilan Kelman, Sunita Narain, Roxy Mathew Koll, K. J. Ramesh, Aparna Roy, and Mihir Bhatt, like Ibe et al. (2025), emphasize that India's rising cyclone risk, driven by warming oceans and shifting storm patterns, demands long-term investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, adaptive coastal planning, and community-centred preparedness. Visit https://mausam.imd.gov.in/index_en.php

[15] Chhotray and Few (2012) argue that Odisha's cyclone governance is effective due to strong local institutions, community participation, and socially embedded early-warning systems; Dash (2002) shows that the 1999 super cyclone exposed the limits of India's relief-centric model and underscores the need for preparedness and institutional reform. Similarly, Kumbhar (2025) highlights India's post-2005 shift toward proactive Disaster Risk Reduction, marked by improved early warning, evacuation planning, and infrastructure resilience.

Nepal: Earthquake Disasters and Governance

Nepal is situated in the seismically active Himalayan mountain belt, dominated by the northward movement of the Indian tectonic plate towards and below the Eurasian plate. In addition to earthquakes, Nepal also experiences landslides and an increasing number of flood days and consecutive days of flooding, which are intensified by climate change. The 7.8 magnitude Gorkha earthquake that struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, resulted in nearly 9,000 fatalities and destroyed more than half a million homes, schools, health facilities, cultural monuments, and worship places. Overall, the disasters affected 8 million people, i.e., over one-fourth of the country's population, and crippled economic growth. Out of Nepal's 75 districts, 31 were deemed *most affected*, and out of that number, 14 districts were *severely affected*. These 14 districts have an estimated population of 2.8 million, of which 1.1 million (40 percent) are children.

Economic losses are estimated at US$7-10 billion, representing approximately 33-50 percent of Nepal's nominal GDP at the time. In addition, rebuilding homes, roads, and infrastructure was estimated at US $5 billion. The agriculture sector suffered US$255 million in damage, while tourism and manufacturing were also heavily disrupted. As a result, millions of Nepali people fell below the government's national poverty line of NRs 19,261 per person per year (average 2010-2011 prices). This is particularly the case in rural areas, where 27.4of the population lives below the poverty line. Overall, 25% of Nepal's population lives below the poverty line. The disasters have added to the increased poverty levels and vulnerabilities that shook the community's trust and bonding.

Urban areas such as the Kathmandu Valley suffered severe structural damage. They became a tent city as internally displaced people (IDPs) chose to come to Kathmandu, the capital of the country, in search of livelihoods and safety. Many IDPs were forced into temporary shelters or makeshift camps due to the destruction of their homes back in their villages. They had no access to safe shelters with privacy-enhancing facilities. The cumulative impacts of the April and May 2015 earthquakes were physical (infrastructure, heritage sites), social and cultural (trauma, displacement), and economic and political.

Institutional bottlenecks during reconstruction highlighted coordination gaps and challenges of centralization. Field research documented delayed grant disbursement, uneven access to housing certification, and heightened migration pressures among

marginalized communities. Disaster response revealed gaps and highlighted the critical role of resilience-centred governance design in shaping long-term recovery, reintegration, and stability, as well as the role of distributive and recognition justice.

Displacement and Reconstruction

The politics of reconstruction following the 2015 Nepal earthquakes underscores that recovery was not a linear, technocratic process but a contested terrain shaped by governance struggles, donor influence, and social inequalities. Reconstruction delays can be traced to institutional fragmentation, a prolonged political transition, and bureaucratic inertia, which have slowed the establishment and functioning of key mechanisms, such as the National Reconstruction Authority.

Nikku's work (2015; 2020) highlights that disaster-related displacement often lasts for years, and that tourism resources and cross-border services, coupled with these conditions, form the main sources of livelihood, leaving survivors feeling stranded and uncertain about their future, often living on *marginal land* or in precarious conditions. Agriculture and animal husbandry, coupled with tourism resources and cross-border services, are the main sources of livelihood for the Rasuwa people. The work with communities in the Rasuwa district of Nepal provides evidence that, while displacement is often treated as a temporary emergency, many populations remain "out of place" for years without permanent solutions.[16]

Shneiderman et al. (2023) demonstrate that reconstruction policies, particularly the "owner-driven housing reconstruction" model, reconfigured State-Citizen relations by shifting responsibility onto affected households while embedding recovery within existing inequalities of caste, ethnicity, and regional marginality. Their work highlights how documentation requirements, eligibility criteria, and technocratic compliance frameworks often excluded the most vulnerable, revealing how reconstruction became a

[16] When aligned with broader disaster scholarship, Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy appears ambitious but uneven. Nikku and his team (2020; 2015) and Shneiderman et al. (2023) further show that disaster resilience depends on local participation and inclusive development, while recovery is undermined by weak governance and prolonged displacement, echoing wider scholarship linking disaster outcomes to social vulnerability and institutional capacity. By prioritizing state-centric partnerships and offering limited attention to local participation, displacement dynamics, and governance reform, Canada's IPS risks overlooking the very factors that shape disaster outcomes across the Indo-Pacific.

site where citizenship, belonging, and state recognition were negotiated. Consistent with Nikku et al.'s (2023) critique of disaster diplomacy and aid politics, international assistance in Nepal was filtered through both geopolitical interests and domestic political calculations, resulting in coordination gaps and uneven outcomes.

Parajulee et al. (2020) observe that local communities, diaspora networks, and volunteers played a pivotal role in early recovery, mobilizing resources, organizing relief, and fostering forms of *citizen diplomacy* that often proved more responsive than formal state mechanisms. However, these grassroots efforts did not fully offset structural disparities; instead, reconstruction outcomes remained uneven across gender, caste, and geography, with remote and marginalized populations facing slower and more precarious recovery trajectories.

Bajracharya et al. (2022) argue that disaster impacts are gendered, and Indigenous women often face disproportionate vulnerability. Their work examines Indigenous women's experiences in disaster recovery through a case study of the Guthi in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley after the 2015 earthquakes. Findings show that government recovery focused on physical reconstruction, neglecting social and cultural needs, while Indigenous efforts, though more holistic, remain insufficient and often exclude women. They call for reframing gendered disasters by challenging knowledge hierarchies, tokenistic participation, and ineffective gender mainstreaming in DRR policies.

Media representations and visual narratives of the post-earthquake landscape further capture this duality: resilience-building alongside prolonged delays illustrates how overlapping political, logistical, and social constraints shaped reconstruction. Overall, the Nepal case demonstrates that post-disaster reconstruction is fundamentally political: it involves not only rebuilding infrastructure but also renegotiating power, governance, and social inclusion, requiring coordinated, context-sensitive, and equity-oriented approaches.

Disaster Diplomacy

Nikku, Nepali, and Dahal examine the 2015 Nepal earthquakes as a case of Canadian disaster diplomacy, arguing that disaster aid functions as a form of soft power embedded within pre-existing political and economic relationships rather than a purely humanitarian response. Nikku et al. (2023) study shows that Canada's relatively swift

and visible engagement through financial aid, deployment of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), and mobilization of non-state actors such as the Canadian Red Cross and diaspora networks both reinforced bilateral ties and enhanced Canada's diplomatic presence in the Indo-Pacific.

However, drawing on field evidence, we contend that disaster relief efforts by state, non-state, and international actors often fall short of socially optimal outcomes due to coordination failures, power asymmetries, and the prioritization of donor interests. We contend that current legal and policy frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region are assessed to determine whether they sufficiently protect the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) facing long-term instability. Nikku's work (2020) on South Asian disasters further discusses the critical roles of citizen diplomacy, diaspora mobilization, and local community responses, while also exposing tensions such as politicization of aid, inequalities in attention based on disaster scale, and ethical concerns within humanitarian organizations. Canadian disaster diplomacy is largely reactive and constrained by broader geopolitical interests, emphasizing the need for more reflexive, locally grounded, and multi-actor approaches to make disaster aid both effective and genuinely transformative.

Regional Cooperation and Disaster Governance

Regional cooperation in South Asia has steadily improved disaster governance, especially after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, but it still struggles with political tensions, uneven capacity, and limited implementation. South Asia's regional disaster governance framework, anchored in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), along with global frameworks such as the Sendai Framework and multiple bilateral mechanisms, has created shared institutions and early-warning systems. However, political mistrust, resource asymmetry, and weak enforcement continue to limit the region's ability to manage transboundary disasters effectively. For example, the India-Pakistan rivalry weakened SAARC's ability to function as a unified disaster-governance body. SAARC summits have been repeatedly postponed, slowing institutional progress. At the same time, India's *Neighborhood First* policy has supported Nepal (2015 earthquake), Sri Lanka (floods), and the Maldives (water crisis). As is evident, regional cooperation often accelerates during major disasters despite political tensions.

Nepal, as a country in transition, and its disaster governance, especially regarding the 2015 earthquakes, reveal that failures in the State's disaster governance have consequences that extend beyond humanitarian loss. Delayed reconstruction, prolonged displacement, governance bottlenecks, and unequal recovery processes can undermine public trust, intensify social vulnerabilities, and weaken state capacity. The case of Nepal provides further evidence that disaster governance in South Asia is a determinant of the region's long-term societal stability and a critical component of non-traditional security (NTS).

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC was established in 1985 as a regional mechanism to address issues collectively. Since then, it has been a platform for initiatives that could foster regional cooperation to mitigate disaster risk, inspiring hope for effective collaboration. A move in this direction was the establishment of the SAARC Disaster Management Center (SDMC) in New Delhi in October 2006, 21 years after SAARC's inception, to function as a regional intergovernmental organization. Its mandate is to serve SAARC member states by providing policy advice, capacity building, research, training, and information exchange to enhance disaster risk reduction (DRR) and to coordinate rapid response mechanisms within South Asia. In 2015, member states accounted for 54 percent of the world's total disaster-related deaths.[17] The main goal of SDMC is to serve as a Center of Excellence for regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction, recovery, and response, aligning with global frameworks. The SDMC was established within the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) in New Delhi, India, and often operates through its own Governing Board. The lack of initiative and political will has led to the marginalization of the SAARC disaster management sector from mainstream efforts in South Asia. The unresolved inter-country conflicts (for example, between Pakistan and India) and trust deficit between the countries have made SAARC a de facto powerless regional body.[18] The SAARC member countries adopted a Comprehensive Regional

[17] Refer to United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) (2015) The Human Cost of Weather-related Disasters 1995-2015. Available at: https://www.undrr.org/publication/human-cost-weather-related-disasters-1995-2015

[18] White's critique of weak regional disaster institutions (2010; 2015) mirrors Bose and Rashmi's findings on under-institutionalized, poorly coordinated DRR/HADR systems in BIMSTEC, echoing wider scholarship by Caballero-Anthony, Cook, and Bacon.

Framework for Action 2006–2015, modelled on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015. However, the failure to renew this framework since 2015 raises concerns about the sustainability of regional disaster management efforts and the proactive development of future policies, which are vital for regional resilience.

Although regional institutions in South Asia have sectors of cooperation in disaster management, in the event of a crisis, when the affected country needs external assistance, it usually requests help from its bilateral partners rather than turning to a regional institution, even though it is a member. Consequently, regional disaster management systems have remained underdeveloped.

Bose (2024) states that SAARC introduced disaster management following extreme weather events in the region in 1985. Later frameworks were also triggered by events such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, and the 2010 Pakistan floods. However, there was a delay in implementing agreements such as the SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters (SARRND), which was signed in 2011 but not enforced until 2016, following the 2015 Nepal earthquake. These disjointed and fragmented approaches highlight a persistent lack of sustained commitment to regional development, with momentum often fading once immediate disaster crises subside.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

History reveals that, in June 1997, four countries from the Bay of Bengal region, which include Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, started their journey with the intention of establishing a sub-regional economic cooperation (BIST-EC), which would accelerate economic growth and social progress in the sub-region through joint endeavours. Additionally, through the Bangkok Declaration (1997), the four countries decided "to promote sub-regional cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, technological exchange," and contribute to peace and prosperity in the region. Myanmar joined the organization in 2004, followed by Nepal and Bhutan, and the organization adopted a new name. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was formally established in 1997 with seven founding countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, to

promote economic cooperation among rising economic powers in South and Southeast Asia.[19]

The BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh, has historically lacked adequate staffing and funding to coordinate its 14 diverse priority sectors. While India is the largest contributor, the absence of a robust, dedicated, and independent funding mechanism, such as a development fund, has slowed project implementation, and the need for renewed regional commitment is starker than ever. While BIMSTEC is viewed as an alternative to the stagnant SAARC (which is plagued by India-Pakistan tensions), most BIMSTEC members (excluding India and Bhutan) participate in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This creates competing loyalties and complicates India's efforts to position BIMSTEC as the primary regional framework.

Despite these inherent political issues and challenges, BIMSTEC has immense potential, with a combined GDP of US$3.697 trillion and a population of 1.68 billion, accounting for almost 22 percent of the world's population. The landlocked Himalayan nations of Nepal and Bhutan see BIMSTEC as a means to further integrate with the Bay of Bengal region. For Myanmar and Thailand, BIMSTEC offers a means to reduce overdependence on China by providing access to consumer markets in India and other emerging BIMSTEC economies. BIMSTEC has emerged as India's preferred platform for regional cooperation in South Asia, representing the intersection of New Delhi's key foreign policy priorities, the "Neighborhood First" outlook, the "Act East Policy", and the 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' vision.[20]

India and its Neighborhood First and Look East Policies

Since India gained independence in 1947, its foreign policy has faced challenges. These came from external influences and policy errors by successive governments, including the National Congress and the current Bharatiya Janata Party led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Over time, India's foreign policy has evolved from the Cold War era to an increasingly populist and far-right regime in a multipolar world. Today,

[19] Visit https://bimstec.org/history

[20] Panke & Rüland highlight how regional organizations often struggle with limited mandates, weak compliance, and fragmented cooperation, while Hussain underscores persistent political and institutional constraints that hinder effective regional disaster-risk governance (Panke & Rüland 2022; Hussain 2025).

India aims to maintain its position as a regional leader in South Asia and across the larger Indo-Pacific. If India aims to achieve its ambitions, Ranjan (2024) cautions that New Delhi needs to respect its neighbours, combat hyper-nationalism, and focus on leading, rather than policing, the region. In 1996, India announced the Gujral Doctrine, which called for India to seek no reciprocity in helping countries such as Nepal, the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Any regional or cross-border disaster management initiative in South Asia would involve India. This is largely due to India's predominant role in the region, stemming from its economic clout and geographic scale. However, policymakers should consider India's operational capacity constraints and logistical challenges when assessing the sustainability of its disaster response efforts. In the realm of non-traditional security, regional experts and commentators have noted that India has been signalling its intention to act as a leading responder during emergencies, reflecting its view of South Asia as its immediate neighbourhood. India's HADR role evolved significantly after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami *(Operation Seawave*), which established the template for its modern tri-service coordination. India's response. It participates in multilateral exercises such as Samanvay (with ASEAN countries) and Tiger Triumph (with the US) to enhance joint disaster-response readiness in the Indo-Pacific. These strategic interests in disaster relief and recovery in the Indo-Pacific are designed to aid India's ambition to become *Viswa Guru* (World Teacher).

India's use of *Operation Maitri (Operation Friendship) in Nepal* is a key example, positioning India as a proactive, reliable neighbour while leveraging Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to enhance regional soft power. *Operation Maitri* was a massive, immediate humanitarian relief and rescue operation launched by the Indian Armed Forces in response to the devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake in Nepal on 25 April 2015. Within hours, India provided massive air and ground support, including over 43,000 evacuations, medical aid, and over 1,300 tonnes of relief material. Three field hospitals and 18 medical teams treated over 7,500 patients. Engineering teams cleared debris and restored power and communication. The Indian Air Force operated 1,677 sorties, and 341 foreigners were assisted in evacuation. The operation was conducted in partnership with Nepali authorities, including assistance from Gurkha Neighbourhood First Policy and the principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (The World is

One Family). Clarifying the roles of specific regional partners can help policymakers understand the collaborative framework and potential for Canada's strategic engagement.[21]

India's *Operation Brahma* responded to a major earthquake in Myanmar in March 2025, deploying medical teams and over 1,000 tonnes of aid. The 60-bed field hospital in Mandalay treated more than 2,500 patients, illustrating India's ability to project regional influence through targeted disaster response. This operation underscores India's strategic intent to strengthen ties and demonstrate capacity in the Indo-Pacific, aligning with its broader regional security and disaster management goals.

Similarly, India's efforts in Cyclone Ditwah recovery, including relief material delivery and infrastructure restoration, should emphasize regional cooperation to foster a sense of shared purpose and collective responsibility among policymakers, encouraging them to see regional collaboration as a source of hope and mutual support. *Operation Sadbhav* in Myanmar & Vietnam, 2024, by India, provided rapid relief to countries hit by Typhoon Yagi. India sent multiple tranches of aid, including 32 tonnes by air and additional consignments by sea, to support flood-affected communities.[22]

In 2023, India launched *Operation Karuna* in Myanmar, dispatching four naval ships carrying over 40 tonnes of relief material, including food, medicines, and water pumps, following Cyclone Mocha. Following a massive earthquake in March 2025, the operation expanded its scope. Between March and April 2025, the Embassy of India in Yangon reported the delivery of hundreds of tonnes of aid via Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and Navy ships.[23] Operations like *Operation Devi Shakti* in Afghanistan (2021) and Operation Sindhu in Iran/Israel (2025) demonstrate India's capabilities and the human and technical infrastructure to evacuate citizens and provide aid in conflict zones.[24]

---

[21] Chakradeo highlights institutional and coordination gaps in BIMSTEC's disaster-management system (2020), while Nepal Press points to ongoing governance weaknesses and slow reconstruction in post-earthquake Nepal (2021), reinforcing wider critiques of fragile regional DRR capacity.

[22] Akashvani News (2024) highlights India's push for regional disaster-management cooperation, while the Embassy of India in Yangon (2024) underscores India's HADR outreach to neighbours, reinforcing its role as a central regional responder. Visit https://www.newsonair.gov.in/?s=disaster&date_from=&date_to=&post_type=

[23] Visit https://embassyofindiayangon.gov.in/pages/NTQx

[24] Visit https://www.mea.gov.in/index.htm

In the Indo-Pacific context, India's swift initiatives in providing disaster aid and relief, and its growing sphere of influence in shaping regional disaster management, are aimed at countering the expanding influence of other regional powers. Its growing sphere of influence in shaping regional disaster management is intended to counter the expanding influence of other regional powers, such as China. By delivering high-quality, grant-based reconstruction projects, exemplified by the construction of 50,000 houses in Nepal, India promotes a development model grounded in local ownership rather than debt-laden infrastructure. This approach reinforces India's position as a preferred partner with its Neighborhood First policy.

India is effectively hedging its regional security interests through joint exercises such as *Samanvay* and Tiger Triumph, building interoperability with both ASEAN and U.S. forces. We would argue India is creating a functional network that can pivot from humanitarian aid to maritime security in contested waters, providing a strategic buffer against regional instability. At the macro policy level, this *disaster diplomacy* serves as a geopolitical hedge for India to stabilize its borders and cement its Indo-Pacific leadership without committing to a restrictive military alliance. However, a significant gap remains in this hedging strategy, as India's internal disaster management still suffers from structural contradictions despite its sophisticated international posturing.

White (2010) explores disaster management in Asia and the promise of regional architecture. White further argues that many factors have driven regional hyperactivity in disaster management, some rooted in Asian regional dynamics, while others relate more broadly to international dictates. At its core, the 'propagation of regional initiatives stems from the overwhelming need to respond to an exponential increase in risk in the region' (p. 61). White further explains that 'there are now more than 10 important regional arrangements: military networks, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and interstate scientific platforms, engaged in one way or another in disaster management. Furthermore, while they all offer specific subregional or thematic know-how, not one has either the resource capacity or the political wherewithal

to "do it all". An uncoordinated donor environment has inadvertently encouraged the bankrolling of duplicative regional initiatives.[25]

Scholars have argued that disaster management in South Asia has largely been reactive, with regional initiatives such as SAARC and BIMSTEC emerging only after major crises as symbolic and performative actions.[26] The evidence from disaster management and governance in two South Asian countries, i.e., Nepal and India, presented in the above sections, further shows that SA regional disaster management remains predominantly reactive rather than anticipatory, shaped by episodic crises rather than sustained institutional commitment. This tendency reflects the normalization of recurrent natural hazards among vulnerable communities, diminishing the perceived urgency of proactive, collective frameworks. As a result, regional cooperation has historically been crisis-driven, mobilized only in the aftermath of large-scale disasters.[27]

We argue that participatory and anticipatory governance systems, rather than hazard magnitude alone, foster legitimacy and resilience, encouraging policymakers to adopt proactive security strategies. Canada, with its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) and commitment, can play a critical role in nurturing regional disaster interoperability and strengthening disaster governance.

Canada's current Indo-Pacific Strategy is a promising opportunity to expand its strategic influence in South Asia, inspiring policymakers and professionals to explore new avenues for regional engagement and leadership to strengthen Canada's role in the

[25] White argues that Asia's regional disaster-management systems, whether ASEAN-centred or SAARC-based, remain weakly institutionalized, politically constrained, and operationally limited(2010; 2015). He emphasizes the need for predictable regional mechanisms, shared standards, and stronger intergovernmental coordination, echoing broader scholarship on the institutional fragility of Asian disaster governance.

[26] Bose argues that BIMSTEC's disaster-management system remains weakly institutionalized, with India acting as the primary but uneven HADR provider (Bose 2020; 2022). His more recent work shows that Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific outlook prioritizes climate resilience and pragmatic regional cooperation, underscoring the need for predictable, rules-based disaster governance across the Bay of Bengal (Bose 2024).

[27] Rashmi's analysis of BIMSTEC disaster management reinforces Bose's argument that the region's DRR and HADR mechanisms remain weakly institutionalized and coordination-poor, requiring predictable, rules-based cooperation (Rashmi 2022; Bose 2020; 2022; 2024). Their findings echo broader scholarship such as Caballero-Anthony, Cook, and Bacon highlighting persistent gaps in regional disaster governance and climate-security capacity across Asia.

region. Drawing on insights from the South Asia region discussed in the sections above, we would argue that disaster governance in the Indo-Pacific needs to be built around transboundary risks, climate-driven extremes, and geopolitical competition. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) touches on several of these themes, but stronger integration among climate security, humanitarian assistance, and regional partnerships is essential**.** The Indo-Pacific remains at the center of a rapidly evolving international order, marked by accelerating geoeconomic realignment, intensifying rivalries, and greater reliance on regional frameworks as global institutions continue to weaken.[28]

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) places climate resilience and disaster governance at the centre of its regional engagement, emphasizing support for adaptation financing, capacity-building, and humanitarian assistance across the Indo-Pacific. It prioritizes partnerships with ASEAN, Pacific Island states, and regional institutions to strengthen early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and community-based preparedness, while also expanding Canada's role in HADR cooperation through the Canadian Armed Forces. Overall, the strategy frames disaster governance as both a human security priority and a key pillar of Canada's long-term regional presence, a role that requires further political will and commitment.

Conclusion and Way forward:

This article argued that disaster governance should be understood as a form of strategic infrastructure within contemporary non-traditional security (NTS) frameworks. Evidence from India and Nepal demonstrates that hazard events become security crises not solely because of their magnitude, but because of the strengths and weaknesses of governance systems responsible for preparedness, response, recovery, and adaptation. Effective disaster governance strengthens institutional legitimacy, reduces displacement pressures, enhances social resilience, and contributes to regional stability.

[28] Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APCF)is an independent not-for-profit organization focused on Canada's relations with Asia. Our mission is to be Canada's catalyst for engagement with Asia and Asia's bridge to Canada. APCF's work argues that Canada's defence diplomacy is increasingly central to Indo-Pacific security, stressing deeper cooperation and coordinated responses to emerging transnational risks, including climate-related challenges. https://www.asiapacific.ca/publication/indo-pacific-outlook-2026 Further Visit https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng

The India and Nepal country cases examined here show that disasters are not simply humanitarian emergencies but systemic tests of governance capacity. India's cyclone management demonstrates how anticipatory governance, early warning systems, community preparedness, and institutional coordination can reduce vulnerability despite increasing climate risks. Nepal's post-earthquake experience highlights how the quality of governance, political institutions, and social inclusion shape reconstruction, displacement, and recovery. Together, these cases illustrate that governance systems play a decisive role in determining whether disasters produce instability or resilience.

The analysis also highlights the limitations of existing regional disaster-governance arrangements in South Asia. While frameworks such as SAARC and BIMSTEC have promoted cooperation, regional responses often remain fragmented, reactive, and constrained by political tensions. Strengthening interoperability, knowledge sharing, and institutional coordination therefore remains essential for addressing increasingly transboundary and climate-driven risks across the Indo-Pacific.

For Canada and other Indo-Pacific partners, the lessons emerging from South Asia suggest that climate-related disasters are becoming central to regional security futures. Understanding disaster governance as strategic infrastructure broadens conventional security analysis beyond military threats and highlights the importance of resilience, institutional capacity, community participation, and regional cooperation in maintaining stability. As climate volatility intensifies across the Indo-Pacific, disaster governance will increasingly shape States' and Societies' ability to manage risk, sustain development, and strengthen regional security.

References

Akashvani News. *India Launches Operation Sadbhav to Provide Humanitarian Assistance to the Countries Affected by Typhoon Yagi*. New Delhi: Akashvani News, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/2xe766zb

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APFC). *Indo-Pacific Outlook 2026: Defence Diplomacy and Regional Security*. Vancouver: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2026.

Asian Development Bank (ADB). *Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2021.

Bajracharya, A., K. K. Shrestha, A. B. Zwi, and E. Baldry. "Reframing Gendered Disaster: Lessons from Nepal's Indigenous Women." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 83 (2022): p. 103422.

Bose, S. *BIMSTEC and Disaster Management: Future Prospects for Regional Cooperation*. ORF Issue Brief 383. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2020.

Bose, S. "HADR across the Bay: Evaluation of India's Role in BIMSTEC." In *BIMSTEC: Mapping Subregionalism in Asia*, pp. 170–187. New Delhi: Routledge India, 2022.

Bose, S. *Continuity and Change in Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook: Deliberating Post-Election Scenarios*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2024.

Bizhan, Nematullah, ed. *State Fragility: Case Studies and Comparisons*. 1st ed. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003297697

Caballero-Anthony, M., and A. D. B. Cook, eds. *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Issues, Challenges and Framework for Action*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013.

Chakradeo, S. *Neighbourhood First Responder: India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief*. New Delhi: Brookings Institution India Centre, 2020.

Chauhan, A., and B. K. Chopra. "Deployment of Medical Relief Teams of the Indian Army in the Aftermath of the Nepal Earthquake: Lessons Learned." *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* 11, no. 3 (2017): pp. 394–398.

Chhotray, V., and R. Few. "Post-Disaster Recovery and Ongoing Vulnerability: Ten Years after the Super-Cyclone of 1999 in Orissa, India." *Global Environmental Change* 22, 3 (2012): pp. 695–702.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and UNDRR. *Global Methodology for Infrastructure Resilience Review*. n.d. https://cdri.world/

Dash, B. "Lessons from the Orissa Super Cyclone: Need for an Integrated Warning System." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002): pp, 4270–4271.

DeVita, T., D. Brett-Major, and R. Katz. "How Are Healthcare Provider Systems Preparing for Health Emergency Situations?" *World Medical & Health Policy* 14 (2022): pp. 102–120.

Ear, J. "Adaptable and Resilient Response Architectures." In *Disaster Response Regional Architectures: Assessing Future Possibilities*. Singapore: Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2017.

Ear, J., A. D. B. Cook, and D. V. Canyon, eds. *Disaster Response Regional Architectures: Assessing Future Possibilities*. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2017.

Embassy of India, Yangon. *Operation Sadbhav: India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief to Myanmar Following Widespread Flooding Due to Typhoon Yagi*. Yangon: Embassy of India, 2024.

Embassy of India. *Operation Karuna: India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief to Myanmar Following Cyclone Mocha*. Yangon: Embassy of India, 2023.

Government of India. *Cyclone Fani Damage Assessment Report*. New Delhi: Government of India, 2019.

Government of Nepal. *Post-Disaster Needs Assessment*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2016.

Hossain, Akbar. *State Fragility in South Asia: Governance, Development, and Security*. Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2013.

Hussain, N. *A Reinvigorated BIMSTEC Hopes to Avoid Regional Pitfalls*. Canberra: East Asia Forum, 2025.

Ibe, K. K., O. Chiweshe, M. I. Ola, and S. P. Kollur. "Community Vulnerability to Cyclones: Empirical Evidence from Rural India to Improve Resilience." *Journal of Safety Science and Resilience* 6, 4 (2025): p. 100217.

India's World. *Operation Brahma*. New Delhi: India's World, 2025.

Indian Air Force. *Indian Air Force Continues to Evacuate Stranded People from Earthquake-Hit Nepal: Operation Maitri*. New Delhi: Indian Air Force, 2015.

Jha, Ganganath. *Non-Traditional Security Threats in the 21st Century: A South Asian Perspective*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2017.

Kumbhar, S. "Governing the Tides: State Capacity and Cyclone-Caused Disaster Management in Odisha, India." *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 71, 2 (2025): pp. 273–286.

Memon, N. *Disasters in South Asia: A Regional Perspective*. Karachi: Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research, 2012.

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. *India Announces Immediate Relief Assistance Worth US$1 Million for Papua New Guinea in the Wake of a Devastating Landslide*. New Delhi: MEA, 2024.

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. *India Launches Operation Sindhu to Evacuate Indian Nationals from Iran*. New Delhi: MEA, 2025.

National Disaster Response Force. *Nepal Earthquake – April 2015*. New Delhi: NDRF, 2025.

NepalPress. *Reconstruction of 50,000 India-Funded Houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot Concludes*. Kathmandu: NepalPress, 2021.

"Social Work Response to Himalayan Disasters: Insights from Green Social Work." In *The Routledge Handbook of Green Social Work*. London: Routledge, 2018.

Nikku, B. R.. "Building Disaster-Resilient Communities." In *Community Practice and Social Development in Social Work*. Singapore: Springer, 2020.

———. "Living through and Responding to Disasters: Multiple Roles for Social Work." *Social Work Education* 34, 6 (2015): pp. 601–6.

———. "Nepal: Protracted Displacement from Haku Village, Rasuwa District, in the Aftermath of the 2015 Earthquakes." In *Climate Change, Disasters, and Internal Displacement in Asia and the Pacific*, 181–201. London: Routledge, 2020.

———. "Social Work Response to Himalayan Disasters: Insights from Green Social Work." In *The Routledge Handbook of Green Social Work*. London: Routledge, 2018.

Nikku, B. R., B. Nepali, and H. Khatiwada. "Earthquakes of Nepal: Making the Case for Indigenous Resilience." In *The Routledge International Handbook of Indigenous Resilience*, London: Routledge, 2021, pp. 285–299.

Nikku, B. R., B. Nepali, and S. Dahal. "Disaster Relief Aid as Soft Diplomacy: Canadian Disaster Diplomacy in Nepal's 2015 Earthquakes." *Canadian Political Science Review* 17, 1 (2023): pp. 133–146.

Nikku, B.R., S. Galimberti, K. Gurung, and S. Kodi. "International Social Work, Community Science, and Disaster Justice." In *Pushing Boundaries in Social Work*

Around the World, Vol. 2, edited by M. Henrickson and D.S. Coffey. Springer Briefs in Advancing Social Work and Social Work Education. Cham: Springer, 2025

Panke, D., and J. Rüland. "Why Asian States Cooperate in Regional Arrangements: Asian Regionalism in Comparative Perspective." *International Relations* 36, 3 (2022): pp; pp. 428–453.

Parajulee, R., S. Shneiderman, and R. K. Shrestha. "Forging Community through Disaster Response: Nepali Canadians and the 2015 Earthquakes." *BC Studies* 205 (2020): pp. 11–31.

Patnaik, A. *India's Regional Challenges*. Canberra: East Asia Forum, 2024.

Press Information Bureau. *India's First Responder Role in South Asia: A Summary of 2025 Operations*. New Delhi: PIB, 2026.

Raghavan, S., and S. Rajesh. "Trends in Tropical Cyclone Impact: A Study in Andhra Pradesh, India." *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 84, 5 (2003): pp. 635–644.

Raju, A. S., and A. B. R. Chaudhury, eds. *BIMSTEC: Mapping Sub-Regionalism in Asia*. New Delhi: Taylor & Francis, 2022.

Rashmi, B. R. "BIMSTEC: Disaster Management as a Tool for Regional Cooperation." In *BIMSTEC: Mapping Subregionalism in Asia*, pp. 188–198. New Delhi: Routledge India, 2022.

Schweizer, P. J., B. Hofbauer, and P. Einhäupl. "Systemic Risk Governance for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation." In *Adapting to Climate Change*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2026.

Shneiderman, S., B. K. Limbu, J. Baniya, M. Suji, N. Rawal, P. C. Subedi, and C. D. Warner. "House, Household, and Home: Revisiting Anthropological and Policy Frameworks through Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Experiences in Nepal." *Current Anthropology* 64, 5 (2023): pp. 498–527.

Tierney, K. "Disaster Governance: Social, Political, and Economic Dimensions." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 37 (2012): pp. 341–363.

UNDRR. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*. Geneva: UNDRR, 2015.

UNDRR. *Handbook for Implementing the Principles for Resilient Infrastructure*. Geneva: UNDRR, 2023.

UNDRR. *Risk Governance*. Geneva: UNDRR, 2023a.

UNISDR. *Report of 2015 Disasters in Numbers*. Geneva: UNISDR, 2016.

United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives*. New York: UNDP, 2022.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*. Geneva: UNISDR, 2015.

Upadhyay, P. "Humanitarian Assistance and Regional Peace: India's Role in South Asia." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 12, 1 (2026): pp.45–60.

White, S. "Disaster Management in Asia: The Promise of Regional Architecture." In *Asia's Response to Climate Change and Natural Disasters*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 2010. pp. 61–98.

———. *The Role of SAARC in Building the DRM Capacities of South Asian Countries*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2015.

World Bank. *Climate Change and Development Report for South Asia*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021.