

Local knowledge practices through the lenses of community-based flood risk management: Insights from an emerging economy

Corresponding Author:

Rabin Sharma
Tribhuvan University Nepal
sharmarabin011@gmail.com

Author(s):

Connecting to the disaster risk reduction (DRR) studies, community-based initiatives are found to be more effective in both developed and developing countries, with a specific focus on the empowerment of local communities to build resilience. Building on social capital theory, the paper investigates local knowledge (LK) practices experienced by local actors in an emerging economy using the community-based flood risk management (CB-FRM) approach.

The qualitative research method was used by collecting data from focused group discussions, and interviews with the key informants including actors from local governments and non-government organizations. Additionally, informal discussions, field visits, and desk studies were undertaken to support the findings.

The findings reveal that the local communities carry out various local knowledge experiences to respond during disaster management phases. They own a creative set of approaches based on the LK and that empowers them to live in the flood-prone areas, accepting the paradigm shift from fighting with floods to living with that. The local actor's involvement is recognized as an essential component for CB-FRM activities. Yet, their program's implementation is more oriented towards humanitarian assistance in emergency responses, even, they often overlook the role of LK. Additionally, the results show a high level of presence of local communities during the preparedness and recovery phases, while NGOs and local governments have a medium role in preparedness and a low in the recovery phase. The lack of local ownership has also emerged as the major challenge. The research provides valuable insights for integrated CB-FRM policies by adopting LK practices.

Community response to crises and disasters: From preparedness to practices