PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN URBAN AREAS OF DEVELOPING NATIONS: A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Hazard early warning systems are considered as effective tools to minimize the damages and disruptions caused by disasters. The timely and relevant information provided by early warning systems enable administrators, organizations, communities and individuals to prepare for hazards and protect themselves. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, strongly emphasizes the need to develop and strengthen early warning systems. Acknowledging the advantages of early warning systems, multiple cities, both in the developed nations and the developing nations have developed and deployed early warning systems. However, the adoption and utilization of the deployed early warning systems by administrators, communities or individuals remain non-uniform. While urban areas in countries like Japan have been successful in effectively utilizing early warning systems and have substantially reduced disaster losses, multiple cities across the world are struggling with mainstreaming early warning systems. Some of the challenges include governance issues like disinterest of public officials in the deployed early warning systems, operational challenges like lack of technical and operational capability to run and maintain the system and socio-cultural challenges like low to no response of community on the issuance of warnings. To ensure that early warning systems are effective and successful, it is essential to examine such challenges and identify pathways to address them. Utilizing the context of India, the paper documents the prospects, challenges and future directions for implementing early warning systems in urban areas of developing nations.

Keywords: Early Warning System, Urban Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction, Developing Nation

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