

Impact of Cyclone Nargis on Disaster Risk Reduction in Myanmar

U Than Myint

Immediate Past President
Myanmar Engineering Society,
Chairman,
Committee for Quality Control of
High-rise Building Projects,
Myanmar.

utmyint@ayeyeikmon.net.mm



U Than Myint , born 1939,
received his civil engineering degree
from the Univ. of Waterloo, Canada.

Summary

Cyclone Nargis struck the coast of Myanmar in May 2008 and severely affected 2.4 million people in Ayeyarwaddy Delta and killed an estimated 140,000. After cyclone Nargis, Government, International Agencies, Local Communities, INGOs and NGOs come out and helping the victims in every way. Professional Associations are also giving their inputs in reconstruction works. The major impact of cyclone Nargis on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Myanmar is paradigm shift from crisis management to risk management. Government has issued standing order for disaster management and formulation of Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) in Myanmar.

Keywords: Cyclone Nargis, Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster management, Professional Association.

1. Introduction

Myanmar is situated in Southeast Asia and is bordered on the north and northeast by China, on the east and southeast by Laos and Thailand, on the south by the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal and on the west by Bangladesh and India. The coast line is about 2400 km long and natural hazards risk in the coastal area of Myanmar is high. Myanmar is blessed with rich natural resources and also exposed to different kinds of natural hazards. The entire country faces a high risk of earthquake, flood, storm, storm surge, landslide and fire. On 2nd and 3rd May 2008, Cyclone Nargis struck the coast of Myanmar and moved inland across the Ayeyarwaddy Delta and Southern Yangon Division, causing widespread destruction and damage and severely affected 2.4 million people in Delta and killed an estimated 140,000. The Cyclone Nargis was the largest natural disaster in Myanmar history. As Myanmar is unprepared for that kind and size of natural disaster the extent of damage and loss of lives is beyond imagination. There has been widespread devastation. The disaster caused widespread destruction to homes and critical infrastructure, including roads, jetties, water and sanitation system, fuel supply and electricity. A large number of water supplies were contaminated and food stocks damaged or destroyed, while the storm surge submerged countless villages. Major casualties are from storm surge.