

Defeating Disasters: Ideas for Action

are as old as human history. They have been mostly dealt with from a purely humanitarian angle, while natural hazards such as cyclones, droughts and earthquakes have been analysed 'technically and scientifically' within scientific disciplines.



The recent past has shown a dramatic increase in disasters and the damage caused by them. Disasters can no longer be seen as 'acts of god' over which we have little control. Nor can we leave disasters to be understood by natural scientists, and handled by rescue teams alone. The need for new ways of analysis, new approaches and new methods to address disasters is pressing.

Defeating Disasters: Ideas for Action confronts the underlying reasons for the increase in disasters, and argues for effective disaster mitigation planning. Based on a variety of experiences from South Asian countries it argues the need for an alternative approach to deal with disasters, in which mitigation and preparedness are the keys to reducing impact. Examples from South Asia unravel the forward and backward linkages between investment in development and disasters. In an alternative approach, all stakeholders - development planners, donors, researchers, practitioners, and communities - have a role to play.

The focus of the book is South Asia. However, the issues and concepts discussed here are applicable globally.