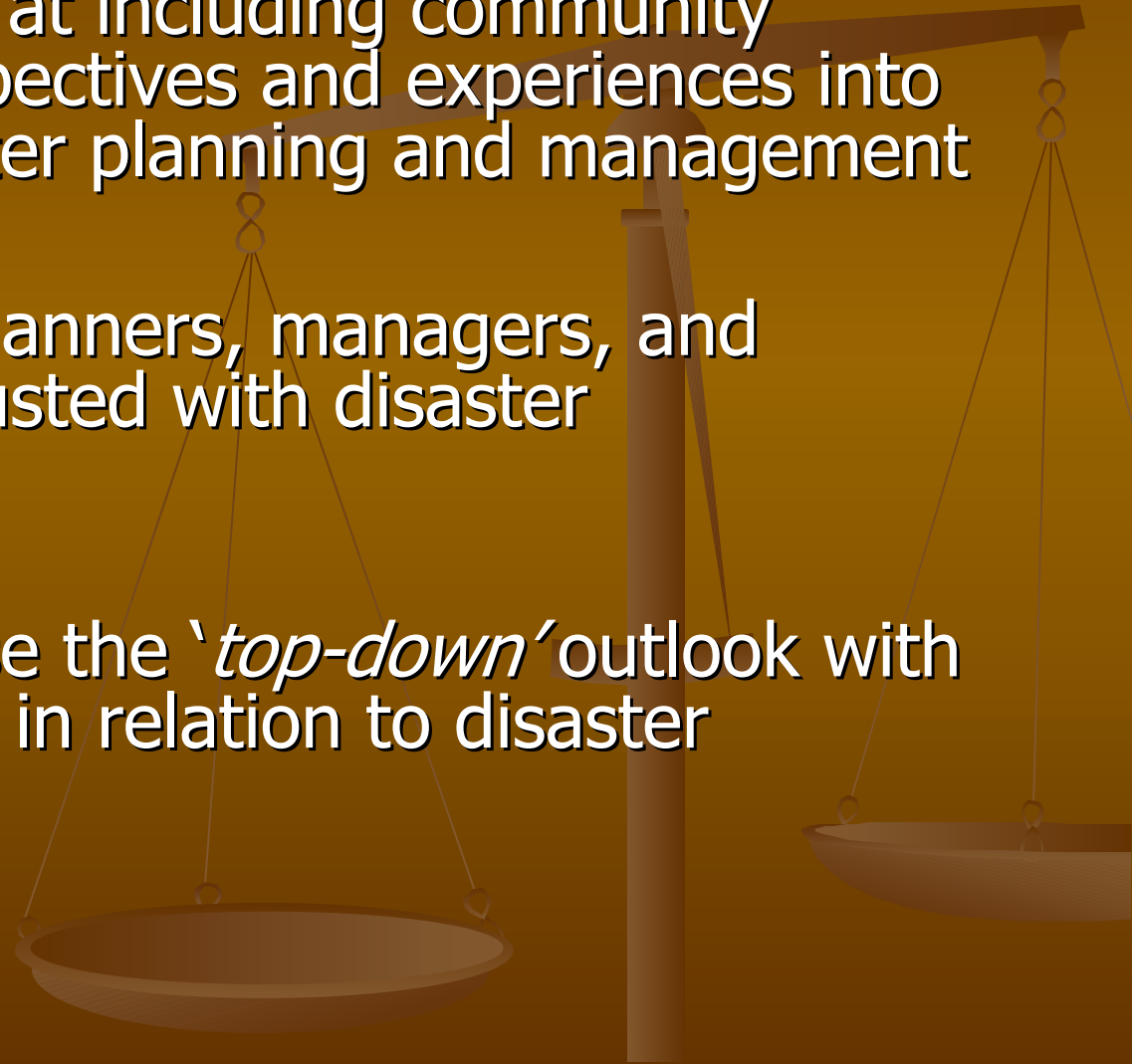# Decentralised Disaster Management in South Asia: New Dimensions to Community-based Disaster Management
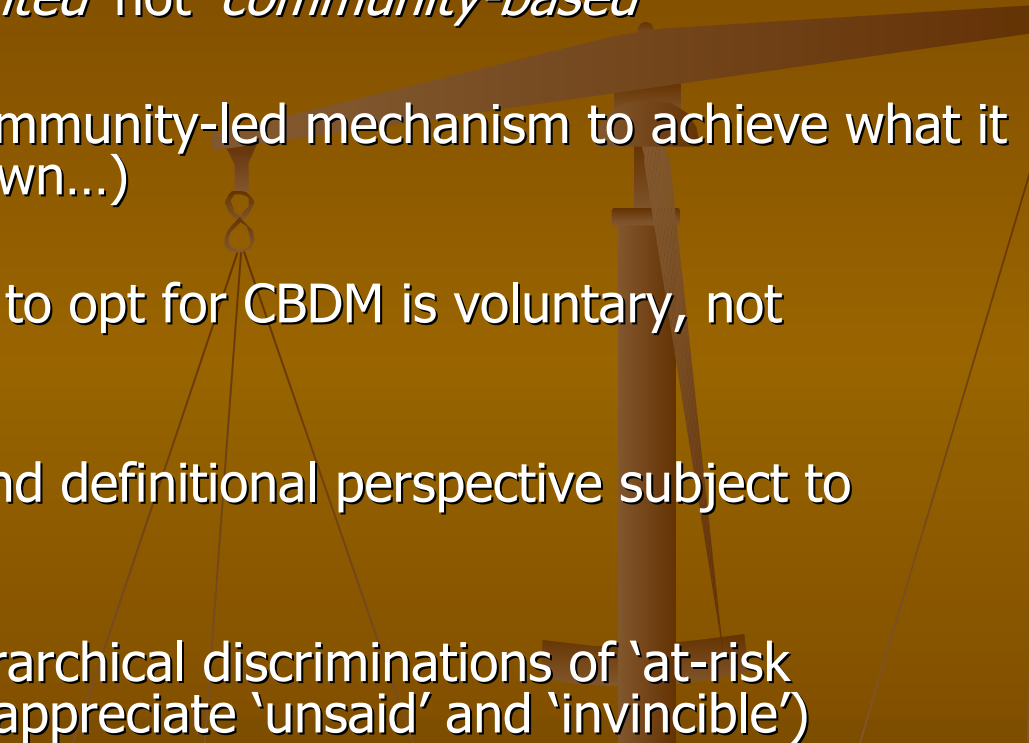
by
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(Rural Development Policy Institute, Pakistan)

CBDM as a Concept and Practice

- The concept aims at including community perceptions, perspectives and experiences into the counter-disaster planning and management

- It is targeted at planners, managers, and practitioners entrusted with disaster management

- It claims to reverse the 'top-down' outlook with 'bottom-up' vision in relation to disaster management
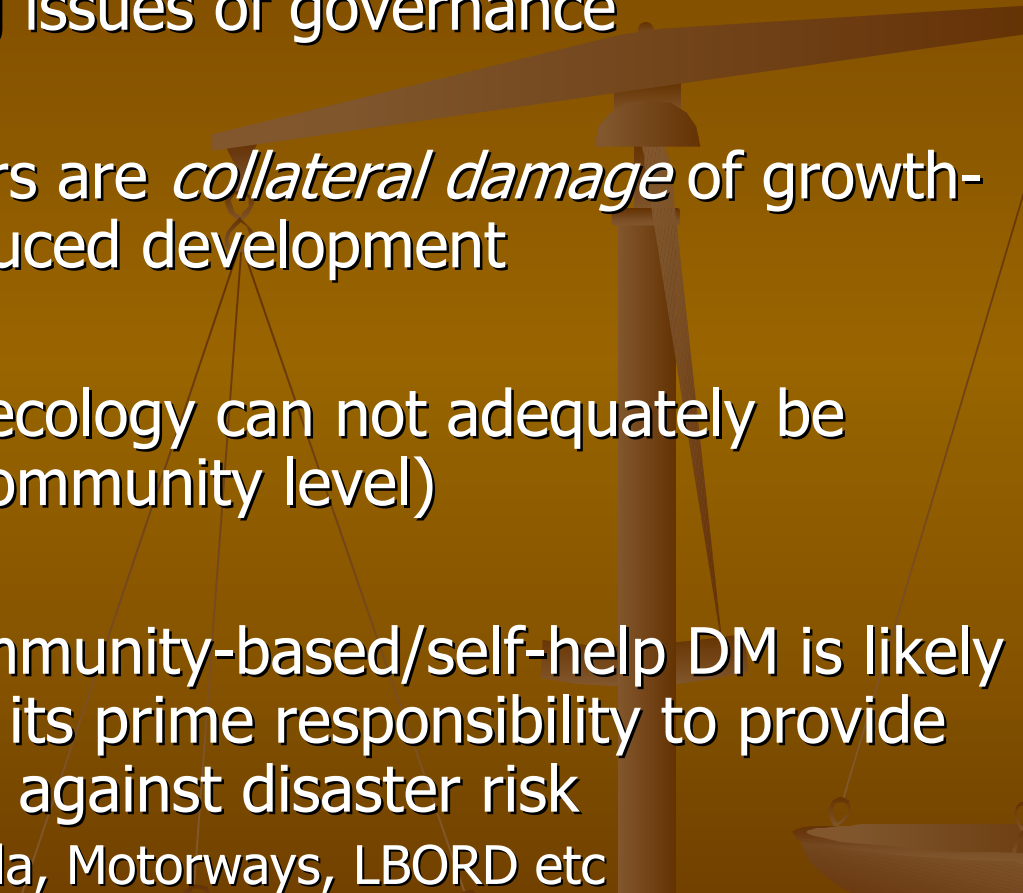
Issues

- CBDM is '*community-oriented*' not '*community-based*'

- It does not provide for community-led mechanism to achieve what it claims (bottom-up/top-down...)

- Mangers/planners' choice to opt for CBDM is voluntary, not mandatory

- It's a management tool and definitional perspective subject to further improvements

- It operates within the hierarchical discriminations of 'at-risk communities' (unable to appreciate 'unsaid' and 'invincible')
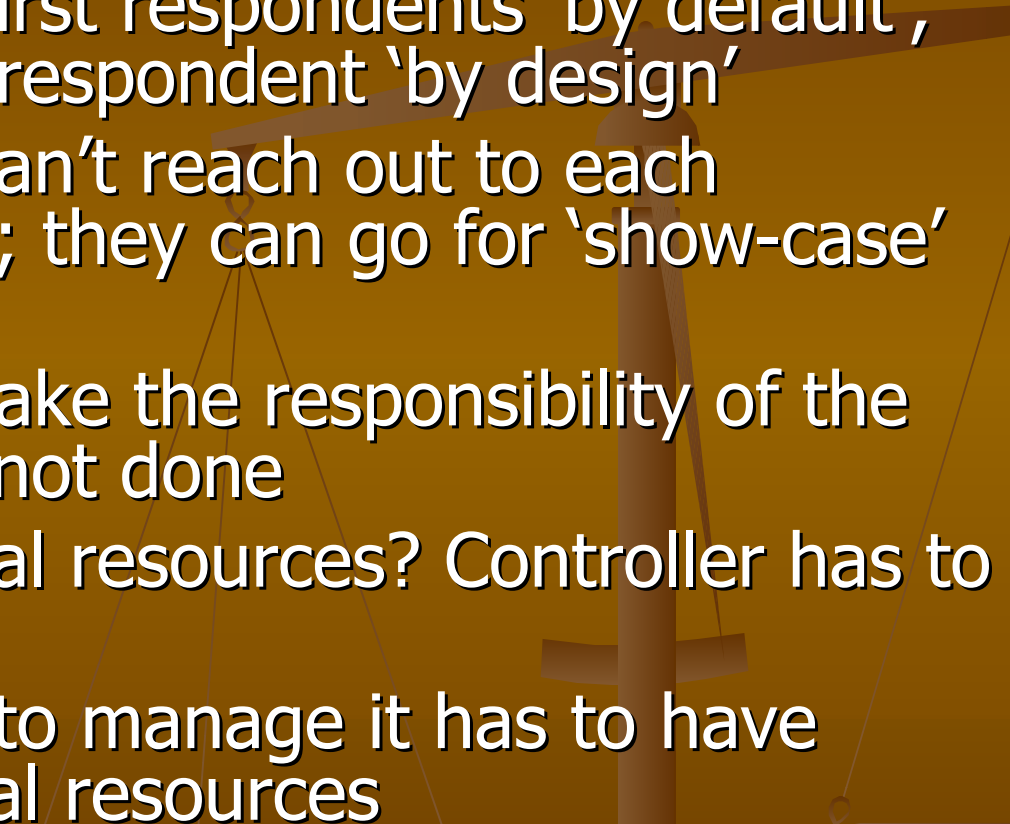
Rejoinder to CBDM

- **Nature-hazard-disaster-community-livelihoods:** connections and contradictions

    - Colonial natural resource management
    - Post-colonial inheritance
    - Ecology, and community dispossession
    - Community alienation as a form of every-day resistance

- **State-disaster-community**: An irresistible pyramid

- **Disaster and Governance**: Links and missing links

Critical Assumptions

- Disasters are pending issues of governance

- [Most of the] Disasters are *collateral damage* of growth-driven and speed-induced development

- Macro disruptions in ecology can not adequately be mitigated at micro (community level)

- Overemphasis on community-based/self-help DM is likely to bail out state from its prime responsibility to provide security to its citizens against disaster risk
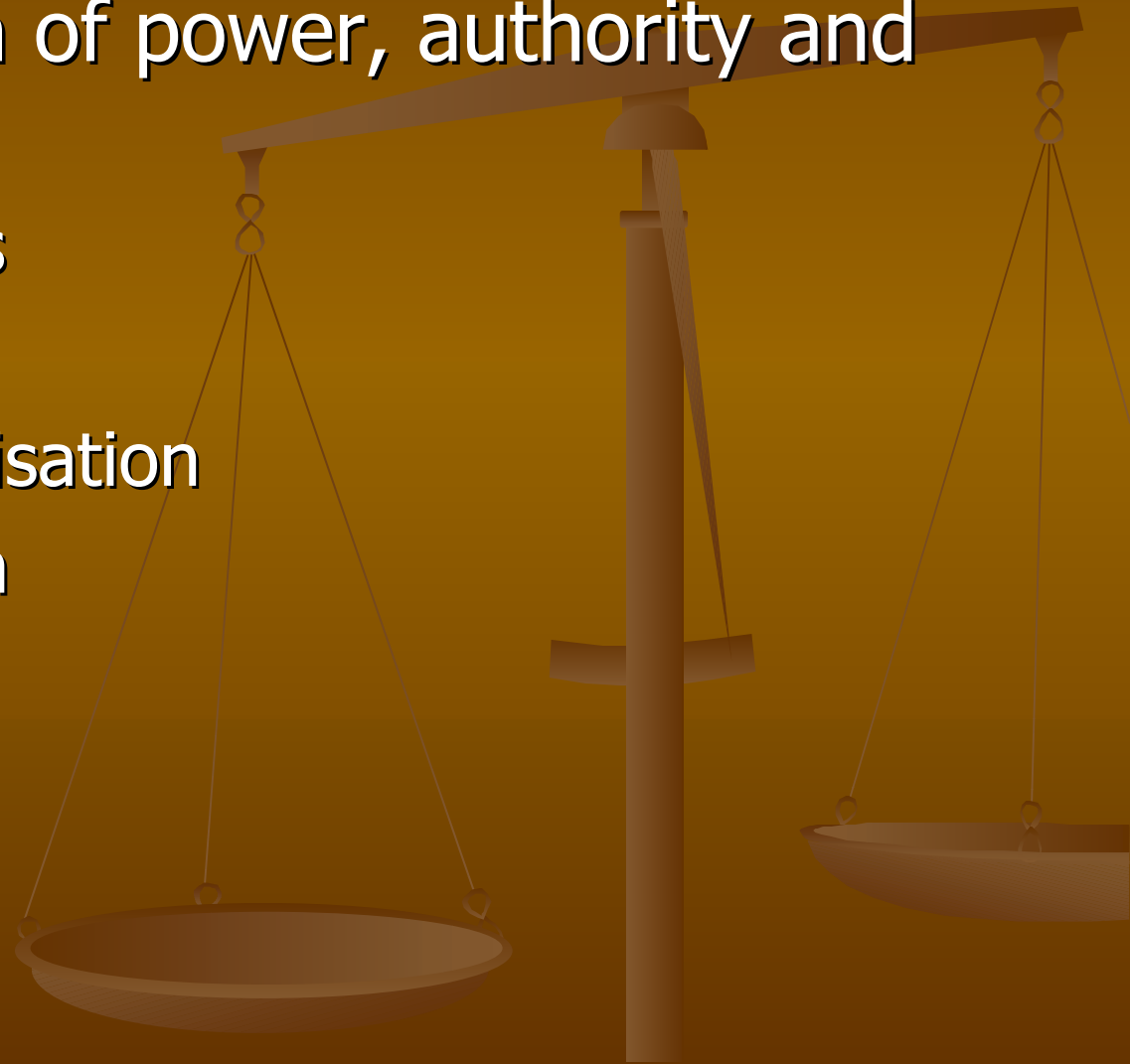 - Case of CRBIC, Narmda, Motorways, LBORD etc

(continued…)

- Communities are first respondents 'by default', while state is first respondent 'by design'
- Non-state actors can't reach out to each village/community; they can go for 'show-case' demonstrations
- Community can't take the responsibility of the 'deeds' they have not done
- Who control natural resources? Controller has to manage!
- If community has to manage it has to have control over natural resources

Alternatives:
Decentralization and Public Action

- Decentralization of power, authority and responsibility
  - Responsiveness
  - Planning
  - Resource Mobilisation
  - Implementation
  - Monitoring
  - Replication

(continued…)

- Rights-based and community-led public action for disaster risk reduction

  - Participation
  - Accessibility
  - Accountability
  - Equity
  - Transparency
  - Social Auditing

Conclusion

- Mainstreaming DDM by capitalizing on the ongoing decentralization drive in South Asia

- Strengthening community-led and rights-based disaster risk reduction