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Integrated Ecosystem And Community Based Disaster Preparedness Framework For Western Ghats: A Case Of Rajakumary Grama Panchayat

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines disaster preparedness as “the sharing of information and capacities for long term refined by the decision makers, response of expertise and related organisations, along with individuals and communities to successfully assess the expected impacts, for current hazard events or future conditions” (UNDRR, 2015). So, the ability of a development system to withstand the hazard events also improves the community resilience along with better well-being.

The Western Ghats plays a significant role in creating the ecological balance in Kerala state. The exploitation of natural resources of the region have resulted in losing its rare and rich biodiversity. The concept of ecological conservation is vital for the sustainability of Western Ghats, so much consciousness should be given to prepare for the natural disasters happening due to these threats. Thus, the need to implement local knowledge on ecosystem services for effective long-term planning in conservation and disaster management was recommended by several expertise studies.

The attempt in this study is to understand the possible scenario of threats and potentials in terms of disaster preparedness and ecosystem services with a bottom-up approach. The major concern being addressed here is the methodology to integrate two concepts of ecosystem and community-based disaster risk reduction as a model for Western Ghats Kerala region. Using the application of a three-stage methodology in the selected study area of Rajakumary grama panchayat in Idukki district, the study aims at formulating an integrated framework for ecosystem and community based disaster preparedness.

Keywords: *Disaster Preparedness, Community, Ecosystem services, Disaster Risk Reduction, Ecosystem based Disaster Risk Reduction, Community based Disaster preparedness*