

## **Framework for monitoring complex social vulnerability**

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As Chambers (1989: 3) said “coping strategies (of the poor) vary by region, community, social group, household, gender, age, season and time in history”, the degree of vulnerability also varies. Watts and Wolde Mariam tried to understand the complex structure and causes of increased vulnerability in Northern Nigeria and Ethiopia respectively in a regional and community level referring to historical backgrounds (Watts 1983; Watts and Bohle 1993; Wolde Mariam 1986). In the study, Watts shows how capitalist development in Northern Nigeria has weakened peasant household and increased their exposure to market fluctuation. Wolde Mariam also demonstrates how Ethiopian peasant farmers are made vulnerable to famine by the socio-economic and political forces. These studies show how peasant farmers, as a social group have become vulnerable to famine or market development.

Swift (1989), on the other hand, focused on household and individual level's vulnerability. He proposed new analysis of vulnerability based on a classification of assets into investments, stores and claims, which successfully showed us the richness of households' portfolios. African farming families mobilize it skillfully to deal with new and different stresses and shocks. The concept of entitlement by Sen (1981) also has contributed to the study of vulnerability of individual and household level. Many gender studies have revealed that the vulnerability of women and children in a household is much severe than that of men. And they note the necessity to see more carefully the intra-household power structure by which women and children are deprived of access to land and assets.

This shows that different actors and groups, such as individuals, households, and village societies have different processes of increased vulnerability. Each processes of increased vulnerabilities have strong linkage although, the vulnerabilities of different actors and groups have not increased coincide with each other, but rather they sometimes have increased independently. In fact, different level's vulnerabilities increase at the same time but it sometimes happens that security of some people in a society have deteriorated while the security of the society as a whole have improved.

So it is very important to see the social vulnerability differently by each level of groups, such as individuals, households, and village societies. After scrutinized each level's vulnerability, we can get the total view of multi-layered disposition of vulnerabilities. At this point, we can start to analyze the relationship between social vulnerability and ecological vulnerability.

## References

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