

Goal of a Disaster-Free India

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Subcontinent due to its unique geographical (Physical & Human), locational, cultural, economical, religious, political, humanistic and geological features has the distinction of being one of the most vulnerable areas to natural hazards, causing colossal losses of life and property. Natural disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, forest fires, famines, storms, air/ rail accidents, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis/ elnino-lanino, food and shelter for war refugees and victims of terrorist attacks etc. are often visited by the country.

International bodies, environmental NGOs (International/ National) Pollution Control Equipment, International funding bodies and funding organizations are working in different countries including India. Disaster education, preparedness training, research and consultancy in the area of emergency management. World Bank, ADB, Embassies and high commission NGOs working in the field of greening, global warming, wasteland development, sustainability, poverty alleviation, employment, generation, quality assurance, certification bodies, more than 15000 ISO certified companies in India. Some Managements Institutes, organizations, research centre working in the world.

- International decade for natural disaster reduction (1990-99) - NDDR - 29 Oct.
- With an objective to mitigate disasters and make Indian society, particularly the vulnerable group resident to adverse impacts of disasters, various initiatives have been taken at national, state and others level (block, village, region, zone).
- UNDP projection strengthening disaster management capacity.
- Hazard mapping and vulnerability/ assessment of buildings.
- Disaster warning system.
- National committee for disaster management.
- High record committee on disaster management plans.
- Monitoring and impact assessment of natural hazards (Drought, flood, cyclone using space technology).
- Human resource development (HRD).
- A programme on enhancing emergency response (PEER)
- Strengthening of information technologies.
- Future vision in disaster management is a multisectoral, multidisciplinary subject, which involves many role players, who should work together for the goal of a disaster free India. By these approaches we can reduce the impact of various disasters and can have safer communities in India. IDRN (Indian Disaster Resource Network) has been set up which is envisaged as an online resource inventory for disaster management. Proper management and foresight the loss of life and property in such incident can be prevented.

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IDNDR (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction) - The UN declared the last decade (1990-99) as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(IDNDR). The main effort in this decade was to reduce, through concerted international action, loss of life, damage to property, social and economic disruption caused by natural disaster in developing countries. Government of India (National level) is observing the current decade as the National Decade for Disaster Reduction (NDDR). After the completion of NDDR Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, Nodal Ministry of Natural Disaster decided to observe 29th October as NDDR day every year to commemorate the day a Super Cyclone had hit Orissa in 1999.

The basic objective of NDDR is to create public awareness and educate the people about the impact of natural disaster and importance of disaster preparedness and mitigation.

With an objective to mitigate disasters and make Indian society, particularly the vulnerable group, resilient to adverse impacts of disasters, various initiatives have been taken at national, state and other levels (Block, village, region, zone).

HIGH POWERED COMMITTEE (HPC) ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANS

During the last decade high powered committee was setup at the initiative of the Prime Minister to look into the issues of disaster management planning at the National and state. It was constituted under the HPC to look into the various aspects of disaster management planning such as water and climate related hazards, geological hazards, chemical/industrial/nuclear disasters, accident related disasters and biological disasters.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Govt. of India established a National committee for disaster management and this committee has representatives from National Centre for Disaster Management and state political parties. This committee is supposed to suggest the institutional and legislative measures for strengthening the existing disaster management structure of the country.

NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

(a) Scope

ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions) setup a committee in 1969 for reduction of disaster. WMO (World Meteorological Organization) set of many institutions for reduction of disaster as- UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) MAB (Man and Biosphere setup by UNESCO) WCP (World Climate Programme) etc.

(b) IGBP

ICSU setup a council in October 1988. IGBP (International Geosphere - Biospheres Programme). Satellite, Remote Sensing Technologies environment monitoring, GIS etc. help to IGBP.

(c) HDGC

(Human Dimension of Global Change for

environmental problems & natural hazards), UNU (United Nations Universities), ISSC (International Social Science Council), IFIAS (International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Studies) UNDRC (United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator), ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions) etc. institute/organization/committee/NGOs/national/central/state/districts/block level help by economic status.

International bodies, environmental NGOs, pollution control equipment manufacturers, international funding bodies, GEF, national and international NGOs and funding organizations working in different countries including, India, central/state ministers and departments of Agriculture, Disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation universities and institutions engaged in rehabilitation, training, research and consultancy in the areas of cyclones, storms, air/rail accidents, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis/el-nino/lo-ninos, food and shelter for war refugees and victims of terrorists attacks, national and international funding agencies, United Nations specialized agencies, UNFPA and other organizations engaged in population activities, world bank, ADB, Embassies and high commissions, NGOs working in the fields of greening, global warning, wasteland development, sustainable agriculture, recycling, rural and urban planning, sustainability, poverty alleviation, employment generation, quality assurance and certification bodies more than 15,000 ISO certified companies in India willing to adhere to latest standards. Under distance education specialised branches such as Ecology and Environment, Disaster Mitigation, Sustainable Development, Landuse planning, Perception of Environment and adjustment to Natural Hazards and disasters and Total Quality Management have been started in M.Sc.

UNDP PROJECT FOR STRENGTHENING DISASTER MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Disaster risk management programme setup by Govt. of India and the UNDP to accelerate capacity building in disaster reduction and recovery activities at the national level and in some of the most vulnerable regions in the country through community based and gender sensitive approaches. It is designed to assist the states.

In the country, the states which are most prone to natural disasters such as - Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, U.P., Uttaranchal, Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Orrisa, Gujarat., this programme continued in 169 districts in 17 regions. Urban earthquake vulnerability reduction programme continued in 38 cities in the first phase. Six Distt. were selected in U.P. namely Agra, Meerut, Bareilly, Lucknow,

Kanpur and Varanasi.

HAZARD MAPPING AND VULNERABILITY/ ASSESSMENT OF BUILDINGS

Ministry of Urban Development prepared a vulnerability atlas of India during the period 1994-97 in which the earthquake, cyclone and flood hazard etc. were mapped. Maps for every state and union territory of India had been prepared at a scale of 1:2500000. In these maps the areas of the districts prone to the various intensities of the hazards are clearly visible.

STRENGTHENING OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Remote Sensing, GIS, GPS, Computer modeling and expert system, electronic information management system (collection, storage and retrieval dissemination of information) in managing situation caused by natural disasters laid great emphasis on using the various state-of-the-art technologies.

Active and ongoing efforts are being made for modernizing the disaster management control rooms. More effective and community friendly databases are being compiled to keep track of past events and benefit from the experiences of their management.

MONITORING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL HAZARDS (Drought, Flood, Cyclone Using Space Technology)

India used space technology for near-real-time impact assessment of drought, flood and cyclones as a national programme. Significant technological programmes have been launched by the department of space technology National agricultural drought assessments and monitoring and flood incidence monitoring and inundation area assessment are undertaken during the decade.

DISASTER WARNING SYSTEM (DWS)

Department of Telecommunication (DOT) systems such as Telegrams, Telex and Telephones are often among the first casualties during cyclone situation resulting in delayed warning messages. DWS for rapid and direct dissemination of cyclone warnings is operated through INSAT. DWS, is working along the coastal areas where 250 DWS sets have been installed in small administrative units like BDO and Police stations, District level headquarters etc.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (HRD)

HRD is an important aspect for capacity building. A central sector scheme in 1993 covering aspects of disaster management as including human resource, development, research, consultant services and documentation of disasters.

NCDM (National Centre for Disaster Management) was established at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in New Delhi and 18 states of India setup faculties in disaster management. The Nodal centre has been networked with various central/state Govt. Ministries training Institutions, Autonomous organizations and universities in organizing training programmes, workshops, seminars and research activities etc., related to disaster mitigation and management. The Nodal centre has also developed a good network with international institutes/organizations working in the area of disaster management such as Asian disaster preparedness centre- Bangkok, Asian disaster reduction centre-Kobe, Centre for excellence in disaster management -Hawaii, Oxford Brooks University, Oxford etc.

Programme on Enhancing Emergency Response (PEER)

Capacity building programmes are required on continuous basis covering many organizations (Armed forces, para-military forces civil Defence & concerned central/state Govt. officials, NGOs and representatives of public besides task forces/units) responsible for search and rescue operation are set up for these purpose. Regional project on PEER for capacity building has been launched by the Asian disaster preparedness centre-Bangkok in countries like India, Nepal, Indonesia & Philippine. A proposal is also under consideration in Govt. of India for raising a Specialized Disaster Response Unit (SDRU)

FUTURE VISION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

It is a multisectoral, multidisciplinary subject, which involves many role players (Govt./NGOs/Community). They should work together for the goal of a disaster free India which should include disaster preparedness and mitigation alongwith disaster response. By these approaches we can reduce the impact of various disaster and can have safer communities. Steps for mitigation of the situation in anticipation of floods may include advance preparedness, construction of shelters, setting up of control rooms for coordination of all rescue and relief efforts. The nodal agency for disaster management in the country, the ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Agriculture Forest Services (UNDAFS) has been setup which is envisaged as an online resource inventory for disaster management but disaster mitigation, the severity and natural extent of a natural disaster remains outside, mortal hands. However with proper management and foresight the loss of life and property in such incidents can be prevented.