

# Together, towards a safer India

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## CONTENTS

*Preparedness Measures to Enhance Response Capabilities*

*Sensitization of Architects for seismically safe construction practices and designs*

*Emergency Health Management in Medical Education*

*Sensitization workshops by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Guwahati (Assam), Dimapur (Nagaland) and Jalandhar (Punjab)*

*Re-naming of Departments of Relief and Rehabilitation in Nagaland and Sikkim*

*Progress of Work in States under the GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme*

*Progress of Work under the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project (UEVRP)*

## Preparedness Measures to Enhance Response Capabilities

While mitigation measures are the lasting solution for vulnerability reduction, adequate preparedness measures are necessary for mounting a rapid and professional response to reduce the impact of disasters. In the aftermath of Bhuj earthquake, the lack of professionally trained and equipped search and rescue teams, dog squads, mobile hospitals, mechanism for location of resources etc. was felt acutely. The Ministry of Home Affairs has, therefore, taken several proactive measures for achieving improved level of preparedness for a professional and rapid response to disasters. Some of the measures taken are as follows:-

- (a) Constitution of a Steering Committee: A Steering Committee has been constituted under the Home Secretary to oversee the creation of capabilities for emergency response.
- (b) Specialist search and rescue teams: Eight battalions of Central Para-military Forces are being converted into specialist response teams. Each battalion will consist of 18 Specialist Response Teams of 45 personnel. Therefore, there will be a total of 144 Specialist Response Teams. The training of trainers has been completed for CISF and ITBP. The training of trainers is currently being held for BSF and CRPF. Four training institutes NISA, Hyderabad (CISF), BTC, Bhanu (Chandigarh) (ITBP), CTC, Coimbatore (CRPF) and the training academy at Tekanpur (BSF) have been identified for this purpose. Eighteen Specialist Response Teams have already been trained in medical first response and collapsed structure search and rescue. The training of additional teams is going on. A dog squad is also in the process of being developed.



Mock-drill in Medical First Response at NISA, Hyderabad

The State Governments have also been advised to set up similar Specialist Response Teams. The training of trainers for State Governments will be organized at the above mentioned designated institutes. The State Governments have been authorized to utilize 10% of the annual inflows in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for purchase of equipments for these teams. Each State Government has been advised to designate an institute for training of Specialist Response Teams.

# Together, towards a safer India

- (c) Regional Response Centres: Fourteen Regional Response Centres are being set-up in different parts of the country. These Centres will have response teams, a cache of essential search and rescue equipments and the resources for being able to respond to any calamity/emergency in the neighbouring States.
- (d) Mobile hospitals: It is proposed to set up three fully trained and equipped 200-bedded mobile hospitals in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Mobile Hospitals will be attached to prominent hospitals in different parts of the country. Necessary airlift facility for the mobile hospitals would be provided by the Ministry of Defence.
- (e) Incident Command System: In order to professionalize the response, it is proposed to introduce the Incident Command System to provide for specialist incident command teams with an Incident Commander and officers trained in different aspects of incident management --- logistics, operations, planning, safety, media management etc. This system will be dovetailed into the existing governmental machinery. The training of trainers in Incident Command System has already commenced at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie, designated as the nodal training institute for this purpose. 71 master-trainers have already been trained in different ICS training modules. Additional trainers are in the process of being trained.
- (f) Communication Network: In order to obviate communication breakdown in the event of a

- disaster, an Expert Group was constituted to draw up a comprehensive communication plan for disaster management. The Group's recommendations have been received and action for putting the communication system in place have been initiated.
- (g) GIS data-base: The Geographical Information System (GIS) data-base is an effective tool for emergency responders to access information in terms of crucial parameters viz. location of public facilities, communication and transportation links etc. at national, state and district levels. The GIS data-base available with Government agencies is being upgraded and institutionalized. It will provide district-wise multi-layered maps and in conjunction with satellite images for a particular area will enable hazard zonation and vulnerability assessment as well as response coordination.
- (h) Handling of hazardous materials: The Ministry of Home Affairs has been interacting with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and new guidelines have been sent to the States for industries handling hazardous substances. Development of on-site and off-site DM plans, to be drawn in consultation with District Administration, has been prescribed with at least one mock-drill every year. The industries are also required to conduct awareness generation campaigns for the community in the vicinity regarding do's and don'ts in case of any accident involving hazardous material. This is necessary if we do not want a repeat of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.
- (i) Crisis Management Plan: The Crisis Management Plan has been

revised. The plan has two parts— one the overall plan for MHA and the other consisting of SOPs for handling different crises for which MHA is responsible.

- (j) Civil Defence: The 1.2 million strong Civil Defence and Home Guards are proposed to be enlisted to discharge key responsibility in all facets of disaster management including preparedness.

## *Sensitization of Architects for seismically safe construction practices and designs*

The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) have initiated a joint programme for training and sensitization of practicing Architects in seismically safe construction techniques and designs. Recognizing the crucial role played by Architects in seismic risk reduction, their training would help in incorporation of earthquake mitigation technologies in building construction and in ensuring that the constructions are compliant with local building by-laws and BIS Codes. It is proposed to sensitize the Architects both in public and the private sector and to inculcate a mindset of creating a seismically safe built environment.

Beginning with a one-day sensitization seminar at Delhi, IIA has subsequently organized such programmes in Jammu, Bangalore, Surat, Mumbai, Lucknow and again in Delhi as part of its Continuing Education Programme (CEP). The Ministry of Home Affairs has extended financial assistance to the IIA to organize the programmes in consultation with the State Nodal Agencies/Officers handling Disaster Management. The module for the programmes has been drawn up in consultation with eminent experts in earthquake engineering.

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## Emergency Health Management in Medical Education

A meeting was held in the Ministry of Home Affairs on 13th May, 2004 to integrate Emergency Health Management with disaster response. Representatives from Medical Council of India, World Health Organization, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka and UNDP, besides the officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs participated in the discussions.

Upto now, Emergency Health Management for dealing with disaster situations has not been a part of the course curricula of medical colleges at undergraduate level. After deliberations, two Committees with representatives from several resource institutes were constituted for the development of i) curriculum for Emergency Health Management for MBBS and ii) training module for in-service health managers.

Rajiv Gandhi University for Health Sciences, Karnataka has been designated as the lead national institute for this purpose.

## Sensitization workshops by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Guwahati (Assam), Dimapur (Nagaland) and Jalandhar (Punjab)

Taking forward the initiative to sensitize the industries to adopt disaster risk reduction measures, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized three sensitization programmes in Guwahati, Dimapur and Jalandhar in association with MHA and the State Governments of Assam, Nagaland and Punjab.

In Guwahati, the programme was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Govt. of Assam, Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita. Referring to the

challenges posed to mankind by industrial development, he appealed to industries to share the responsibility to ensure safety of its infrastructure, manpower and nearby community.



Making the presentation on 'Introduction to Natural Hazards with special reference to North-Eastern States', Relief Commissioner, Government of Assam stressed the need that industries must tackle their vulnerabilities to minimize risk and the steps taken in Assam viz. drafting of DM Act; DM Policy; identification of 12 districts for implementation of DRM Programme and a proposed workshop in Duliajan (Assam) aimed at industries especially oil industry to sensitize them for initiating disaster risk reduction measures.

In Dimapur, the programme was inaugurated by Commissioner, Nagaland who stressed the need for preparedness and sensitization of all stakeholders. It was emphasized that the corporate sector as well as others must develop DM Plans as disaster mitigation and preparedness are the key to minimize losses in natural disasters. Apart from representatives from industries, the participation of stakeholders from a cross-section of society was indicative of the importance attached to the subject.

In Jalandhar, the Municipal Commissioner, Jalandhar and the Additional DC attended the programme from the district administration and emphasized the need for disaster risk reduction especially in industries since

Jalandhar was in a seismically vulnerable zone.

The technical presentations in the programmes related to the effects of earthquakes on structures; earthquake-resistant designs of industrial buildings especially structural and non-structural measures and vulnerability assessment of industrial establishments and retrofitting of the same to make them disaster-resistant. The presentations were followed by interactive sessions.

## PROGRESS OF WORK IN STATES UNDER GOI-UNDP DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

**GUJARAT:** The Chief Secretary took a state-level pre-monsoon preparedness meeting to look at the Disaster Management plan for cyclone and measures taken by the Departments were reviewed to check their preparedness levels. Every Department was asked to develop its contingency plan and update them.

An orientation for teachers on disaster management and on school awareness and preparedness was held in Ambaji, Banaskantha district with focus on role of teachers.

A joint meeting of Bhavnagar district administration and corporate sector was held to strengthen DRM activities and to involve corporate sector in them.

A mock-drill was organized in Bhavnagar with help of Police, Fire and Home Guards to check preparedness to handle fires and earthquakes. Similarly, Gujarat Narmada Fertilizer Corporation along with other petrochemical companies conducted a mock-drill to check preparedness of Village Disaster Management Committees and Disaster Management Teams in all facets of disaster management.



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A GIS based chemical disaster management information system is being developed in Bharuch district to help in identifying the exact location of chemical spill or gas leakage by providing a digitized layout of the location. It will basically contain on-site plans which can be activated during emergencies.

**MEGHALAYA:** A meeting was held to formulate strategy for dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. It was decided to print material in Khasi and Garo languages; organize mock-drills in schools; posters on different disasters.

**NAGALAND:** A presentation on DRM programme was made during monthly meeting of all Heads of Departments of the Government. Nearly 100 officials were present.

**ORISSA:** A cyclone warning was issued on 17th May to all coastal districts and preparedness steps initiated including activation of 24-hour district control room. Orissa State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) organized a meeting of all organizations to review preparedness measures.

A workshop on technological disasters was held from 24-27 May at Paradeep with participation of industries and district officials and multi-hazard preparedness for natural and industrial disasters was emphasized.

District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) have been formed in all 16 DRM districts and training of DDMC members in 14 districts has been completed.

**DELHI:** A meeting of health officials of Central District was convened by Deputy Commissioner on "Health Sector Preparedness for Disasters" to review the preparedness levels in hospitals to meet any contingency. The hospitals were advised to prepare contingency plans and share it with the

administration. Apart from ensuring structural safety and safety of equipments, the issue of managing mass casualties at the disaster site, during transportation and at the hospital was discussed. DM Plans prepared by some hospitals were shared.

## School Education

**ORISSA:** The Orissa Board of Secondary Education has included a chapter on Disaster Management in its Geography textbook for Class 8. Process for inclusion of DM in Class 9 and 10 has also been initiated.

**GUJARAT:** A School Safety Awareness Programme was organized in Rajkot under the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project. Nine schools and one NCC Camp were covered with a view to create awareness among the students and teachers about disasters, especially earthquakes, and disaster risk management.

**SIKKIM:** Disaster Management has been included in the Class 8 textbook under 'Social Studies' and teachers training is being organized in all districts.

## PROGRESS OF WORK UNDER THE URBAN EARTHQUAKE VULNERABILITY REDUCTION PROJECT (UEVRP)

**PATNA:** City Disaster Management Committee meeting was convened by Secretary, Urban Development to review the UEVR Project. Secretaries of concerned Departments and representatives of IIA, CII, IIE and others participated.

Patna Regional Development Authority has set up a group of experts to review the building by-laws in Bihar. Two Working Groups have also been

formed with specific roles and responsibilities.

**BHAVNAGAR:** As part of initiative with corporate sector, sensitization programme was organized in Excel Industries. Companies showed keen interest in taking up disaster awareness & training programmes.

**KOCHI:** A mock-drill was conducted in Kochi Refineries Ltd. for testing "off-site emergency plan" in the event of an LPG leakage during an earthquake with a view to test the district emergency plan; functioning of various agencies; promptness of personnel in the industry, police, fire, hospitals etc.

## RE-NAMING OF DEPARTMENTS

In Nagaland, the Relief & Rehabilitation Branch in Home Department has been re-designated as the 'Relief, Rehabilitation & Disaster Management Branch' and Secretary (Home), Govt. of Nagaland has been made the nodal officer for Disaster Management.

In Sikkim, the Land Revenue Department of the State has been re-named as 'Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.'

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