

6. *Sharing Responsibility* *–Role of Local and State Bodies*



Delhi Fire Services trying to extinguish a major fire in a slum

At the time of disaster various agencies both government and non - government organizations play a crucial role in preparing the society. Home Guards, Civil Defence, Volunteers of National Service Scheme, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan too play a major role at the time of crisis. This chapter tries to understand the functions and role of these agencies in disaster management, who make the society a better place to lives.

READ THE FOLLOWING ...

26th January 2001, Earthquake of an intensity of 6.9 occurs in Bhuj.

26th January 2001, reports of the State Government state that, more than 13,000 people have been declared dead and about 1.67 lakh people have been injured. About 1.97 crore population spread over 21 districts have been affected. About 3.20 lakh, permanent and semi permanent (pucca/kucha) houses and 14,000 huts have been fully destroyed and about 7.33 lakh permanent and semi permanent (pucca/kucha) houses and 31,000 huts have been partially damaged,.... What went wrong? Did the houses have faulty structural design?

Let's join hands and be prepared. Students are the future generation of the country and they can make a difference by helping the community for a safer place to live.

28th January 2001, relief teams started reaching Ahmedabad and Bhuj. Individuals, Voluntary organizations, Professionals, Aid agencies have started approaching materials for providing assistance.

Mr Khan is a driver in the town of Bhuj. Thankfully none in his family was injured during the quake; they lost all their valuables, cash, and their house. More than 100 organizations, private, government and non-government, were providing relief materials after the earthquake, but Mr. Khan could not get a single tent for his family, who were living on the street... Who will coordinate?

It is not only Mr. Khan a poor driver who was suffering. There were many ill-fated families and this could happen to you and me. Think about it... When disasters occur they teach us lessons at a very high cost usually to life and property. This indicates how important and how crucial planning for a disaster is. So, are we prepared to face another jolt like the Bhuj? Isn't it time for us to learn from our past experiences?

Managing Disasters

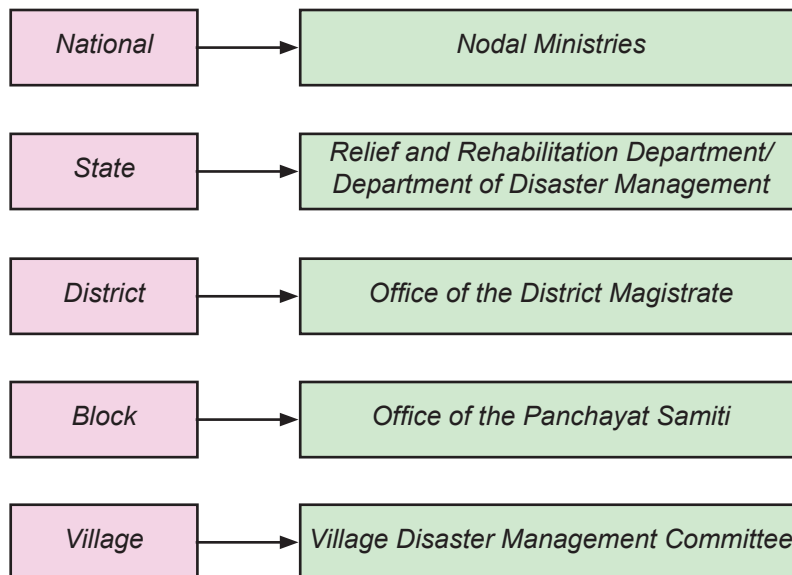
Disasters can be managed effectively through close coordination with various government and non-government agencies. Do you know the agencies that work for our safety?

Let's understand the various agencies which play a key role in Disaster Management.

How are Disasters Managed?

The flow chart given below would give you a better understanding about the management of disasters at various levels in our country.

Do you remember the administrative divisions in India, which you had read in your civics book?



India with its federal system of Government has specific roles for the Central and the State Governments. The country has an integrated administrative machinery for management of disasters at the National, State, District and Sub- District levels. The basic responsibility of undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the event of natural disasters is with the concerned State Governments. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Government by providing financial and logistic support.

NATIONAL LEVEL:

The response from the Central Government is based keeping in view the following factors:

1. The gravity of the disaster
2. The scale of the relief operations
3. The requirements of the Central assistance for augmenting financial resources and logistics support at the disposal of the State Government.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is the Nodal Ministry at the centre for coordinating disaster management activities for all natural hazards except drought which is taken care by Ministry of Agriculture under the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Other Ministries are assigned the responsibility of providing emergency support in case of disasters that fall within their purview.

Sl.No	Disasters	Nodal Ministry
1	Natural Disasters (other than drought)	Ministry of Home Affairs
2	Drought	Ministry of Agriculture
3	Air Accidents	Ministry of Civil Aviation
4	Railway Accidents	Ministry of Railways
5	Chemical Disasters	Ministry of Home Affairs
6	Biological Disasters	Ministry of Home Affairs
7	Nuclear	Ministry of Home Affairs
8	Epidemics	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

STATE:

The responsibility to cope up with natural disasters is essentially that of the State Government. The role of the Central Government is to support in terms of physical and financial resources. The Chief Minister or the Chief Secretary of the State heads a state level committee which is in overall charge of the relief operations at the State and the Relief Commissioner who is in charge of the relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural disasters. In many of the states, Secretary, Department of Revenue is also in charge of relief operations. The states have the relief manual called as the 'State Relief Code' and the State Contingency Plan which guides them to manage disaster scenarios.

DISTRICT:

The district administration is the focal point for implementation of all governmental plans and activities. The actual day-to-day function of administering relief is the responsibility of the District Magistrate/ District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner who exercises coordinating and supervising powers over all the departments at the district level.

The 73rd and the 74th constitutional amendments recognise Panchayati Raj Institutions as 'Institutions of self- government'. These local bodies can be effective instruments in tackling disasters through early warning system, relief distribution, providing shelter to the victims, medical assistance etc.

A Disaster Management Committee has been set up at the district level headed by the District Magistrate and officials from the health department, Irrigation Department, Veterinary Department, Department of Water and Sanitation, Police, Fire Services, representatives from National and International NGOs, etc. The Disaster Management Committee which is basically the decision making body takes the help of the Disaster Management Teams, like the Fire Services, Police, Health practioners etc. are:

ACTIVITY 2

As a District Magistrate of a district of Delhi, which is in seismic zone IV (high risk zone), what are the measures or activities you would have organized to generate awareness among the school children and the communities around your school?

BLOCK:

The Block Development Officer/ Taluka Development Officer is the nodal officer at the Block level for all the disaster management activities. The Disaster Management Committee at the Block/ Taluka level is headed by this Nodal Officer. The other members of the committee are officers from the Social Welfare department, Health department, Rural water supply and Sanitation Department, Police, Fire Services, representatives from youth organizations, Community Based Organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, eminent senior citizens, elected representatives etc. The main functions of Block Disaster Management Committee are:

- Helping the Block administration in preparation of the Block Disaster Management Plan
- Coordinating training for the members of the Disaster Management Teams
- Carry out mock drills

VILLAGE:



Villagers preparing a Disaster Management Plan

At the village level, the Village Disaster Management Committee headed by the Sarpanch/ Village Headman is responsible for preparing the Village Disaster Management Plans and also coordinating with various agencies for providing training to the Disaster Management Teams. The members should see to it that mock drills are carried out by the villagers at regular intervals by the villagers for various hazards.

It is accepted that the Government alone cannot take on the entire responsibility of Disaster Management. Apart from national, state, district and local levels there are various institutions who are involved in disaster management at various levels in the country. This includes the police and Para-military forces, Civil Defence and Home Guards, fire services, National

Cadet Corps (NCC), Youth Organizations, UN agencies, International and National voluntary groups, public and private sector enterprises, media etc. play a major role in managing disasters. Functions of some of the organizations have been mentioned below.

Recollect and discuss with your friends in the classrooms regarding various disaster management teams at the village level – their members and their roles and responsibilities in before, during and after disasters.

1. UN DISASTER MANAGEMENT TEAM (UNDMT) – INDIA

UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), has been made responsible by the UN General Assembly mandate for all International disaster response. In India, UNDMT represents various UN agencies to implement disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts and strengthen Government's capacities on disaster risk management. The UNDMT has representation from various UN Agencies such as FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO which act together whenever there is a disaster. The primary purpose of the UNDMT is to ensure prompt, effective and concerted country level disaster preparedness by the UN system, and the response when appropriate.

2. INDIAN ARMED FORCES:

The Armed Forces are the core of the government's response capacity. They intervene and take on specific tasks only when the situation is beyond the capacity of civil administration. Due to their ability to organize action in adverse ground circumstances, speed of operational response and the resources and capacities at their disposal, the armed forces have historically played a major role in emergency support functions such as communications, search and rescue operations, health and medical facilities, transportation, power, food and civil supplies, public works and engineering, especially in the immediate aftermath of disaster.

3. NATIONAL CADET CORPS (NCC)

The National Cadet Corps, a body formed in 1948 aims at:

- developing qualities of character, courage, comradeship, discipline, leadership, secular outlook, spirit of adventure and sportsmanship and the ideals of selfless service among the youth to make them useful citizens.
- This it does by creating a human resource of organized, trained and activated youth.
- Providing leadership in all walks of life including the Armed Forces and making themselves available for the service of the nation.



NCC Cadets helping the victims in the local hospital.

Be a part of NCC and serve the country...

Every Indian school going student can join NCC. The NCC is open to all regular students of schools and colleges on a voluntary basis. The officers and cadets have no liability for active military service. It has been divided into four divisions (they are not similar to the Army divisions). The first two divisions are; the Senior Division for college students and the Junior Division for school students. The college cadets and the school cadets are trained differently. To enter the Junior Division, the high school you are studying in should have an NCC troop. If it has one, a board is usually displayed at the school entrance, with the emblem and Troop number. If you meet the physical standards and if all is well you will receive your kit, which contains uniform, beret cap, cap badge, hackles, web belt, etc. An identification card is issued, but it might take some time, since it comes from the Battalion HQ. An NCC troop cannot have more than 100 cadets in its roll, so if you want to join, do it quick. The recruitment begins every academic year.

4. CIVIL DEFENCE



Civil Defence volunteers being trained

Civil Defence aims at saving life, minimizing damage to the property and maintaining continuity of industrial production in the event of a hostile attack. The two war emergencies faced by the country in 1962 and 1965 compelled the Government of India to reorient its emergency training activities from natural disasters to those concerning protection of life and property against enemy action. The National Civil Defence College

was founded on 29th April 1957 at Nagpur as the Central Emergency Relief Training Institute (CERTI) to function as the training wing of the Emergency Relief Organization of the Government of India. This Central Institute focuses on advanced and specialist training to the leaders of relief services, which was essential for efficient conduct of relief operations during natural disasters. Today there are around 500,000 Civil Defence Volunteers throughout the country.

5. NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS)



Ever since independence there has been growing awareness of the desirability of involving students in national services. The first Education Commission (1950) recommended the introduction of national service by students on a voluntary basis. Ministry of Education introduced the National Service Scheme during 1969-70. The motto of NSS is “NOT ME BUT YOU”. It underlines that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the society as a whole. The NSS symbol is based on the “Rath Wheel” of the Konark Sun Temple of Orissa. It stand for dynamism and progressive outlook of youth. Any student **enrolled** as a NSS volunteer, as per NSS Manual should put in atleast 240 hours of useful social work in a continuous period of two years (i.e. 120 hours per year). A work diary is to be maintained by each NSS volunteer, which will help him/her in the assessment in his/her performance. Such volunteer is eligible to get NSS Service Certificate from the colleges. The Service Certificate given in the NSS Manual should be strictly adhered. Each NSS unit in the college is expected to adopt a near by village/slum and work for its all-round development. Regular activities and special campus should preferably be organized in the adopted village/rural unit/slum for this purpose.

In the tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu about 1200 NSS volunteers have spread themselves into affected areas with relief material especially in the slums. In Pondichery also, the NSS volunteers have been deployed for relief work and they are constantly working under the supervision of NSS Regional Director.

6. NEHRU YUVA KENDRAS:

The Nehru Yuva Kendras were launched in the year 1972 as part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of India's Independence. This was on the recommendation of the National Advisory Board on Youth with the objective of providing the non-student rural Youth avenues to take part in nation building activities and also to provide opportunity for the development of their own personality and skills. As volunteers the members have helped the community at times of crisis. Today, it functions under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. NYKS is a registered society and is governed by a Board of Governors headed by the Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports.

7. HOME GUARD

Home Guard is a voluntary force, first raised in India in December 1946, to assist the police in controlling civil disturbance and communal riots. Subsequently, the concept of a voluntary citizen's force was adopted by several States. In the wake of Chinese aggression in 1962, the Centre advised the States and Union territories to merge their existing voluntary organization into one uniform voluntary force known as 'Home Guards.' The function of Home Guards is to

- Serve as an auxiliary to the police in maintenance of internal security
- Help the community in any kind of emergency such as air raid, fire, cyclone, earthquake, epidemic etc.
- Help in maintenance of essential services
- Promote communal harmony and assist the administration in protecting weaker sections
- Participate in socio-economic and welfare activities and perform Civil Defence duties.

MAINSTREAMING DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

In order to make available a competent force, training right from the School to the Technical colleges and Higher education courses about disaster management is being introduced. Courses have been designed with a purpose to sensitize students in all the aspects of Disaster Management.

Various leading institutes of the country like the Indian Institute of Technology {IITs} and The National Institute of Disaster Management {NIDM} intend to upgrade the skilled human resources for the country by providing training to various government level functionaries of various departments. All India Council of Technical Education [AICTE] has introduced Disaster Management courses in Engineering. Similar efforts are being made to introduce Disaster Management in Architecture course and Urban Planning, Medical courses etc. Disaster Management has also been made a part of the foundation course for All India Services like the Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Services (IPS) and Indian Forest Services (IFS) etc.

Reference for further reading:

<http://mha.nic.in/ch13.html>

<http://www.iitd.ac.in/~nss/>

<http://www.annauniv.edu/nss/aboutnss.htm>

www.nyks-india.org



1. If you were the Relief Commissioner of the State of Assam which is affected by floods every year list out five departments that you need to contact.
2. List out four members of the Disaster Management Committee at the district level.
3. Write the main aim of the National Cadet Corp.
4. List the organisations which help the state govt. functionaries in responding to disasters.
5. Explain the role of Central Govt. in responding to disasters.