

## DISASTER MANAGEMENT: AN INTRODUCTION

Disaster is a manmade or natural phenomenon whose effect brings disaster for human life. It creates situations like death, disability and injury for human beings. Also, it damages the constructed area. Destruction of crops and animals can also be seen during its occurrence.

Previously, mainly the natural problems used to take the form of disaster but presently human induced problems also, not only take the form of disaster but its implications are also more disastrous. In the most disastrous components of human induced disasters, the disasters created by Chemical, Biological and Nuclear factors can create havoc. The human induced general disasters are created by accidents in factories, leakage of poisonous products, pollution, breach in Dams, fire due to human error, religious and caste based riots etc.

The management of disaster, whether human induced or natural, is essential. It is almost impossible to completely wipe out the disasters but its impact can be minimised. If its impact is minimised then its repercussions are less destructive and number of deaths are also reduced. Following are the four important factors of disaster management:-

- (1) Preparedness before the occurrence of disasters.
- (2) Responsive action and relief work.
- (3) Rehabilitation.
- (4) Prevention and planning of minimisation of ill effects.

**Following important things are to be kept in mind before the disaster strikes in any region:-**

- (i) To prepare disaster management plan by School/community/individual.
- (ii) Community awareness and education.
- (iii) Training of warning system through mock drill.
- (iv) Comprehensive knowledge of total warning system.
- (v) Material and human ability resource – List of both the resources.
- (vi) Identification of unsafe community and buildings.
- (vii) Development of traditional support system.
- (viii) Announcement of forecast from the public places such as – religious places, after main worship and prayer.
- (ix) Identification of School, Dharamshala, panchayat bhavan and religious places to run the relief operations.

**Community arrangement of response action and relief work is essential as the disaster strikes. Following are the few important works:-**

- (i) To establish community kitchen with the help of local groups.
- (ii) To start emergency Control Room.
- (iii) To execute the disaster management planning.
- (iv) To establish medical camp and make sufficient arrangement of medicines and Doctors.
- (v) To gather resources.
- (vi) To give warning of the disaster as per the latest situation.
- (vii) To make temporary arrangements of the houses.
- (viii) To make arrangements of the shelter and toilets.
- (ix) To send teams for searching the affected people and for their protection.
- (x) To keep the search and protection groups in readiness.

**Following works are essential at this stage:-**

- (i) To start programme of consoling those who have separated from their families and to make efforts of re - uniting the families.
- (ii) Restoration of essential services like road and communication facilities.
- (iii) To provide shelter/temporary housing facilities.
- (iv) To collect re - usable materials from the debris for the re - construction work.
- (v) To re – establish normal life standard and rehabilitation process.
- (vi) To find employment opportunities.
- (vii) To construct new houses.
- (viii) To provide first hand knowledge to the community about how to remain healthy and safe.

**It is impossible to totally stop disaster. Its impact can be minimized through following works:**

- (i) Stopping habitation in the vulnerable areas.
- (ii) Preparing land use plan.
- (iii) Constructing disaster protective buildings.
- (iv) Finding out means to reduce risks before the effect of disaster becomes less.
- (v) Building community awareness and education.

**As a disaster Manager**

Students, you can yourself become a disaster manager. Whenever you hear an announcement about a coming disaster then instead of panicking you can inform your family and your neighbours about this. So that everybody can work together to stop it and save others from it. You can run relief work with the help of your friends and teachers, to provide shelter to the victims in your school and with the help of the villagers provide the victims with food and medical facility. This arrangement made by you will share the pain of disaster affected people.

*Students, I will narrate you a story of bravery of a child of a village of Banka district. There was a pond just beside the school. Two boys aged seven years while returning back from the school started bathing in the pond. One of the boys got drowned. The other boy started shouting and running towards the village. His shouting collected many people and they pulled out the drowned boy whose life could be saved by administering first aid. This effort of seven year old Guddu exceeded the knowledge of educated disaster managers. This story of bravery remained a matter of discussion for long time in nearby villages also. Such acts of children connects communities together and set an example of managerial skills which cannot be achieved by large units associated with this.*

#### **DISASTER MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

In India, all the year round in almost every region, natural and human induced disasters can be experienced. Disasters like Earthquake of Bhuj in Gujarat (2001) and Tsunami of Indian Ocean (2004) have shaken the disaster managers. Every day incidents like bomb blast and other terrorist acts have become troublesome for the people associated with disaster management. The good thing is this that several plans have been made at the national level. Its long lasting effect will be highly useful. Like –

- 1) Provision of emergency fund is there in the annual budget for the disaster management. This provision solves the problem of funds at the time of crisis.
- 2) Prime Minister's relief fund has been created for disaster management.
- 3) Maps of the disaster prone areas are being prepared on the basis of frequency of the disaster, so that knowledge of that area could be gathered.

- 4) The training of the personnel engaged in the disaster management is also essential. That is why many training centers are being established for them. Disaster management is also being taught in Universities as a subject now.
- 5) At the Panchayat and village level not only training for disaster management is given but also complete knowledge is being given to tackle the disaster. To minimize the terrorism and communal riots, Anti Terrorist Squad is also being constituted.
- 6) The contribution of self help organisations is also very significant. It works significantly in the form of guide.

**DO YOU KNOW?**

*Presently, information about disaster is also being received from the satellites. It increases the chances of forecasting many natural and human induced disasters.*

- 7) The work of disaster management is incomplete without the participation of 'Gram Sabha' because in every disaster the activity of 'Gram Sabha' increases the activity of common people. In this situation people themselves determine the priority of works and take the effect of the disaster to lowest level.

It is essential for the disaster management that the community should come forward for the management of disaster because the first benefit of management is being experienced by people and the second benefit comes in the form of community satisfaction. Thus, the role of community is of great importance.

## EXERCISE QUESTIONS

### OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Are the main components of disaster management are -
  - (i) Preparedness at the personal level before the disaster.
  - (ii) Preparedness at the community level before the disaster.
  - (iii) To depend on others for prevention.
  - (iv) To have no knowledge of disaster management.
2. Which are the measures to minimise the effects of human induced Disasters?
  - (i) To have no knowledge of land use.
  - (ii) To construct disaster protective buildings.
  - (iii) To concentrate on community awareness.
  - (iv) To increase settlements in the vulnerable areas.

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What is disaster management?
2. What are the measures to be adopted to minimise the disaster?
3. How will you help people in the disaster affected areas?
4. How the disaster affected people can be helped by the school?

### LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Describe the role of 'village Panchayat' in disaster management?
2. Asses the work done at the national level for disaster management?

### PROJECT WORK

1. Students, collect information from your grandparents and elderly persons regarding fire and epidemic in your village/Mohalla in the last one year.

