DISASTER MANAGEMENT-INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN INDIA

Manoj kumar jain
Research scholar, Depart. Of Public Administration
Govt.Arts College, Kota
Kota University, Kota

Abstract

India is one of the hazard prone countries in the world, especially in South Asia. Disaster may also be termed as "a serious disruption of the functioning of society, causing widespread human, material, animals and environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected society to cope using its own resources." Thus, a disaster may have the following main features: Unpredictability, Unfamiliarity, Speed, Urgency, Uncertainty, and threat. Droughts, Floods, Earthquakes, Landslides, Cyclones, Tsunami, Snowstorms, Hurricanes, Industrial and road disasters occur regularly. These disasters extremely threaten millions of lives and cause large scale developmental, financial, infrastructural, and agricultural losses that seriously hinders the county's overall GDP growth. In India, the primary responsibility for management to disasters lies at the central, state and local levels. In 2005, The Government of India regularizes a national emergency plan for disaster management; some of the states also have their own disaster management plan also. When an emergency happens and needs assistance immediately, but it seems there is a lack of co-ordination and awareness in the institutions as well as public. Many Indian States have limited resources and lacuna in their own disaster management plans.. Considering these problems, this paper attempts to throw light on a more holistic, integrated and responsive disaster management institutional system in India.

Keywords: disaster, mitigation, preparedness, risk, Disaster management.

Disaster management IN INDIA

High Powered Committee was constituted in August 1999 on Disaster Management was the first major initiative, by the Government of India in this direction. The Committee was set up by the Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India along with the National Disaster Response Plan. The report (2002) advocated for ushering in a new culture of disaster management which will stand on the four pillars - preparedness, quick response, strategic thinking and culture of prevention. In 2005, National Disaster Management Act was laid down to manage the institutional, legal, financial and coordination mechanisms at different levels. The Act clearly indicated that these institutions will work in close harmony simultaneously. This Act advocated for a paradigm shift in Disaster Management from centric-relief approach to a pro-active approach that lays greater emphasis on preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response for conserving developmental gains and to minimize the loss of life, livelihood and property also. It also paved way for new institutional mechanisms Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction.

A Disaster Management Plan in India includes the following parts:-

1. Institutional and policy framework; 2. Early warning system;

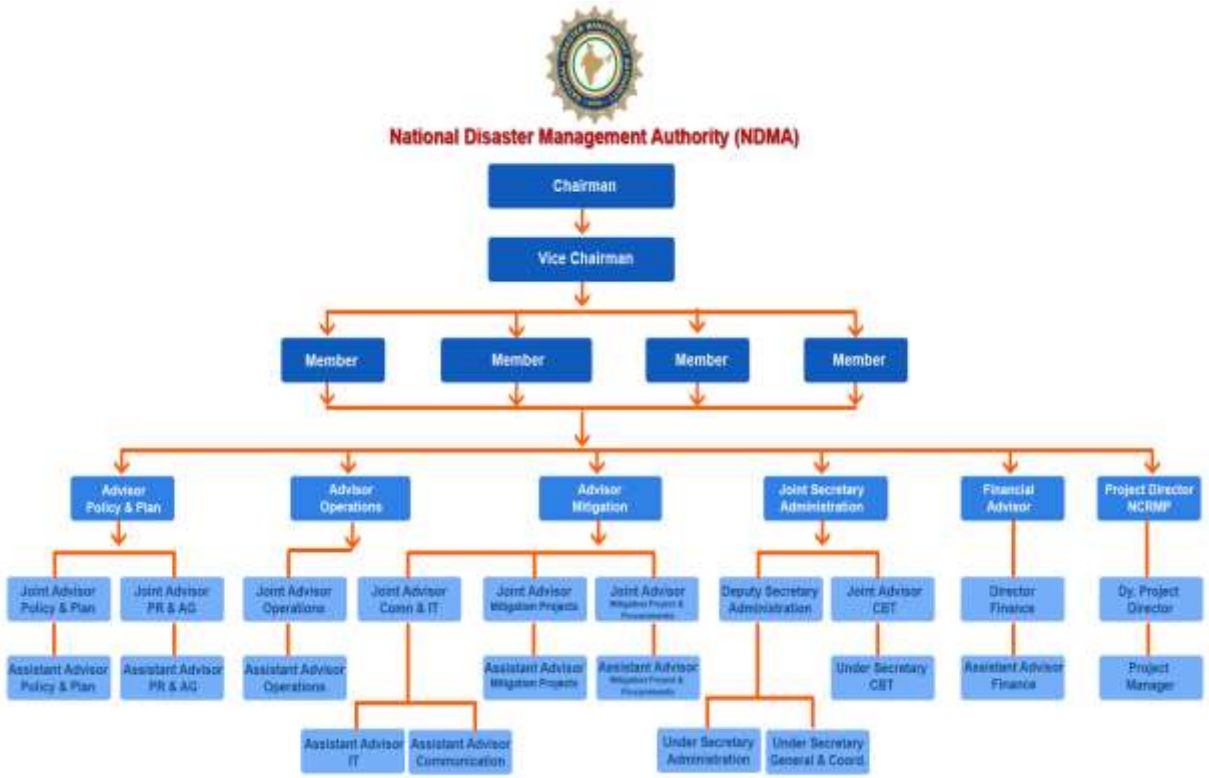
3. Disaster prevention and mitigation; 4. Preparedness

2.1 Institutional and policy framework -The institutional and policy mechanisms for carrying out responses, relief and rehabilitation have been well-established since Independence. These mechanisms have proved to be robust and

effective in so far as response, relief and rehabilitation are concerned. At present, for the national level the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for all matters concerning disaster management.

2.1.2 [1].Different level institutes-

1. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)-.



2. National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) - The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) was constituted under an Act of Parliament with a vision to play the role of a premier institute for capacity development in India and the region. The efforts in this direction that began with the formation of the National Centre for Disaster Management (NCDM) in 1995 gained impetus with its re-designation as the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) for training and capacity development. Under the Disaster Management Act 2005, NIDM has been assigned nodal responsibilities for human resource development, capacity building, training, research, documentation and policy advocacy in the field of disaster management.

4. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

5. National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC).

4. State disaster management authority.

5. District disaster management authority

6. Local level management authority.

National Policy on Disaster Management (2009) visualizes a holistic and integrated approach towards disaster management with emphasis on building strategic partnerships at various levels. Community-based disaster management, capacity development in all spheres, etc. were some of the themes underpinning the policy. The objectives of the Policy are:

[1] BOOKLET- 1 Conceptual and Institutional Framework of Disaster Management-BOOKLET I Conceptual and Institutional Framework of Disaster Management 2002

• Promoting a culture of prevention, preparedness and resilience at all levels through knowledge, innovation and education.

• Encouraging mitigation measures based on technology, traditional wisdom and environmental sustainability.

• Mainstreaming disaster management into the developmental planning process.

• Establishing institutional and techno-legal frameworks to create an enabling regulatory environment and a compliance regime.

• Ensuring efficient mechanism for identification, assessment and monitoring of disaster risks.

• Developing contemporary forecasting and early warning systems backed by responsive and fail-safe communication with information technology support.

• Ensuring efficient response and relief with a caring approach towards the needs of the vulnerable sections of the society.

• Undertaking reconstruction as an opportunity to build disaster resilient structures and habitat for ensuring safer living.

• Promoting a productive and pro-active partnership with the media for disaster management.etc.

It analyses the efforts for capacity building at national, state and local level institutions and community members by examining the measures for disaster preparedness and risk reduction at each levels. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments enabled the Local Governments with the power, authority and resourceful to function as 'units of self government', though with varying levels of initiative, drive, interest, intensity and diversity of operations in practice. Drawing power from the Constitution of India, the Local Governments have started assuming the centre stage by ushering in effective, efficient, people centric and responsive system in decentralized governance. The uniqueness of Local Government is that it not only provides direct participation of people in administration but also plays an important role in bringing good governance at the grass-roots through various dimensions like immediate, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and coordinated. It is also noted that the significance, operations and the impact of all levels across the country are improving over the period, despite wide disparity in their approach and extent in different parts of the country. It is viewed that Local Governments can be effective instruments in tackling disaster through early warning system. They can be relied on at the time of relief distribution, providing shelter to the victims, medical assistance, etc. since they are closer to the communities. They are in a better position to undertake such tasks than the State and Central government. This is many times viewed that creation of motivation, community level coordinated action; disaster mitigation education, etc. are all tasks that can be provided by the rural and Urban Local Bodies.

Methodology

Elected members of local levels from different parts of the country provided useful inputs for the, as part of capacity building programs organized for them. The local leaders and opinion makers, they are able to bring in positive approaches and attitudes among the community, non-political organizations and other members of community also provided the inputs. These categories of respondents were preferred as they are more active, challenge taking, dynamic, and may bring in new ideas, approaches, strategies and practices In addition, the researcher also interacted with the officials of various local institutions like Schools, Health Centers, Public Distribution System (PDS) shops, Agriculture Office, Veterinary Hospital, etc., who also provided with several useful inputs. Regarding the process of data collection, interactions with the elected members were made in their rural office. FGDs were held with the office bearers of youth wings of major political parties in public places like Schools, Libraries, etc.

Significance of different institutional arrangements-

[2]Role of Local Governments in the Pre-Disaster Phase Local Governments are expected to carry out the following, measures for disaster preparedness-

(i) Initiate the 'Mapping of Resources and Facilities' in and around its functional area with emphasis on their suitability for disaster management. For example, identifying temporary locations for keeping evacuated persons, storage of food, drinking water, medicines, etc., availability of necessary equipment and its status and list of emergency items to be procured.

(ii) Carry out 'Vulnerability Mapping' of the area and update the vulnerability profile at regular intervals.

(iii) Prepare an 'Evacuation Plan' with priority for children, women, differently disabled, sick, and aged peoples.

(iv) Devise an 'Early Warning and Reporting System' with the list of Nodal persons from the functional area and update their status at regular intervals.

(v) Prepare a directory of blood donors, youth volunteers, etc. with contact address, mobile no. and update their status.

(vi) Constitute a 'Disaster Management Cell' at the local level which will act as a 'Core team' for all the activities. Each member of the core team will be assigned with specific responsibilities (Main and Stand-by) to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts.

(vii) Capacity building of different stakeholders will be organized at regular intervals: every family to prepare the 'emergency kit' in case of an emergency; every official on documenting vital information for disaster management; every citizen on 'Disaster-specific drills'; every youth volunteer on application of first aid, carrying out safe evacuation procedures, operation of stand-by power and communication equipment, etc.

(viii) In case of an early warning about the onset of disasters, core team member will brief the nodal persons about the disaster plan and their expected assignments.

(ix) Formulation of a Plan for Disaster Management in the area, with inputs from elected members of PRIs, officials, village elders and community members.

(x) Setting up of community volunteer teams for search and rescue, communication, first aid, preparation of shelter, provision of food and water, maintenance, etc

The role of Local Governments in the 'pre-disaster phase' is significant, as they have first initiative; and expects to take proper appropriate measures for disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Local Government is in a better position to analyze the hazard, risk, vulnerability and capacity effectively, which is imperative in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. And, they are in a better position to understand the social vulnerability of the disasters, and to address differential impacts of disasters on different section of the society. Local management is expected to formulate a better 'Disaster Management Plan' for the local level, which is an essential component for disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

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