

Together, Towards a safer India

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CONTENTS

Inclusion of a Chapter on Disaster Management in the Regional Plan 2021 for the National Capital Region (NCR)

Preparation of Disaster Management Plans in Educational Institutions in the North-East

Establishment of Hazard Safety Cells in the States

Dissemination of Disaster Management agenda among school children – Initiative by The Times of India

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) allocates funds for disaster management in its annual budget

Updates on GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Programme and the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project (UEVRP)

Inclusion of a Chapter on Disaster Management in the Regional Plan 2021 for the National Capital Region (NCR)

The National Capital Region Planning Board has included a Chapter on Disaster Management in its Regional Plan 2021 for the National Capital Region (NCR). The Chapter on Disaster Management highlights on the vulnerability and risk assessment of the region due to natural hazards and also outlines the policies and proposals for effective disaster management in the region.

In the segment on ‘Vulnerability and Risk Assessment of the Region due to Natural Hazards’, a detailed analysis of the various hazards which are likely to affect the region has been given along with the historical data of previous such incidents. The primary hazards identified are earthquakes, high winds, floods and fires. The document mentions that seven earthquakes of magnitude 5.5 to 6.8 on the Richter scale are known to have occurred in or around the NCR since 1720 AD and two major lineaments, namely Delhi-Haridwar ridge and Delhi-Moradabad faults, pass through the region with a potential of generating medium magnitude earthquakes. On the basis of previous incidents and the damage caused, it is estimated that such earthquakes occurring in the region could adversely affect the entire Region. In terms of probable damage scenario, the Chapter states, “.....*The whole urban development must be checked for safety against an intensity “VII” probability of occurrence and upgraded for required seismic resistance in buildings and infrastructure as found necessary.*”

Although adequate protection measures have been taken against floods, yet an area of about 25 sq. km. in south-east remains unprotected and “*in the event of heavy precipitation in the catchment area of Yamuna and its tributaries, the river down stream comes in spate, overflowing its banks and flooding the adjoining low lying areas. Also great damage is caused to areas deep inside the region because of back flow in the drains which is otherwise meant to discharge excess water into the river. In addition, heavy precipitation within the region causes local flooding of streets and localities on a large scale.*”

Another hazard identified is the high wind or ‘Andhi’ which affects the weakly built houses of thatch, sheets etc. and the damage occurring in ‘Andhis’ is of a localized nature and does not result in ‘disaster’ in the region. Fire hazard is increasingly threatening the fast-growing cities in the region due to various factors and suggests a comprehensive study of the vulnerability to fire hazards and adequate safety provisions be made for future planning of NCR and improvement in the quality of electrical cabling and wiring and distribution systems should be made.

The Regional Plan 2021 in its Chapter on 'Disaster Management' recommends certain policies and strategies for effective disaster management which inter-alia include adoption of a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary approach involving all role players viz. the Government, NGOs, community etc. Development of appropriate human resource and capacity building of various stakeholders through trainings and seminars and use of state-of-the-art technology like GIS, GPS, remote sensing, computer modeling and expert systems, electronic information and management systems etc. also needs to be ensured along with development of detailed data-base on occurrence of hazards, damage to buildings and infrastructure and economic losses and its dissemination to common public for awareness creation. It suggests putting in place a comprehensive techno-legal regime with requisite amendments to existing town and country planning acts, building by-laws and municipal acts etc. Efforts should be made to undertake retrofitting of existing public infrastructure viz. schools, hospitals, power stations, etc. on priority basis. Seismic micro-zonation to ensure that development of townships is in keeping with the seismicity of the region. Various development authorities and fire department should be involved in the planning process for NCR to ensure coordinated effort amongst the different participating States.

Preparation of Disaster Management Plans in Educational Institutions in the North-East

One of the important focus areas under disaster risk management is the DM planning in educational institutions. The process of preparation of disaster management plans has been initiated in the State of Assam. In Barpeta district, Nabajyoti College, situated in a far-flung area, has developed a sample DM Plan and also shared the same with the Deputy Director Higher Education, Assam.

In brief, the DM Plan inter-alia includes the constitution of a College Disaster Management Committee, Action Plan for the year 2005-2006, including awareness and sensitization programmes, painting, essay and quiz competition as well as conduct of training programmes and mock-drills etc. It also included constitution of various teams viz. warning and information dissemination team, evacuation team, search and rescue team, fire safety team, first-aid and medical team, site security team,

bus safety team and a team for students with special needs has also been constituted. The DM Plan also includes the sketch map of the campus of the college as well as that of the Girls' Hostel.

It is proposed to undertake sensitization and training of faculty and students and to ensure better outreach of the activities and the process of safety of educational institutions, the initiative is proposed to be taken forward through the Education Society. In addition, trainings on first-aid and search and rescue is also being inbuilt into the process. In order to conduct mock-drills and for demonstrating evacuation for fire/earthquake situations, requisite support from the Emergency Support Function (ESF) teams is also being secured.

Establishment of Hazard Safety Cells in the States

The damage to buildings and other structures during the past disaster events has highlighted the lack of disaster-resistant design, non-adherence to provisions of the Bureau of Indian Standard Codes and faulty construction practices as the principal factors for recurring loss of private as well as public property. In order to establish proper implementation of building codes in all future constructions, the Ministry of Home Affairs has advised the States/UTs to establish Hazard Safety Cells to perform following functions:-

1. develop competence in hazard-resistant design of buildings as well as in restoration and retrofitting of existing structures.
2. review the architectural and structural designs of RCC, masonry and steel buildings from the point of view of hazard safety.
3. provide suitable checklists for regulatory authorities in local bodies.
4. act as an advisory cell to the State Government on different aspects of building safety against the hazards.
5. act as a consultant to State Government for retrofitting of government buildings and lifeline structures.

It is proposed that the Hazard Safety Cell will be headed by the Chief Engineer (Design), State PWD. The Ministry of Home Affairs is supporting in training the functionaries of HSCs on engineering aspects of hazard safety with the help of National Resource Institutions.

Dissemination of Disaster Management agenda among school children --- Initiative by The Times of India

Times NIE – Newspaper in Education – instituted a programme for creating and institutionalizing inter-school mega events targeted at the student community and organized a Debate Competition on “Disaster Management: A National Failure” in Apeejay School, NOIDA for the schools in East Delhi and NOIDA with two students from each school being asked to speak in favor of and against the subject. The matter was discussed with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry deputed its resource person for adjudging the participants as a member of the Panel of Experts.

After a pulsating round of debate by students from thirty-eight schools in which the students spoke with unrestrained eloquence. The fact that every student could speak only for two and a half minutes was a testimony to the wider dissemination of disaster management agenda among school students. The Delhi Public School, NOIDA won the first prize and Apeejay School, NOIDA was the runner-up while Bal Bharti School bagged the third prize. The resource person deputed by the Ministry gave an overview of the national initiatives launched by the Government to usher into better disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness in the country with specific reference to the efforts being made to disseminate the subject among school students in order to build a generation sensitive and alive to disaster risk reduction concerns.

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) allocates funds for disaster management in its annual budget

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has allocated a sum of rupees two crore as an interim budgetary provision in its annual budget for disaster management. The amount is expected to increase in coming years to enable the municipal corporation to accord adequate attention to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures within the city. This will help mainstream disaster risk management activities in the functioning of the municipal corporation and also facilitate development of capacities for meeting the natural and technological disasters within the urban fabric of the city.

Updates on GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Programme and the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project (UEVRP)

- **UTTAR PRADESH:** As part of its efforts to give a fillip to implementation of disaster management agenda, the Government of Uttar Pradesh (UP) has finalized the School Safety Programme and Training Programme for Engineers and Architects. List of all engineers and architects working in various departments is being compiled and it is proposed to utilize the State-level engineering and architectural colleges as resource institutions. In the first instance, a Training of Trainers programme is being organized. Simultaneously, the officers of Civil Defence and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are being mobilized for initiating the process of Ward level Disaster Management Plans. Recognizing that special groups such as women, children, disabled persons etc. are more vulnerable in an emergency situation and require special attention, the Government has converted ‘The Manual on Disaster Preparedness’ into Braille for generating awareness among the visually challenged.
- **DELHI:** With a view to incorporate disaster safety aspects into the functioning of schools, the Government of Delhi, North District has initiated a detailed programme for school safety and awareness among teachers and students. Initiating the process, the Deputy Commissioner convened a meeting of Education Officers from Directorate of Education and MCD, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, District Liaison Officer from Civil Defence and Additional District Magistrate (North). The approach outlined was that the schools were divided into twelve clusters and each cluster was put under the charge of one nodal officer for formulating a set of activities. Meetings of various clusters were organized and they were sensitized on the need for disaster preparedness in schools. At the end of these sessions, nearly 116 Principals from various schools were sensitized. The schools started the process of developing their school level DM Plans and 116 schools out of a list of 155 schools submitted their plans. All the schools were advised to conduct mock-drills as per their DM Plans and have begun the process of identifying the shortcomings and taking action to plug these.

Disaster Preparedness Month was observed in District North in Delhi involving organizing sensitization programmes for Municipal Councilors and PWD Engineers, Doctors and Nurses, the Municipal Corporation staff of two zones, college level programmes were organized in Miranda House and Kirori Mal College, a mock-drill for responding to a fire situation was organized in residential block of Timarpur Residential Area with active association of Fire, CATS, Civil Defence, Police and major hospitals of the District. A poster on EQ safety was also prepared and distributed amongst all Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). In North-east District, a school evacuation mock-drill was organized in MC Primary School, Baburpur with involvement of around 1000 students, both boys and girls and they demonstrated search and rescue, first aid and fire fighting techniques.

▪ **ASSAM:** District Administration, Dhubri District organized NGO coordination and awareness generation meeting in all five development blocks in which presentations were made on various facets of disaster management and an action plan was chalked out for implementation of disaster risk management activities by various NGOs and community based organizations. In Guwahati, a 'Life First' – critical care and trauma vehicle (a mobile ICU) – was dedicated for emergency response. A panel discussion on "Emergency Health and Disaster Management in context of North-Eastern Region" was also organized with participation of around 500 people from different backgrounds. In addition, a training programme on Search and Rescue was conducted at R.G. Baruah College in which 47 volunteers, including 13 women, from one college and four wards were trained.

▪ **TRIPURA:** In Tripura, the Department of Police has provided rupees 38 lakhs to four districts for construction of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and also finalized a 2-week programme for training of EOC personnel. Twenty four police personnel have completed training in NISA, Hyderabad and are being used as master-trainers for imparting training to policemen at District level in Search and Rescue. The State Government has also finalized the list of critical equipments to be procured from the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), as per Ministry of Home Affairs' guidelines. The Government has also decided to construct helipads at all Block HQs by utilizing the SGRY funds to enable

swift disaster response and 27 helipads have already been constructed. As per the instructions of Hon'ble Chief Minister, the process of identifying 250 volunteers at sub-division level and 500 volunteers at Agartala city has been initiated through NSS, NYKS etc. NSS has also started building a data-base of blood donors for utilization during emergencies. The Department of Urban Development, Tripura has finalized the Tripura Building Rules, 2005 by incorporating IS codes. Tripura Engineering College is commencing a 2-week training programme for Engineers in hazard-resistant construction practices. The process of formulation of District DM Plans has been completed in four districts. Similarly, out of 40 Blocks, 27 Blocks and 54 villages have completed their Block DM Plans and Village DM Plans, respectively.

▪ **ORISSA:** An advertisement on Earthquake Preparedness in Oriya has been published in daily newspaper 'Dharitri' in public interest.

▪ **MAHARASHTRA:** A sensitization programme for Ward level Officers of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) was conducted on implementation of Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project (UEVRP) and preparation of City DM Plan and constitution of CDMC. Thirty ward level officer, engineers and officers of PMC participated in the training programme. An essay competition was organized in Dhule district to create awareness among students. Nearly 180 students participated in the competition.

▪ **TAMIL NADU:** The Department of Disaster Management and Mitigation has undertaken a revamp of the Chennai Corporation Building Rules and TN District Municipalities Building Rules with the Technical Committee set up by Govt. of Tamil Nadu preparing the draft Rules as per the model building by-laws circulated by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

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