

Together, towards a safer India

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Setting-up of composite Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) (Control Rooms) at the State District and City Levels

In order to strengthen the overall capacities for emergency/disaster response in the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs has been systematically assessing the existing response mechanisms and systems at the national, state and district levels. One of the major challenges faced by the emergency response managers at all levels during the recent disaster situations has been the near-total breakdown of contact and communication with the affected regions.

With a view to ensure effective coordination of entire disaster/emergency response operations, the Ministry has initiated the process for setting-up/strengthening the existing Control Rooms at the national, state and district levels. The round-the-clock Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) are proposed to be a major step towards establishing an effective disaster management communication network in the country. These EOCs will function as nerve centres for all disaster management activities as also for coordinating law and order situations. The EOCs at the national, state and district levels will be networked and equipped with state-of-the-art communication equipment. They will compile, analyze, disseminate information to facilitate decision-making and will work as hubs for coordination and preparedness activities and monitor the relevant indicators prior to any emergency. At the same time, it will also be ensured that the EOCs have the inherent ability to survive and continue to perform during a disaster and are housed in an all-hazard proof building and its communication equipment is kept in a high state of alert.

In order to ensure establishment of a fool-proof connectivity and communication during emergencies, the Ministry has developed the blueprints for the State and District level EOCs with their construction designs and specifications for requisite communication equipment. The EOC in the State capital would ideally be situated in the State Secretariat so that all disaster related relief and rescue efforts can be monitored by the higher authorities. The EOC at the district level will be located in the Collectorate since the District Magistrate/Collector is responsible both for law and order and disaster management.

These EOCs are expected to extend assistance to the State/District authorities to guide and control relief operations with an unambiguously defined authority and responsibility matrix of various civil, defence and other agencies involved in relief operations for smooth operation of the EOC.

At the national level, the existing Control Room is being upgraded as National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). It is being equipped with satellite phones, GPS, computers, GIS information system, emergency lights etc. in five on-site emergency coordination kits in ready-to-use mode. The training of staff in the NEOC has been completed.

In order to facilitate the process of setting-up of EOCs at the State level, the Ministry of Home Affairs has drawn up the guidelines on hazard zone-wise standard layout, structural and architectural designs and construction drawings for EOCs at state and district level for different seismic zones. The same have also been shared with the States. The EOC at the State level is slated to incorporate the main Control Room with an area of not less than 800 sq. ft. so that it has sufficient space for installation of communication equipment along with workstations, power supplies etc. along with provision for a Conference Room, Rest Room, Generator Room, Toilet Block etc. The following structural drawing with the proposed lay-out

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of the EOC has been sent to the States (Fig. 1)

The State EOC buildings have been planned in four separate blocks which could be arranged by the States in pattern most suitable for the area available. The control room, the conference room and the resting room are designed as reinforced concrete frames for twice the seismic force for which residential buildings are normally designed in each zone so that the EOC building will have much larger factor of safety against probable earthquakes in the respective areas. By this design, the buildings will not only be safe against collapse but will remain functional after

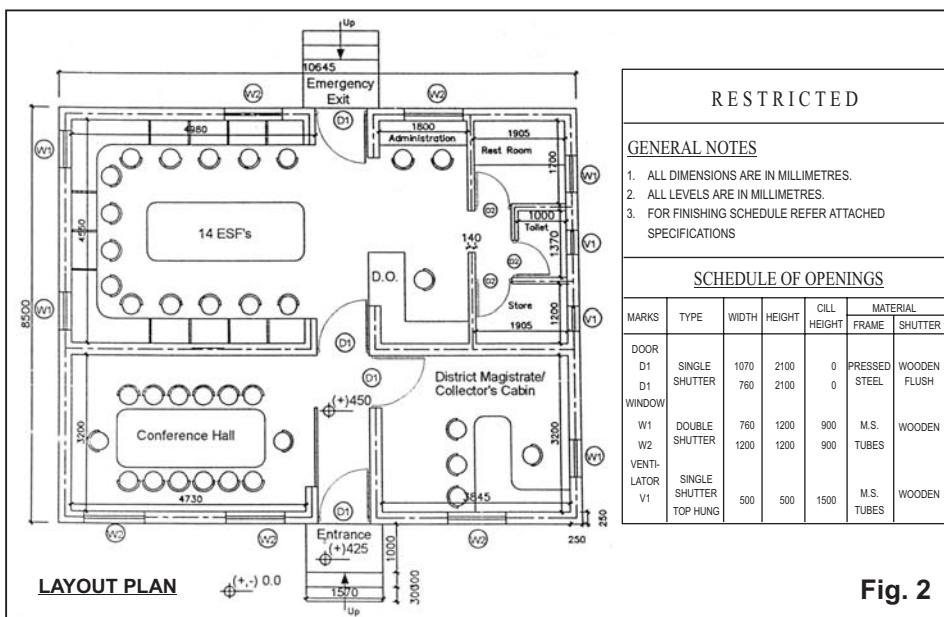
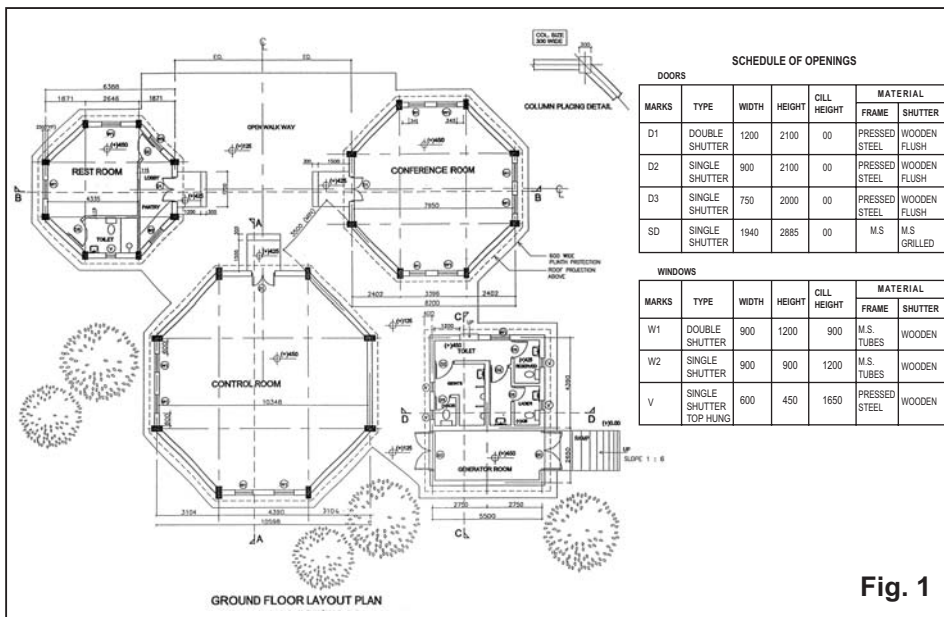
the hazard occurrence.

Similarly, at the district level, the EOC is planned as a composite control room to function round-the-clock to look after law and order situations as well as disaster management. In order to ensure that the building does not suffer any damage during a disaster, it is proposed that the construction should be carried out under the supervision of an officer not below the level of an Assistant Engineer who should be made accountable for the quality of construction or a third party quality control should be ensured. The following structural drawing with the proposed lay-out of the District level

EOC has been sent to the States (Fig. 2)

The importance of reliable communication equipment for speedier and effective emergency response needs no emphasis. The ability of administrators to make sound disaster management decisions to analyze risks and decide upon appropriate counter-measures is based on reliable availability of information. The information needs to be made available as quickly as possible. The monitoring of hazards in the pre-disaster preparedness phase and organizing efficient relief operations in the post-disaster scenario necessitates a fail-proof communication system to inter-connect the EOCs at different levels and to connect them to requisite disaster response authorities. For this, a detailed equipment layout plan for the district EOC has also been prepared and sent to the States. (Fig. 3)

In addition to the utilization of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for strengthening/establishment of the EOCs, the States have been advised to utilize the funds available under the GoI-UNDP DRM Programme as supplementary source for establishing/equipping the same. Moreover, the funds earmarked for Technology Demonstration Units (TDUs) under the Programme may also be utilized for construction of an earthquake-resistant EOC. The services of a senior seismic engineer/consultant are proposed to be provided to the State Departments of Disaster Management to assist in construction of the EOCs.



Sensitization of media on their role in disaster management

Recognizing the important role played by media in creating awareness on disaster mitigation issues for reducing disaster risks, the need to develop a work plan for sensitizing the Chief Executives/Senior Executives and professionals working at all levels in the public and the private media agencies including TV/radio channels, news agencies, newspapers etc. on disaster management issues has been felt for quite some time. A meeting was accordingly held in the Ministry of Home Affairs to hold interaction with the representatives of the Ministry of

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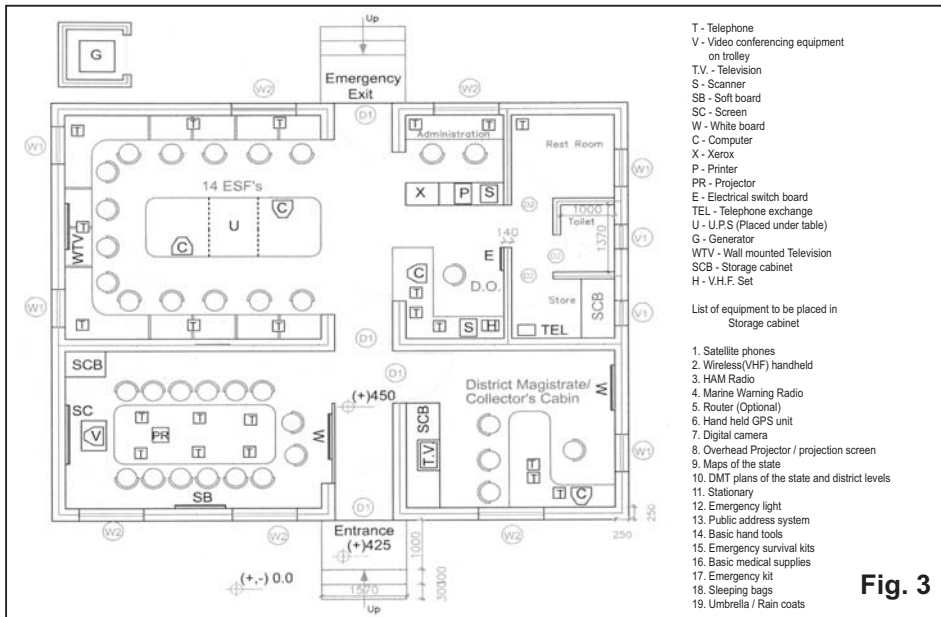


Fig. 3

Information & Broadcasting, Door-darshan, AIR, DAVP and the PIB for organizing a workshop on "The Role of Media in Disaster Management". It was decided to hold a one-day workshop with the objective of conveying messages on policy and institutional changes for disaster management; disaster management planning at different levels; role of media in increasing awareness on disaster preparedness and on the role of media in disaster prevention and mitigation. The different organizations present in the meeting were requested to provide their inputs to the Ministry for formulating the agenda of the workshop.

Approval of National Programme for Capacity Building of Architects in EQ Risk Management

In order to tackle the high earthquake vulnerability scenario arising out of unsafe building stock, the Government of India has formulated the National Programme for Capacity Building of Architects in Earthquake Risk Management. It is felt that while structural safety is the main focus of Engineers, the structural configurations chosen by Architects affect the behaviour of buildings. Moreover, an aspiring house-builder usually seeks the help of an Architect for preparing a

building plan and for supervising the construction. Thus, it has become important to train practicing Architects to ensure incorporation of earthquake-resistant construction features to reduce vulnerability of the building stock. Such training would, inter-alia, educate the architects on the architectural aspects that determine the earthquake resistance of buildings and also the problems and nature of earthquake effect on buildings, earthquake-resistant designs and construction of buildings as also in the vulnerability assessment of existing buildings and retrofitting etc. The objectives of the Programme are to ensure construction of seismically safer habitats; capacity building of Colleges of Architecture at national and state levels for training of architects; development of resource materials and training modules for sensitization of architects and to put in place a system of training and certification for practicing Architects.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) sensitization programme for corporate sector in Amritsar

As part of the Ministry of Home Affairs-Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) partnership, a sensitization programme was organized in Amritsar to inculcate a mindset of disaster risk reduction in

the industrial sector. The programme was inaugurated by Smt. Gurbinder Chahal, Financial Commissioner, Revenue, Government of Punjab. She complimented the CII for the initiative and urged to spread awareness about natural and man-made disasters among children and masses.

The Technical Sessions introduced the participants to the vulnerabilities and disaster risk in the state of Punjab; the need to take earthquake preparedness and mitigation measures; the need to have the existing industrial establishments and infrastructure assessed and retrofitted; the steps to be taken to safeguard against chemical and industrial disasters and the fire hazard.

Apart from the representatives of industries and government departments, the programme was attended by the Press, the Civil Defence and representatives from some schools.

Orientation Programmes by Centre for Disaster Management, Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration, Jaipur

The Centre for Disaster Management, the Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration organized three separate workshops for the engineers of departments like Nagar Nigam, Irrigation, PHED on 26th May; for the personnel of various Circuit Houses in the State from 19th to 21st May, 2004 and for district level officers of various districts to train them in preparation and updating of Disaster Management Plans on 27th and 28th May.

Inaugurating the workshop for district level officers, Shri A.K. Pandey, Principal Secretary, Disaster Management and Relief introduced the participants to the need and importance of Disaster Management plans. Shri R.K. Meena, Secretary, Disaster Management delivered the valedictory address.

Initiatives by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) held a three-day

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workshop to develop a training module for CBSE teachers and various reading materials on the chapters covered in the text book on Disaster Management for Class IX. The materials would serve as the resource material for the teachers and would also help the trainers in training the teachers.

A School Safety Awareness Programme was organized in Rajkot to create awareness among the school children and teachers about disasters and disaster risk reduction measures especially earthquake vulnerability and safety measures and to build capacities of the teachers in teaching the subject of disaster management to students. In the first phase, 9 schools were covered and over 1,000 students were sensitized.

PROGRESS OF WORK IN STATES UNDER GoI-UNDP (DRM) PROGRAMME

DELHI: A meeting of health officials of Central District, Delhi was held on the subject of "Health Sector Preparedness for Disasters". Considering the importance of health sector in emergency situations, the state of preparedness of hospitals was assessed. The Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) were asked to prepare their hospital contingency plans and train the medical and para-medical staff in emergency health management.

A four-day workshop on Capacity Building in Earthquake Engineering was attended by about 300 practicing engineers from various government departments viz. DDA, MCD, PWD, NDMC, DMRC, MES, AAI, RITES, NBCC etc. and the private sector.

ORISSA: A state-level natural calamity meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister to review the level of preparedness in the State to respond to any type of disaster. Similarly, District level calamity meetings were also held in all districts to review the state of preparedness measures. Three-day ToT on DM for district and block level officials from the new DRM districts was conducted at the State Institute of Rural Development. Aanganwadi workers were trained in the

process of development of multi-hazard community DM plans, their updating and conduct of mock-drills.

MAHARASHTRA: The second phase of sensitization of Engineers of Municipal Corporation was held in Nagpur and engineers from Nagpur, Aurangabad, Nashik, Pune, Satara and Karad participated in the two-day sensitization programme. The engineers entrusted with the scrutiny of structures for granting building permission were specially trained.

The Municipal Corporation of Kalyan-Dombivali has established its City Emergency Operations Centre to meet any eventuality in the city.

The Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation has established its Disaster Management Committee. Two working Committees, one under the Deputy Municipal Commissioner and the other under the City Engineer, have also been formed. The constitution of the task forces of the City Disaster Management Committee is under process. A disaster management unit has been created in the corporation.

PROGRESS OF WORK UNDER UEVF PROJECT

BHAVNAGAR: A meeting of engineers of Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation was held to identify the hazards, the risk areas and the resources available and to discuss the measures to reduce the risks.

AIZAWL: A one-day orientation and sensitization meeting of Aizawl City Disaster Management Committee was held under the Chairmanship of DC, Aizawl and it was attended by over 120 officers from line departments and representatives from village councils. The objective of the meeting was to orient the members of the CDMC on their roles and responsibilities, the various task forces and village level contingency planning for EQ mitigation

DEHRADUN: Meetings were held with the Chief Medical Officer and the IMA President with regard to the preparation of Hospital Contingency Plan and health sector preparedness for Dehradun city. In order to highlight the role of women in Disaster Management, a Women's

Awareness Workshop in Disaster Management was held in association with Rotary Club with the participation of nearly 30 women.

LUCKNOW: 110 architects were sensitized under a programme organized on "The Role of Architects towards Seismically Safe Built Environment" held as part of the MHA-IIA partnership for sensitization and training of practicing architects.

PATNA: Patna Regional Development Authority has prepared a report on modification in existing bye-laws by using Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA) bye-laws as the base. A core group has been constituted to review the by-laws.

DHANBAD: Chief Town Planning Officer, MADA has initiated steps to review the building bye-laws in the city by using the bye-laws of Delhi and Ahmedabad as reference.

MANGALORE: The District Administration, organized a city consultation workshop, attended by about 220 persons, on "Addressing Earthquake Awareness, Mitigation and Preparedness" in association with NIT, Suratkal, MHA and UNDP. Apart from government officials, representatives from PSUs, NGOs, engineers and architects participated in the workshop. It was agreed to set-up the City DM Committee and 13 Task Forces for Emergency Support Functions.

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