CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Towards a Safer India

EDUCATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT
Towards a Safer India
Education in Disaster Management...

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Introduction

Natural disasters have been visiting every part of the globe at one time or the other. The world is becoming increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters. From earthquakes to floods and famines, mankind is even more threatened by the forces of nature. Disasters can strike at any time, at any place. Nearly three million people worldwide may have been killed in past 20 years due to natural disasters such as landslides, earthquakes, floods, snow avalanches, cyclones etc. Ninety per cent of the natural disasters and ninety five percent of the total disaster related deaths worldwide occur in developing countries in which India has the second largest share. Recognizing the need of the hour, the decade 1990-99 was declared as “International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction” with a main objective to focus on disaster management planning for prevention, reduction, mitigation, preparedness and response to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters.

The following is the poem penned by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in memory of the children who died in Kumbakonam fire tragedy in Tamilnadu in a school in which 93 children died.

Oh dear little ones! Oh dear little ones!
For you, parents had glorious dreams!
And you were all immersed in your own dreams
Yet, Agni engulfed you and all of those dreams
Taking you to Almighty’s divine presence
Usually, departed old parents are buried by sons
Whereas, Kumbakonam, saw a sad scene!
Crying parents burying their little ones!!
Oh Almighty! Show Your grace on those little ones
And keep them all in Thy Holiest Presence!!
Oh Almighty! Bless those parents wilting in grief
To have the strength to bear this great loss
May Thy compassion and grace pervade all souls
And bring down the pain and wipe away the tears
Oh Almighty! Show your grace on those little ones.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
His Excellency President of India

"Natural hazards will always challenge us. But it is within our power to ensure that poverty does not turn hazards into unmanageable disasters. And it is within our power to join forces, address the immense complexities of disaster reduction, and build a world of resilient communities and nations equipped to counter the adverse impact of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters."

Mr. Kofi Annan
UN Secretary General
India, a country with diverse hypsographic and climatological conditions, 70 per cent of the cultivable land is prone to drought, 60 per cent of the land area is prone to Earthquake, 12 per cent to Floods, 8 per cent to Cyclones, 85 per cent of the land area is vulnerable to number of natural hazards and 22 States are categorized as multi hazards States. Tens of thousands of people are affected by these natural disasters.

We have seen in the recent past that country suffered impact of earthquake even where the seismicity was low as per the seismic zoning map, as in the case of Maharashtra and droughts have occurred in the areas with highest rainfall i.e. Cherrapunji in the North East. In spite of the best efforts by the Governments, external assistance and available technologies and media, the 1999 Super Cyclone of Orissa and 2001 Earthquake of Gujarat have inflicted untold misery. The socio-economic backwardness of the majority of our population, coupled with lack of skills or for mitigating preparing for and responding to disasters increases their vulnerability, negatively affecting their ability to respond and recover from periodic and intense disasters. The lesson learnt clearly bring out the fact that no State, no Government can meet the challenges alone. The Governments’ effort have to be strengthened by communities themselves getting involved in the emergency response system and being aware of the do’s and don’ts to be prepared for any eventuality.
In ancient India, disaster management finds mention in Kautily’s Arthashastra as a primary duty of the State. Disaster Management as a post disaster activity has been well established in India especially since independence. The novelty of the new approach lies in taking well-planned and timely proactive measures to prevent disasters, to prepare people to cope with disasters and to motivate them to safeguard their own lives, livelihoods and habitat.

**Disaster Management and Education…**

Prevention is better than cure, is an old saying which is very apt in the context of disaster management. Every year colossal amount of resources are used by our Government as well as Aid agencies in relief and rehabilitation measures. It is now becoming increasingly evident and mitigation and investment in disaster preparedness can save thousand of lives, vital economic assets, livelihoods and reduce the cost of overall disaster relief.

Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development in its Tenth Five Year Plan emphasized the need for integrating disaster management in the existing education system in India. In addition, the government of India launched a set of nation-wide *disaster risk mitigation* initiatives that addresses larger aspects of development in order to safeguard the developmental gains. One of the important initiatives includes *disaster management in the curriculum of school and professional education* has been recommended to the Boards. Empowering the younger generation on the preventive aspects, the types of services to be rendered in a disaster situation and the need for humane approach from part of the curriculum.

In a first ever attempt by any educational institution in the country, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has integrated a short course on Disaster Management in the school curriculum. With nearly 85 per cent of the land area prone to disasters it is high time the younger generation is prepared to combat disasters.
A growing and a learning organization…

Central Board of Secondary Education is a pace setting learner sensitive pioneering institution of the country. With more than 7300 schools belonging to its vibrantly healthy family, CBSE is one of the largest institutions of its kind in the country. The Board began conducting examinations from the year 1930 when 3091 candidates appeared in the first examination. By 1979, the Board’s examinations benefited over 90,000 students and today the number stands over 9 lakhs! CBSE affiliated schools sprang up not only in India but in Gulf and in neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and in the Far East countries.

With the glorious 75 years in its cap the Board has always strived to encourage innovation, and experimentation through timely curricular interventions. It realizes that sustainable progress can be achieved through constant striving for excellence, an important feature for any learning organization.
The Board has introduced the subject on Disaster Management as a frontline curriculum in Social Science for classes VIII in the year 2003, for class IX in 2004 and for class X in the next academic year. Frontline curriculum is an innovative initiative by means of which obsolete and old content in the existing syllabus is replaced to the extent of ten per cent by incorporating emerging, relevant and current topics after every two of three yeas. The units on the Disaster Management will carry a weight-age of ten per cent of the total marks allotted to the subject of Social Science. The Board has developed the curriculum, course content and the pedagogy with support from Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India and United Nations Development Programme. CBSE has also developed textural materials in this regard. A lot of care has been taken in development of instructional materials.

**The Course Objectives…**

The curriculum on Disaster Management contains the following topics:

- The nature and types of hazards
- Natural and man-made disasters and need for their management
- Efforts made in various regions for disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Role of community and schools in Disaster Management.
- Partnership with various Government and Non-Government agencies.
- Use of modern and scientific technologies to combat disasters and
- Survival skills.
The main emphasis of the subject has been on:

- Awareness and sensitization of students and teachers on various hazards
- Preventive and precautionary measures on various hazards.

**Curriculum Transaction...**

The curriculum transaction intends to provide joyful experience for the students in the journey of Disaster Management by ample use of:

- Case studies
- Projects
- Success stories
- Anecdotes
- Regular participation in mock drills and
- Minimum emphasis on learning of concepts

**Beyond the classrooms...**

The curriculum transaction on disaster management in the schools intends to cross the boundaries of the curriculum, classrooms and schools and make the learning local specific involving families and community at large. The Board strongly believes that “educating a child is educating a family”. It intends to generate awareness in the form of painting, debate and essay competitions, skits and exhibitions.
Training the Teachers...

To ensure effective curriculum transaction, the Board has taken up extensive training programmes for the teachers in a phased manner across the country. This requires a large number of resource persons who would take up the work along with the Board. To achieve the above ends, two Master Trainer’s programmes consisting of Principals and senior teachers across the country were organized. The success of these programmes was reflected in the successive training programmes where the support from these master trainers added immense value to the training programmes.

The Board has till date has conducted more than 26 such training programmes covering 2000 teachers throughout the country. In each of the training programmes focus has been laid on the causes, preparedness and mitigation measures for various hazards. Sessions on group work have stimulated the participants to bring out their creativity to the forefront and have a better understanding of the subject. The Board is pleased to have active support from various participants go back as a potential resource person for their own as well as for schools of their area to take the message further from the schools to the community and the society at large.
Achievements so far...

In these two years of its journey in the field of Disaster Management, the Board has been able to achieve the following objectives:

- Development of textbooks for standard VIII and IX on Disaster Management in Hindi (an Indian language) and English mediums.
- Development of training modules.
- Two Master Trainer's training programmes
- Training of more than 2000 teachers on Disaster Management across the country in more than 26 training programmes.
- Guidelines given to the schools to ensure school safety against natural and manmade disasters.
- Initiating and ensuring the preparation of School and Community Disaster Management Plans.
- The schools have started organizing competitions, project and exhibitions on Disaster Management.

Apart from these tangible achievements the Board has been able to achieve a major breakthrough in the mindset of the teachers. At the initial stage of the training programmes, the teachers’ come with a preconceived notion about the subject as an additional teaching and learning burden. But, by end of two days training programme, they start considering disaster management as an essential tool for building the knowledge, aptitude and skills not only for students but also for each and everyone in the school.
Evaluation...

The Board lays emphasis on continuous and comprehensive evaluation of students of class VIII. Besides learning about the preparedness measures to be taken up for various hazards the students earn grades for his/her participation in mock drills, street plays, rallies, painting, debate and essay, poster and slogan writing competitions. In class IX and X, it proposes for both internal and external evaluation in the subject of Social Science. Internal evaluation, however, is restricted to 20% of total evaluation. Hence, apart from evaluation in writing skills the students are also evaluated through project work and other assignments. The schools are encouraged to get their teachers and students and other ministerial staff trained on First Aid, Search and Rescue etc. by various Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies.
Road ahead...

It is said that accidents do not happen but they are caused. Advance planning, effective implementation strategies, development of right attitude for safety, co-ordination and co-operation with agencies working in this area are important for ensuring safety in schools.

- The Board on its part has stipulated certain conditions in the Byelaws of Affiliation with regard to nature and housing of the building and safety measures to be taken in the schools.
- The Board intends to introduce Disaster Management as a part of Geography, Sociology and Environmental. Education in standard X\textsuperscript{th} and X\textsuperscript{II\textsuperscript{th}} soon.
- Looking at the importance of a safer living and working environment, the Board has been urging the school & for preparation of School Disaster Management Plans.
- The Board is proposing to use its website www.cbse.nic.in for on-line education for teachers on Disaster Management.
- The board intends to share its rich experience with Government of India and other Central and State Boards and guide them in introducing disaster management in their states.
May thy compassion and grace pervade all souls...