

# Chapter-I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Vision of the Document

Repeated disasters threaten sustainable development. In the past twenty years, earthquakes, floods, tropical storms, droughts and other calamities have killed more than 3 million people globally, inflicted injury, disease, homelessness and misery on one billion others and caused damages worth millions of rupees. Disasters destroy decades of human effort and investments, thereby placing new demands on society for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Disasters are either natural, such as floods, droughts, cyclones and earthquakes, or human-made such as riots, conflicts and others like fire, epidemic, industrial accidents and environmental fallouts. Globally, natural disasters account for nearly 80% of all disaster affected people. According to the insurance company estimates, natural disasters represent 85% of insured catastrophe losses. If one adds the losses in countries like India, where most of the property of the people, especially in the rural areas remains uninsured, the losses are astronomical. In 1996, 40 million disaster-affected people depended on humanitarian assistance, a 60% increase over the 25 million in the 1980s.

### 1.2 Towards promotion of a culture of preparedness

Disaster preparedness and the promotion of disaster resilience have come to be recognised as essential components of all development strategies. **It was also realised that the issue of reduction of the socio-economic vulnerability of the people has to be integrated into all disaster management activities.**

By adopting this strategy, the District Administration envisages to reduce economic and financial losses resulting from disasters, while ensuring that they do not reverse, retard or neutralise development efforts.

The main focus has been on strengthening of existing organisational structures of disaster management and reorienting existing organisational and administrative structures.

**Disasters** are characterised by some or all of the following:

- ❖ They are disruptive to individuals and communities;
- ❖ They are not part of day-to-day experience and are outside normal life expectations;
- ❖ They are unpredictable in occurrence and effects;
- ❖ They require a response for which normal local resources may be inadequate;
- ❖ They have a wide range of effects and impacts on the human and physical environment;
- ❖ There are complex needs in dealing with them;
- ❖ They can be of sudden onset;

Three major functional areas were recognised as necessary components of a comprehensive approach: prevention, response and recovery. Within these areas, the key responsibilities of agencies include:

**Planning:** the analysis of requirements and the development of strategies for resource utilisation.

**Preparedness:** the establishment of structures, development of systems and testing and evaluation by organisations of their capacity to perform and their allotted roles.

**Co-ordination:** the bringing together of organisations and resources to ensure effective disaster management.

**The main vision of this document is to initiate coordinated efforts to have an effective disaster management strategy for the District, which will minimise the impact of any future disasters. The other main focus area of this document is to have an extremely quick, efficient and coordinated response and recovery plans in place from the Panchayat to the State level (village being the unit of planning) with a mechanism that will ensure increasing community participation in all disaster preparedness activities.**

**The ultimate vision is to have a disaster resilient District with total risk reduction as the main monitoring parameter in all developmental investments and initiatives to ensure sustainable development.**

### **1.3 Evolution of the Document**

The initiative for disaster management globally started with the member states of the United Nations General Assembly declaring the 90s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). The international initiative was conceived to motivate concerted international action and cooperation that could **“reduce the loss of life, property damage, social and economic disruptions caused by natural disasters, especially in developing countries.”**

IDNDR is based on the understanding that there is sufficient scientific and technical knowledge that can save lives and property from natural and other disasters through more extensive application. The international impact on the subject was expanded in May 1994 at the World Conference of Natural Disaster Reduction convened by the UN at Yokohama, Japan. 155 participating countries including India adopted the fundamental principles of natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation embodied in the **Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World**. The Yokohama Conference underlined the economic rationale for disaster reduction, complementing the scientific foundation with an essential commitment from public policy authorities.

The goals that were established for the IDNDR are:

- ❖ To improve the capacity of each country to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, in the assessment of disaster damage potential and in the establishment of early warning systems and disaster resistant capabilities.

- ❖ To devise appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing scientific and technical knowledge.

- ❖ To foster scientific and engineering endeavours aimed at addressing critical gaps in knowledge.
- ❖ To disseminate existing and new technical information.
- ❖ To develop measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, education and training and to evaluate effectiveness of programmes.

In essence, the decade's activities sought to **shift the emphasis from post disaster relief to pre-disaster risk reduction**. The main tasks identified for risk reduction are:

- ❖ Avoiding habitation in hazardous areas;
- ❖ Developing structures resistant to the onslaught of hazards;
- ❖ Developing the ability to rapidly evacuate hazardous areas and shift residents to hazard- resistant structures
- ❖ Reducing or eliminating natural hazards through technological intervention (e.g., dams, plantations, etc); and
- ❖ Establishing, through preparedness, the means to quickly recover from disasters with minimal additional suffering and loss of life.

For planning and coordination of Disaster Management Activities in India, a High Powered Committee (HPC) on Disaster Management was constituted with the approval of the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Shri J.C. Pant, a former Secretary to the Government of India. Though the original mandate of the HPC was confined to preparation of plans for natural disaster only, man-made disasters like accidents, industrial and chemical accidents, biological disasters, etc. were included to ensure a holistic approach for preparation of Disaster Management Plans.

The HPC constituted 5 sub-groups to develop detailed history of each type of disaster and the type of plans of actions needed to have the most effective preparedness, response and recovery strategies for each type of disaster. The five sub-groups were on:

- Water & Climate related hazards
- Geological hazards
- Industrial, Chemical and nuclear hazards
- Accidents
- Biological Hazards

#### **1.4 Multi-Hazard Disaster Management Plan**

This Plan is the first attempt to bring out a common plan for the District for possible disasters identified by the 5 sub-groups to which is the District vulnerable to. The Plan has a '**multi-hazard approach**' and incorporates various action which will promote a '**Culture of Preparedness.**' Extensive

L concept has been developed to define different levels of disasters in order to facilitate the responses and assistances to States and Districts.

**L0 level** denotes normal times which will be utilised for close monitoring, documentation, prevention and preparatory activities. Training on search and rescue, rehearsals, evaluation and inventory updation for response activities will be carried out during this time.

**L1 level** specifies disaster that can be managed at the District level, however, the State and Centre will remain in readiness to provide assistance if needed.

**L2 level** disaster situations are those, which require assistance and active participation of the State, mobilisation of its Resources for management of disasters.

**L3 level** disaster situation is in case of large scale disaster where the State and District authorities have been overwhelmed and require assistance from the Central Government for reinstating the State and District machinery as well as for rescue, relief, other response and recovery measures. In most cases, the scale and intensity of the disaster as determined by the concerned technical agency like IMD are sufficient for the declaration of L3 disaster.

## **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of the Disaster Management Plan are to ensure that the following components of disaster management are organised to facilitate planning, preparedness, operational coordination and community participation.

**Prevention:** the elimination or reduction of the incidence or severity of disasters and the mitigation of their effects.

**Response:** the combating of emergencies and the provision of immediate rescue and relief services;

**Recovery:** the assisting of people and communities affected by disasters to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.

### **Hassan District disaster management arrangements are designed to:**

- **deal with all types of hazards**

Though the focus of attention has been on the more frequent disasters like floods, Crop disease, droughts and transport accidents

- **be integrated (involve all stakeholders)**

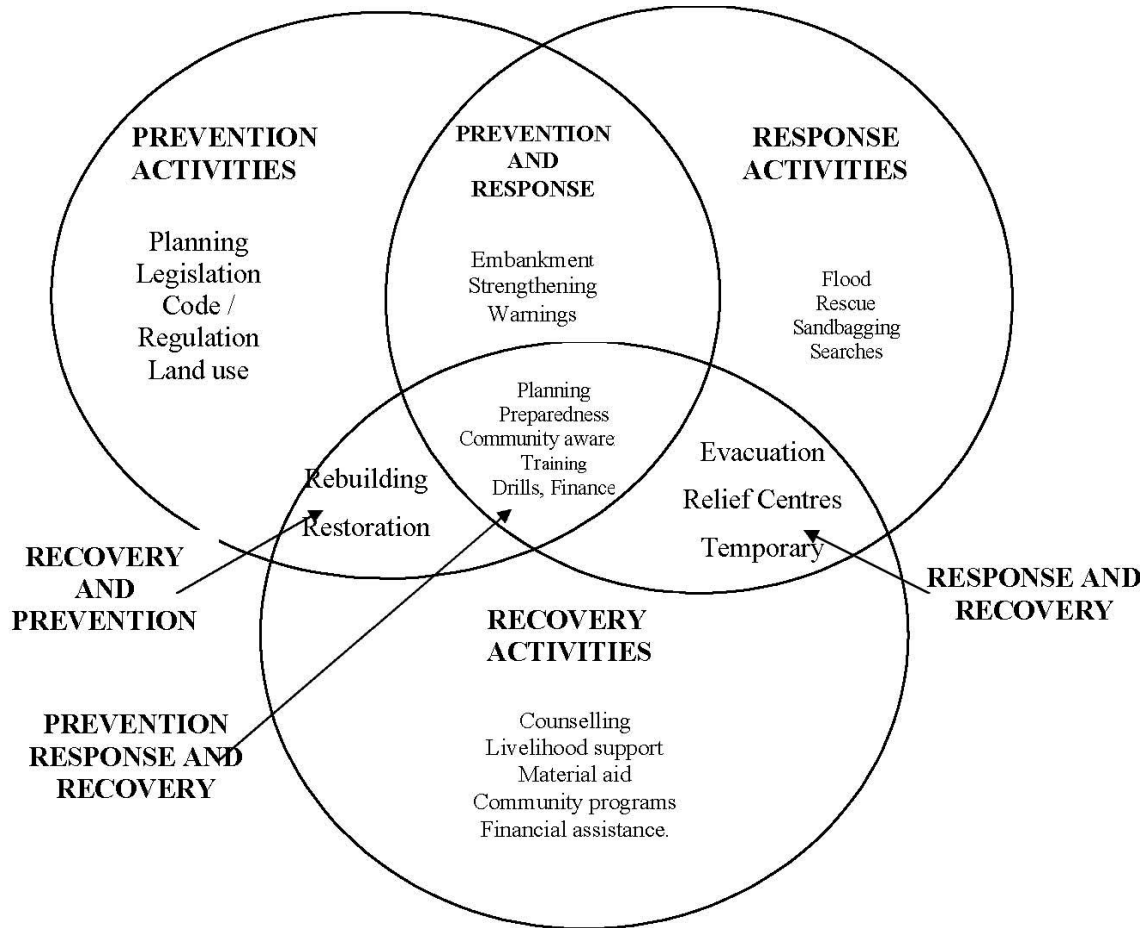
The management of emergencies is a shared responsibility involving many people and organisations in the community. It is not something done by one sector *to* or *for* the rest of the society, although some organisations have specialised roles of this kind.

In addition to the response services, most government departments have some role to play. The disaster response role is usually a minor part of the responsibilities. However, many departments have an essential prevention responsibility. Municipalities, Gram Panchayats, Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat have essential roles in disaster management.

- **be comprehensive (cover prevention, response and recovery)**

Prevention, response and recovery are all important aspects of disaster management and each should be explicitly addressed in the arrangements. A large number of activities can be included under the general heading of disaster management. These can be clustered

into the identifiable components of prevention, response and recovery. These components themselves are not mutually exclusive. There are overlaps of sub-categories. In the overlap areas between the categories there are activities that have characteristics of more than one category.



**Figure 1.1 Examples of Disaster Management Activities Clustered into Groups**