Disaster Preparedness: Role and Responsibilities of Various Agencies
UNIT 8  DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CENTRAL, STATE, DISTRICT AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

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8.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the government’s approach in dealing with disasters
- Discuss the centre and state coordination and allocation of responsibilities amongst different agencies for action in disaster situations
- Explain the working mechanisms of the district administration and other field level agencies in tackling disasters; and
- Highlight strategies for disaster preparedness at the field level.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

India and the world have realised that development cannot be sustainable unless disaster preparedness is built into the development process. To be effective, disaster preparedness has to be multi-disciplinary spanning across all sectors of development. Investments in disaster preparedness are much more cost effective than expenditure on relief and rehabilitation. Realising the importance of disaster preparedness, the Tenth Five Year Plan of India for the first time has incorporated a Chapter on Disaster Management titled - The Development Perspective. The government has decided to earmark ten per cent of the funds for disaster preparedness out of the new development projects, India has faced
several disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones and floods in the year 2005. The tsunami of 2004, highlighted the need for preparedness and mitigation measures to tackle the nature's fury.

It has been experienced that the timely preparedness measures coupled with effective administrative response, result in reducing the adverse impact of natural disasters. This is evident from the two situations of 1977 and 1990 in Andhra Pradesh, which was hit by cyclone accompanied by high storms of almost the same intensity. The number of deaths in 1977 was over 10,000 whereas the loss of human lives in 1990 was less than 1000. Technological improvements in the forecasting and warning system, effective administration in evacuating the people, construction of cyclone shelters, public awareness are some of the factors which contributed towards reduction of human losses (Sinha, 1999).

The Hurricane Wilma that hit Florida in 2005 in the USA brought out certain lessons. It indicated Cuba's preparedness especially its trigger mechanism. The people are instructed from an early age how to move quickly during a natural disaster. When a tropical storm starts brewing in the Caribbean, a well-oiled hurricane response mechanism clicks on in Cuba. In the informative phase, the island's state-run media begins broadcasting frequent announcements about the storm's movement. Next comes the alert phase, informing Cubans that a hurricane hit is probable and to prepare for possible evacuation. Shortly there after comes the third phase - alarm and evacuation (The Hindu, 2005).

There has been a paradigm shift in the thinking of the government from disaster response, rescue, relief and rehabilitation to disaster preparedness. For the purpose of disaster preparedness a National Disaster Framework (or roadmap) covering institutional mechanisms, disaster prevention strategy, early warning system, disaster mitigation, preparedness and response and human resource development has been prepared. The framework gives expected inputs, areas of intervention and identifies and lists the agencies to be involved at the national, state and district levels. We have discussed this in Unit 18 of this Course. The framework is a common document being followed by national, state, district and local administration. The central government has set up a National Disaster Management Authority headed by the Prime Minister and also State Disaster Management Authorities in some states to handle the preparedness and mitigation activities. Thus presently a common national strategy is being developed in India for disaster preparedness.

8.2 ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT*

India with its federal system of government has specific roles for the central and State governments. However, disaster management does not specifically find mention in any of the three lists in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, where subjects under the central, state governments and under both are specified. There was till now, no specific central or state Act, which clearly defines the ways of dealing with disasters. The central government introduced the Disaster Management Bill in the winter session of Parliament in 2005 which has been passed. The Governments of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have already enacted disaster management Acts. The central government has requested other state governments to legislate Disaster Management Acts.

* Parts of the material for this Unit have been adopted from Disaster Management in India: Country Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, brought out at the time of World Congress on Natural Disaster Mitigation, 19-22 February 2004, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi organised by The Institution of Engineers. (India)
The country has age-old integrated administrative machinery for management of disasters at the national, state, district and sub-district levels. However, the old system was geared for relief and rehabilitation to be taken up after the natural disasters and there was hardly any provision for disaster preparedness. Fortunately, the thinking is changing now towards disaster preparedness. The basic responsibility of undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the event of natural disaster is that of concerned state governments. The central government supplements the efforts of the states by providing financial and other logistic support.

The Government of India has decided to enunciate a National Policy on Disaster Management and a draft policy had been accordingly formulated. The policy is to cover all spheres of central government activity and take precedence over all existing sectoral policies. The broad objectives of the policy are to minimise the loss of lives and social, private and community assets arising out of disasters. The policy notes that state governments are primarily responsible for disaster management including preparedness. However, since response to a disaster requires coordination of resources available across all the departments of the government, the policy mandates that the central government in conjunction with the state governments, seeks to ensure that such a coordination mechanism is laid down through an appropriate chain of command so that mobilisation of resources is facilitated.

A National Contingency Action Plan has been formulated to facilitate relief operations giving procedures and focal points in central ministries and departments. Disaster preparedness is the important component of this plan. India Disaster Resource Network a web enabled centralised database comprising 226 items and about 60,000 records in 481 districts giving availability of human and equipment resources across the nation is available on the web site http://www.idrn.gov.in and is of importance to the disaster managers (like Collectors). Earlier, disaster managers were not aware of the resources that are available in neighbouring district or state and hence faced difficulties in dealing with disasters. IDRN facilitates this task. It is a nation-wide electronic inventory of essential and specialists resources for disaster response both in terms of equipment and personnel. It lists out the equipment and resources by type and by the functions it performs and gives the contact address meticulously at the district, state and national level. The system, at the touch of the button, provides location of specific equipment/specialists, resources as well as the controlling authority for that resource so that it can be mobilised for response in the shortest possible time.

**Incident Command System**

To professionalise emergency response management, Incident Command System (ICS) has been developed and is being introduced to professionalise the disaster response preparedness activity. It is an integrated system providing specialised incident command teams with an Incident Commander and officers trained in different aspects of incident management - logistics, operations, planning, safety, finance and administration, media management etc. It is a management system which can be used in any type of disaster or any event and/or incident, in which teams could be scaled up or down depending upon the need of the incident. Relevant personnel are being trained in the Incident Command System. In Incident Command System generally, a person is entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating the activities on the disaster site. The Incident Command System has been effective in USA and Canada. The ICS is in a way a formalised management structure, that facilities quick response, coordination of activities and resources and gives direction.
to all involved in this activity. The ICS organisation is said to comprise five major components. These are i) incident command, ii) planning, iii) operation, iv) logistics and v) finance.

The Incident Command System is responsible for performing the needed command activities, managing the resources, coordinating the emergency activities, establishing liaison with related organisations and personnel, coordinating the various emergency activities and maintaining contact with outside agencies, media and the public. Installing Incident Command System requires a comprehensive plan, and training to ensure that all those involved in this are familiar with the principles of operation of ICS. Incident Command System properly put to operation provides a smooth organisational approach to disaster handling, a standardised response system and trained personnel during crisis.

For imparting nation-wide training in ICS, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has designated the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie as the nodal institute, which in 2004, has begun the training of Master Trainers across the country. Six Regional Training Institutes have been also designated by the Home Ministry – at Pune, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Ranchi, Bhopal and Guwahati – for further training to be conducted at regional and local levels.

UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme

A Disaster Risk Management Programme has been taken up with the assistance from UNDP, USAID and European Union in 169 most hazard-prone districts in 17 States including the North-eastern states during 2002-07. The programme aims to minimise losses of development gains from disasters and reduce vulnerability. Disaster preparedness is an important component of this project. Other components include awareness generation and public education, preparedness, planning and capacity building, developing appropriate policies, institutional, administrative, legal and techno-legal regime at state, district, block, village, at urban local bodies and ward levels for vulnerability reduction.

Calamity Relief Fund and National Calamity Contingency Fund

A Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been set up in each state as per the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission. The size of the CRF has been fixed by the Finance Commission after taking into account the expenditure on relief and rehabilitation over the past ten years. Seventy five per cent is contributed by the central government and balance by respective states. In India, the centre released Rs. 1600 crore, Rs. 1700 crore and Rs. 1787 crore during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively, from the CRF. Where the calamity is of such proportion that the funds available in the CRF will not be sufficient for provision of relief, the state seeks assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) created at the central government. It was the Eleventh Finance Commission, which suggested the creation of National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) with an initial contribution of Rs. 300 crore by Government of India and further augmented through surcharge on central taxes. For example, in the aftermath of Bhuj earthquake of 26 January 2001, a surcharge of 2 per cent on income tax was levied. The Twelfth Finance Commission has been mandated to examine the requirements for disaster mitigation and preparedness apart from its existing mandate of looking at relief and rehabilitation. We shall be discussing in detail about this in our Courses, MPA-005 on Disaster Response, as well as MPA-007 on Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery.
Important Disaster Preparedness Measures

A National Core Group for Earthquake Mitigation has been constituted consisting of experts in earthquake engineering and administrators. The Core Group is to draw up a strategy and plan of action for mitigating the impact of earthquakes; providing advice and guidance to the states on various aspects of earthquake mitigation; developing / organising the preparation of handbooks / pamphlets / type designs for earthquake-resistant construction; designing systems for assisting the states to adopt building codes in seismically vulnerable zones; developing systems for training all concerned technical persons; evolving a system of certification of architects / engineers qualified for earthquake resistant construction and promoting awareness campaigns.

A separate Committee of Experts has also been constituted to review building codes and byelaws. The state governments have been advised to ensure rigorous enforcement of existing byelaws. Earthquake engineering education is being included in engineering colleges at undergraduate level. An earthquake mitigation project has been finalised for reducing the vulnerability to earthquakes. The programme includes detailed evaluation and retrofitting of lifeline buildings such as hospitals, schools, water and power supply units. An accelerated urban earthquake vulnerability reduction programme has been taken up in 38 cities in seismic zones III, IV and V with a population of half a million and above.

A cyclone mitigation project has been formulated which aims at strengthening of monitoring / warning systems, coastal shelterbelt plantation, mangrove plantation, construction of cyclone shelters, storm surge modeling and water envelope studies. People in vulnerable zones will not be required to walk more than two kilometers to reach a cyclone shelter. Cyclone shelters will have the capacity to house 3000 to 5000 persons with kitchen and other facilities and will be multipurpose units used as schools or community centres in normal times.

For the purpose of all types of disaster preparedness, fire services are proposed to be developed as multihazard response units. Fire services will be provided rescue tenders in addition to existing fire tenders. Hazard vans will be provided in the state capitals and metropolitan cities to deal with hazardous materials.

8.3 ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

In India, the frequency of the occurrence of famines, and other natural calamities has led to an institutionalised set up to deal with the disasters. The subject of natural calamities, initially after independence was dealt with by the Ministry of Home. The earlier scarcity relief division was later shifted to the Ministry of Agriculture. This division has been upgraded to Natural Disaster Management Division. Presently, the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for coordination of all disaster preparedness activities, except the disasters specifically allocated to other ministries as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disaster</th>
<th>Nodal Ministry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Accidents</td>
<td>Ministry of Civil Aviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Railway Accidents</td>
<td>Ministry of Railways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemical Disasters</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment and Forests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Disasters</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Disasters</td>
<td>Department of Atomic Energy</td>
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The Central Government bodies responsible for disaster preparedness are as follows:

- The Union Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister.
- Empowered Group of Ministers, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister.
- National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. The other members of this committee include the Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretaries of Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, Research and Analysis Wing and Agriculture and Co-operation along with Director Intelligence Bureau and an officer of Cabinet Secretariat.
- Crisis Management Group (CMG), under the chairmanship of the Central Relief Commissioner, who is also Joint Secretary, Disaster Management in Home Ministry. This group consists of senior officers from the various ministries and concerned departments and reviews disaster preparedness plans and coordinates among themselves and State governments. The CMG, in the event of a disaster, meets frequently to review the relief operations and extends all possible assistance required by the affected states to overcome the situation effectively. The Resident Commissioner of the affected state is also associated with such meetings.
- The recently constituted National Disaster Management Authority headed by the Prime Minister.
- The National Contingency Action Plan (CAP) becomes operational on the onset of a disaster that facilitates the relief and resource operations. It outlines the action to be taken by various central Ministries and Departments and determines focal points in the administrative machinery.
- Technical organisations, such as the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Central Water Commission (CWC), Indian Space Research Organisation, Building and Material Promotion Council, Bureau of Indian Standards, Defence Research and Development Organisation, Director General of Civil Defence. Generally, whenever a natural disaster is about to strike, the Central Relief Commissioner receives information from the IMD, CWC, which is conveyed to the Secretary (Home), Home Minister, Cabinet Secretary, the Prime Minister, Cabinet and the NCMC. The information is also disseminated to central government ministries and departments, and also to the respective state governments for taking necessary action.

A 200 bedded mobile hospital, fully trained and equipped is being set up by the Ministry of Health and attached to a leading government hospital in Delhi. Three additional mobile hospitals attached to leading government hospitals of the country are proposed to be located in different parts of the country. These mobile hospitals will be airlifted during emergencies to the site of disaster.

Agriculture in India is largely monsoon-dependent. Some areas of the country frequently face droughts. The Ministry of Agriculture has launched a number of programmes to mitigate the impact of drought in the long run. These include Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), Watershed Development Programme for Shifting Cultivation (WDFSC), and Integrated Afforestation and Eco-development Project Scheme (IAEPS).
8.4 ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

SPECIALISED AGENCIES

The Government of India constituted a High Powered Committee (HPC) on Disaster Management in August 1999 under the chairmanship of Shri J C Pant and comprising other eminent experts. The terms of reference were framed around suggesting institutional reforms in Disaster Management in India and model plans at different levels. The HPC appointed sub-groups and undertook detailed studies. The HPC submitted its final report in October 2001. It gave a number of recommendations and outlined a programme of action. Many of its recommendations were approved by the government. Some of the recommendations have been implemented and others are being implemented.

Ten search and rescue teams have been trained. Eighty six specialist search and rescue teams consisting of 45 personnel including doctors, para-medics, structural engineers etc., are being trained and equipped. These are to have latest equipment and dog squads for locating survivors in the debris and the teams shall be stationed at various centres around the country. The personnel of Central Police Organisation are also being imparted training in search and rescue.

Fourteen Regional Response Centres are being set up in different parts of the country to respond to any hazard/calamity in the neighbouring states. These centres will have response teams and equipment and necessary resources. A Steering Committee has been constituted to oversee the creation of capabilities for emergency response.

A National Disaster Response Force will be set up to tackle situations arising from different types of disasters comprising eight battalions from the Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Boarder Police and the Border Security Force, and this force would be positioned at eight locations in different parts of the country. Disaster management as a subject in Social Sciences has been introduced in the school curriculum for Class VIII by the Central Board of Secondary Education. It has also been included in the syllabus of Class IX and X from 2005.

National Emergency Management Authority

A National Emergency Management Authority is proposed to be set up. This will be the apex level organisation having multi-disciplinary experts covering a large number of branches. It will have flexibility of a field organisation. The authority is to coordinate disaster management activities and ensure adequate preparedness at all levels in order to meet disasters.

National Institute of Disaster Management

The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) was set up in 2003 and is being developed as a Regional Centre of Excellence in Asia. It will develop training modules at different levels, undertake training of trainers and organise training programmes for planners, administrators and command functionaries. The role and responsibilities of the Institute include development of national level information base on disaster management policies, formulation of disaster management code and consultancy to various states in strengthening their disaster management system.
Emergency Operations Centre

The Control Room or Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in the nodal Ministry of Home Affairs functions round the clock. This Centre is the focal point of first contact and assists the Central Relief Commissioner. It maintains contact details of concerned officers at central and state levels and other experts in the field of disaster management. The Emergency Operations Centre is considered to be a nodal point for tackling the emergencies. The Central Control Room is responsible for procuring, and transmission of information about any natural calamity and relief activities. It maintains a liaison with the concerned state government, and other related central ministries/departments. It performs other functions as may be entrusted by the Relief Commissioner.

Similarly, the concerned State Control Room is entrusted with the task of continuously transmitting to the Central Relief Commissioner, the developments taking place in the disaster situation, and implementation of relief measures. The District Control Room is responsible for the day to day maintenance of the rescue and relief operations on a continuous basis. The Emergency Operations Centre is to facilitate efficient mobilisation of personnel and resources, communication of information, interaction with the concerned level of government, be it centre, state or district, as well as the public. We shall be discussing more about this in Unit 13 of this Course.

India Meteorological Department

India Meteorological Department (IMD) monitors meteorological information and continuously communicates with disaster managers for disaster preparedness. Meteorological disasters occur due to variability in precipitation over the region (snowfall, hailstorm, floods and heavy rains, drought), temperature prevailing over the region (heat wave, cold wave), atmospheric convective activity over the region (thunderstorms, cyclone), wind prevailing over the region (squall, gale, dust storm), electrification of the atmosphere (lightning and forest fires). IMD also monitors geology-related disasters such as earthquake, landslides, and snow avalanches.

IMD uses latest technologies like remote sensing, satellite communication, Geographical Information System (GIS) etc. It has monitoring stations throughout the length and breadth of the country. It does forecasting of tropical cyclones. The goal of the warning system is to maximise the number of people who take appropriate and timely action for the safety of life and property. All warning systems start with detection of the event and with people getting out of harm’s way. Detection systems are entrusted with detection and warning, communication and response function.

IMD has installed 250 Cyclone Warning Dissemination Systems in the cyclone-prone areas of east and west coast. The general public, the coastal residents and fishermen are warned through the government machinery and broadcast of warnings through AIR, Television and other means. The IMD, after the tsunami has upgraded the existing seismological observatory at Port Blair with a state-of-the-art broadband seismograph system. A network of five temporary field observatories has been established at Baratang, Havelok, Port Blair, Hut-Bay and Campbell Bay. Permanent observatories have been planned at Diglipur, Campbell Bay, Car Nicobar, Havelok and Titaije (Parsai, 2005).

Central Water Commission

The Central Water Commission (CWC) provides flood forecasting and warnings. The flood forecasting network of the CWC covers all the major flood-prone inter-state river basins in the country. There are 166 flood forecasting stations on various rivers in the
country. Flood forecasting and warning system is used for alerting the likely damage to centres well in advance of the actual arrival of floods, to enable the people to move and also to remove the moveable property to safer places or to platforms specially constructed for the purpose.

**Bureau of Indian Standards**

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has laid down the standards for construction in seismic zones, popularly known as Building Codes. The building construction in urban and suburban areas is regulated by the Town and Country Planning Acts and Building Regulations. Each state and even towns have their different Acts and regulations and many times they do not incorporate safe standards as laid down in BIS codes. The knowledge of seismically safe construction among engineers and architects is also being imparted. Masons are being trained to construct earthquake safe houses. New technologies have been evolved for construction of safe yet economical houses in rural areas.

### 8.5 ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

At the state level, disaster response, relief and rehabilitation are handled by the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation. The focus of this department has generally been provision of post-calamity relief. The Chief Secretary is responsible for relief operations in the state and the Relief Commissioner and Additional Relief Commissioners function under the Chief Secretary’s direction and control. Most of the states have Relief Commissioners but in some states, the Secretary, Department of Revenue is in charge of relief operations. The Government of India is working with state governments to convert the Department of Relief & Rehabilitation into Department of Disaster Management with an increased area of responsibility including disaster preparedness. Uttaranchal is the first state to have a separate Department of Disaster Management. Seven other state governments / union territories have also introduced this change. The government of Rajasthan has re-designated the department as Disaster and Relief. Other states are also bringing about these changes.

Three state governments have established specialised agencies to deal with disasters. These are Orissa State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) and Delhi Disaster Management Authority. The central government has instructed other state governments to set up disaster management authorities under the Chief Minister with ministers of relevant departments as members. The objective of setting up these authorities is to ensure that disaster preparedness is seen as the joint responsibility of all the concerned departments.

The Disaster Management Act 2005 provides for a State Disaster Management Authority to be constituted by the State Government. It shall consist of the chairperson and such number of other members, not exceeding nine as may be prescribed by the State Government. Unless the rules otherwise provide, the Chief Minister of the State shall be the chairperson in an *ex-officio* capacity.

The states have been advised to restructure/re-group the officers/staff within the Department of Disaster Management with definite functions to pursue the holistic approach to disaster management. The states have a State Crisis Management Committee (SCMC) under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary and representatives form the concerned departments and organisations of the state and central government departments located in the state. The Committee reviews the action taken for response and relief and gives necessary guidelines
Disaster Preparedness

A Control Room is established under the Relief Commissioner in the capitals of states and union territories. The Control Room keeps continuous contact with climate monitoring and forecasting agencies and coordinates the action of various agencies.

In 29 State level training institutes, there is a separate faculty for disaster management. These are directly supported by Ministry of Home Affairs. The State Training Institutes take up several focused training programmes for different target groups within the state. Assistance to the state level training institutes is provided by the National Institute of Disaster Management in the development of training capsules / modules for different functionaries at different levels.

Several state governments also have introduced the curriculum pertaining to disaster management for Classes VII to X in the syllabus of Central Board of Secondary Education. Some states are setting up specialist teams for responding to disasters. The state governments’ search and rescue teams are being constituted from state police and these are being equipped to meet disasters. Each state government has relief manuals / codes which identify the role of each officer in the state for managing the disasters. These are reviewed and updated periodically based on the experience of managing the disasters and changing needs of the state.

States like Maharashtra have also drafted the District Disaster Management Action Plans for all its districts. The usefulness of such plans, of course, will depend on their periodic revision and updation. As we have discussed in this Unit, a Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been set up in each State as per the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission. The size of the CRF has been fixed by the Finance Commission after taking into account the expenditure on relief and rehabilitation over the past ten years. Twenty per cent is contributed by the respective states and balance by the Central government. The Calamity Relief Fund is administered by a State Level Committee headed by the Chief Secretary of the state government. The size of this fund is determined on the basis of vulnerability of the state to different natural calamities and the magnitude of expenditure incurred by the state on relief operations.

8.6 ROLE OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The district level is the focal point for disaster management activities at the field level. The Collector and District Magistrate is the chief administrator in the district. The Collector/Deputy Commissioner is the focal point for all disaster management activities. A District Level Coordination and Relief Committee is constituted and is headed by the Collector as Chairman with participation from all related government and non-government organisations and departments in addition to the elected representatives. These committees are being re-constituted or re-designated as Disaster Management Committees with officers from relevant departments being added as members. The district heads and departments engaged in development shall also be a part of this Committee so that disaster mitigation and preparedness are mainstreamed into the district plan.

The Collector is required to maintain close liaison with the district and State Governments as well as the nearest units of Armed Forces, Central police organisations and other relevant Central Government organisations such as Ministries of Communications, Water Resources, Drinking Water, Surface Transport, who could support the efforts of the district administration in the rescue and relief operations.
The Collector and coordination Committee functioning under the District Collector review preparedness measures prior to an impending hazard strike. As all the departments of the state government and district level report to the Collector, there is an effective coordination mechanism ensuring holistic response. A contingency plan for the district for various disasters is generally formulated by the Collector/Deputy Commissioner, which is approved by the State Government. Presently District Disaster Management Plans have been prepared in many districts and in other districts they are being prepared.

The District Disaster Management Plan would facilitate the preparedness, response, relief and rehabilitation activities. It outlines the institutional framework with clear cut roles and responsibilities for various agencies at the district level and below for various types of disasters.

The Disaster Management Act 2005 provides for setting up of a District Disaster Management Authority in each district by the State. It shall consist of a Chairperson and such number of other members, not exceeding seven as determined by the State Government. The Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner shall be the ex-officio Chairperson.

8.7 ROLE OF SUB-DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Each district for the purpose of administration is sub-divided into Blocks and Taluqas and Disaster Management Committees at these levels are being created. One hundred sixty nine districts in 17 States have been identified as multi-hazard prone. The Committees are being first constituted in these districts. A district is generally subdivided into sub-divisions and Tehsils or Talukas. The head of a sub-division is the sub-division officer (SDO), while the head of a Tehsil is variously known as Tehsildar or Talukdar or Mamlatdar. The village officer or Pahvari is in-charge of a certain number of villages. On the occurrence of a disaster, the district administrative machinery becomes operational.

Next level of administration is the village level. At the village level in these 169 identified districts, Disaster Management Committees and Disaster Management Teams are being constituted. Eventually each village will have a Disaster Management Plan. The Disaster Management Committee which draws up the plan consists of elected representatives at the village level, local authorities, government functionaries including doctors / para-medics of primary health centres located in the village, primary school teachers etc. The Disaster Management Teams at the village level will consist of members of voluntary organisations such as Nehru Yuva Kendra and other non-governmental organisations as well as able-bodied volunteers from the village. The teams are provided basic training in evacuation, search and rescue etc. The Disaster Management Committee will review the disaster management plan at least once in a year.

Under the UNDP assisted Disaster Risk Management Programme, Disaster Management Plans for about 3500 villages, 250 Gram Panchayats and 60 blocks were prepared till February 2004. Elected representatives of over 8000 Panchayati Raj Institutions have been trained apart from members of voluntary organisations. Over 20,000 government functionaries were also trained in disaster preparedness under the programme. More than 600 master trainers and 1000 teachers have been trained in different districts in disaster preparedness and they are expected to train others.
8.8 CONCLUSION

Disaster preparedness needs to be an integral part of development process for sustainable development. In all new government projects, ten per cent of project costs are being earmarked for disaster preparedness. Disaster preparedness and management is the responsibility of the respective state governments. In case of severe disasters, central government collaborates, coordinates and assists the state governments.

The Natural Disaster Management Division (NDM) in the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for all natural disasters, except drought which is allocated to Agriculture Ministry. The Government of India has an ongoing UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme. The National Institute of Disaster Management is involved in policy research, training and consultancy.

Disaster Management Committees are being set up from village, gram panchayat, block, district, state to national levels. Similarly, Disaster Management Plans have been prepared and are being prepared at all these levels. Disaster Management Cells are there in State Administrative Training Institutes, which also undertake research, teaching and bring out publications in local language. As evident from the discussion in the Unit, the entire administrative machinery in the present times is getting integrated in the rendering of activities pertaining to disaster management.

8.9 KEY CONCEPTS

Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) : It is one of the area development programmes launched by the government in 1973-74, to tackle the special problems faced by those fragile areas which are constantly affected by severe drought conditions. The programme aims at minimizing the adverse effects of drought on the production of crops, livestock and productivity of land, water and human resources leading to the drought-proofing of the affected areas.

Desert Development Programme (DDP) : This was launched in 1977 on the recommendations of the National Commission of Agriculture. The aim is to control the desertification process and raise the productivity of these areas. The programme intends to control severity of drought through measures such as land shaping and development, afforestation, dry land framing, agro-forestry, construction of check dams etc.

Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA) : The programme which is being implemented since 1993 aims at development of jhum areas (involved in shifting cultivation) on watershed basis, reclaiming the land affected by shifting cultivation and socio-economic development of jhum families so as to encourage them for settled agriculture. The objective is to let the shifting cultivation go for settled cultivation.
National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA): Watershed is a geo-hydrological unit of an area draining to a common outlet point. It is recognised as an ideal unit for planning and development of land, water and vegetation resources. National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas focuses on construction on check dams, water harvesting structures, desilting of village ponds, treatment of drainage lines, land leveling, agro-forestry.

### 8.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- The *Hindu*, 27 October, 2005.

### Websites

1) [http://www.gsdma.org](http://www.gsdma.org)
2) [http://www.ndm.india.nic.in](http://www.ndm.india.nic.in)
3) [http://www.idm.gov.in](http://www.idm.gov.in)
4) [http://www.osdma.org](http://www.osdma.org)

### 8.11 ACTIVITIES

1) In your local area, attempt to find out who is the government official responsible for disaster preparedness, and about the key functionaries in different departments entrusted with the task of disaster management in your area and about their roles.

2) Enquire whether there is a Emergency Operations Centre (Control Room) in the vicinity of your area? If yes, what are its contact telephone numbers? Who is the officer responsible of EOC? Has any disaster preparedness plan been prepared for your area? If yes, make efforts to study it. In your opinion what improvements could be made in the disaster preparedness plan?