UNIT 4  DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR
PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/
VULNERABLE GROUPS

Structure

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4.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

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

- Analyse the impact of disasters on vulnerable groups
- Assess the vulnerability of women to disasters
- Explain the role of women in disaster preparedness activities; and
  Highlight the preparedness strategies for vulnerable groups.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Disasters when occur, have a severe impact on all sections of the society. But globally, it is observed that it is certain sections who are more susceptible. These vulnerable sections lack resources and are deprived of basic necessities, that exposes them to the adverse effects. Preparedness activity, is to be holistic that takes into consideration, the hazards the vulnerable are exposed to, existing resources, capacities and capabilities and attempt to harness their potentials. They need to be integrated in the overall disaster management process. The general tendency is to overlook the contribution of vulnerable groups and consider them more as victims. The process of disaster preparedness needs to involve all segments of society, bring out their strengths and transform them into a useful resource. This Unit attempts to examine the impact of disasters on vulnerable groups, preparedness aspects with particular reference to women, and bring out the preparedness strategies for those with special needs,
4.2 DISASTERS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

In any disaster, it is the vulnerable sections of society who are more adversely affected. These include, women especially the pregnant, lactating mothers and children including newborn and infants, old and infirm people, physically challenged, destitutes, landless, and poor farmers.

Disasters affect the communities in different ways. Livelihoods are the most important which bear the impact. For instance, the drought situation in many states in India such as Rajasthan and Gujarat witnesses migration to nearby states especially urban areas. This situation takes its toll on the health of undernourished who are compelled to undertake heavy physical work. Agriculture being the primary livelihood source in many states, any disaster that affects this sector, it leads to serious consequences. There is always lack or under development of secondary and tertiary sectors such as agro-based industries and processing units in many rural areas. The traditional arts and crafts industries also receive a setback.

Research studies have indicated that disasters affect the lives of poor in drastic ways. These include:

- Losses especially from agriculture.
- Disruption of agriculture cycle.
- A fall in the purchasing power of population.
- Distress sale of assets.
- Migration of population.
- Increase in large number of women-headed households.

The earthquake that struck Gujarat in 2001, resulted in severe loss of livelihood, as most of the rural areas, were already facing the impact of drought. The earthquake affected agriculture to a considerable extent as the bore wells, and pump sets were damaged. There has also been loss of livestock which had impact on milk production. This deprived several families of valuable source of nutrition as well as income. The crafts production also declined as work sheds were destroyed.

A study on the impact of drought on livelihoods in Rajasthan (2000) has reflected the measures resorted to by vulnerable groups in meeting the situation. The cattle were sold at lower prices. The jewellery was sold or mortgaged by the women. There was a remarkable fall in the consumption of food by poor that ultimately resulted in malnutrition and other illnesses affecting the working potential of the poor. With the gradual disposing off, of their productive assets, the vulnerable groups became exposed to several crises.

Disasters, which strike without warning are traumatic for children. It creates fear in their minds about injuries, getting separated from the family or being left alone. The tsunami that occurred in December 2004 has witnessed many such instances. The severity of a child's reaction to disaster depends on several risk factors which include exposure to the event, personal injury or loss of a close relative, dislocation from the home or community, the level of physical destruction, etc. Children can be under post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This can result in irritability, aggressiveness, fear, anxiety, withdrawal, etc.

Women who were with their children when the tsunami struck but were unable to save them have suffered the most. Among children, anxiety and panic feelings of insecurity,
refusal to leave their parents and go to school have manifested in the form of nightmares and disturbed sleep. Those who saw their siblings or friends washed away or lost close family members or those orphaned and shifted are especially vulnerable (The Hindu, 2005). The old and physically challenged are exposed to the vagaries of disasters in several such ways.

The question of assessing the preparedness needs brings forth the issue of who are the most vulnerable within the group affected by disasters. This activity is required as preparedness measures need to take into consideration the specific requirements of these sections. For instance for the poor, sustainability of livelihoods is an important pre-condition for development. Micro-credit, self-help groups and various other activities etc., play an important role. Hence, preparedness has to encompass these measures. If we take the case of ensuring safety of elderly people in disasters, it relates to provision of appropriate shelter, food, the old age homes, mobile medicare units etc. With regard to the children, elderly and physically challenged, preparedness centres around a family, community-based disaster preparedness plan, making them aware of the hazards they are exposed to, recognising danger signals, teaching effective coping strategies, fostering supportive relationships, focusing on their resilience, developing peer support, friendship etc.

Disaster preparedness for physically challenged people is an area which needs to be addressed especially in developing countries. In developed countries such as USA, there are several organisations that cater to the needs of this section of the society. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has provided clear cut guidelines. Emphasis is laid on creating a nature of physically challenged groups, describing their specific needs in disaster situation, formulating an evacuation plan, practicing the disaster plan etc.

Experiences from many developing countries including India indicate that women are the most vulnerable groups in a household. In the tsunami that occurred in December 2004, official figures from Tamil Nadu reveal that 2406 women died as compared with 1833 men. In some villages all the dead were women. In Sri Lanka, although the government had not disaggregated the data along gender lines, Oxfam found that the same pattern repeated itself. A common thread runs through the different regions that explains this. Women were at home on that Sunday morning while the men were either out in their boats at sea and therefore escaped the waves or were away from the shore doing other chores. Women stayed behind to help the children and the elderly when the waves struck. Also there is another common factor. Women did not have the strength to hold on to a child and also hang on to a tree or some thing else to save themselves from being battered to death (Sharma, 2005).

We shall be discussing these aspects and in specific the required disaster preparedness measures in the next section.

4.3 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND WOMEN

In disaster situations, generally it is the women who suffer the most. Their nutritional status, mobility, access to information is less as compared to men especially in poorer sections of the society. In the event of death or physical disability of men arising out of the disasters, it is the women who shoulder the responsibilities. Though in many developing countries, women's role in emergency planning, risk assessment etc., is not much or at times totally absent, still, women display tremendous courage, resilience and
necessary skills, in crisis. It is women, who come forward to provide care to the affected family members, and arrange for food, water and fuel for the families affected by disasters.

Duryog Nivaran, a network of individuals and organisations working in South Asia set up in 1994, is committed to promoting the alternative perspective on disasters and vulnerability as a basis for disaster mitigation in the region. The network's membership includes institutions and individuals from research, academic, and training institutions from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

In one of the workshops conducted by Duryog Nivaran (1996) six Case Studies from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were presented which focused on the empowerment of women in handling the crises. Women, it was brought out are the greatest victims of disasters in the developing countries. The specific needs and situation of women and children it was felt, need to be addressed. These include privacy, separate toilets and other sanitary facilities in temporary camps, presence of female relief workers etc.

Women, especially rural women, are considered to have a repertoire of conventional and traditional wisdom, which has to be taken cognisance of, instead of relying on only external knowledge and methods. The situation of women in emergency situations reflects their position in the household and in the society. In many ways this makes them extremely vulnerable during these periods. Because they are confined to their homes the warning signals often do not reach them in time. The inability to understand the language of the warning systems and through them the gravity of the situation, make these women even more vulnerable. Many of the emergency shelters in Bangladesh are not designed in a way that women can meet their personal needs in a culturally acceptable way. Men get the first place in the queues that provide food. Women-headed households are particularly vulnerable. Their needs are not considered when government or relief agencies make priority lists. Single women with no adult men in their families are often deprived of relief, food and other items (Fernando and Fernando, 1996).

The specific needs of women are generally not taken care of. For instance, the appropriate location of washrooms, separate toilets for women in relief camps, their security and safety are generally neglected. Women possess the required organisational and managerial skills to gear towards facing as well as managing their households in disaster situation. The following Case Studies strengthen this perspective.

In Bangladesh, where frequent flooding is a regular feature in most parts of the country, women take on the role of preparing and storing food items, which can be the source of energy and nutrition for the family for days when the floods come. As studies have shown, in Faridpur, women prepare a mixture of puffed rice and dried coconuts for this purpose, secured in appropriate packaging, safe from flood waters. This is a food item which, has a long durable quality, and gives sufficient energy when consumed in small quantities. Women in this area also ensure that their meagre belongings such as clothing and bedding are stored in such a way that they can be easily removed when floodwaters rise.

Women in Jhang area in Punjab (Pakistan), have mastered the skills to survive floods through generations. While male members of the family take the livestock to protective embankments or distant places, and arrange for their fodder, women make preparations to take care of the children, the valuables, and the cooking utensils. It is the women who make provision for food to support the family during the floods, and preserve seeds for the next cultivation season.
In the dry zone of Sri Lanka, people face scarcity of food and water during the long dry periods. Women, as regular managers of the food and water take care of the needs of the family, resort to various mechanisms to survive the difficult conditions. Families, who generally take three meals of rice a day, change the composition of the meals to reduce the rice consumption; millet, corn and other cheaper and less favourable food grains are introduced to substitute rice. As drought advances, the number of meals taken for a day is reduced, in order to preserve the available food grains. ‘Rice Seettu’ (5-10 families get together to contribute with a given quantity of rice to a common pot every week/month. The collection is accessed by each family on a rotating basis) organised by women in the drought-affected villages is a common practice, to avoid the risk of starvation of the family. In Andarawewa, it was noted, that women also get into seettu, where small amounts of cash is contributed. Generally, under normal circumstances, when it is their turn to collect the lump sum of money, women are in the habit of purchasing special items such as furniture, crockery for the house, or long awaited items of jewellery, with this money. However in Andarawewa, many women went into seettu to collect money to purchase large plastic barrels, to collect and preserve water to meet their family’s water requirements during the long dry periods.

A study on floods in Jolpur, Bangladesh vindicates that, with floods, most of the drinking-water sources go under water. Women take considerable risks to procure drinking water from great distances, walking through chest-high water or swimming to collect fresh and clean water. The study also noted that women use various techniques to take water out of the tube wells so as not to mix it with flood water, and to purify the water, in the absence of fuel wood. (Nasreen, 2000).

In procuring food for the family during flood emergencies, women manage the risk of starvation through various means; by gathering edible wild plants, and rotten or discarded vegetables. Often, the collection of food from common land was women’s work. The study also observes that the social networks of women provide emergency survival support during floods. For instance, food items, fuel, bedding, and material for makeshift household purposes are borrowed on loan or given as charity. Borrowing of food or minor items is not identified as a man’s responsibility and, asking for help from others is looked down, as beneath his dignity. The study also noted that men often sat idle or moved elsewhere, leaving their household members behind. It was left to the women to take the responsibility for protecting children and other members of the family, livestock, and belongings (ibid.).

In Jhang, Punjab, Pakistan, in the aftermath of floods when affected people return to their destroyed houses, male members usually start rehabilitation work on agricultural land and in caring for livestock. Women share responsibilities with them in the handling of animals and in the rebuilding of houses, which involves preparing mud and doing construction work. (Hameed, 2001).

A research conducted in the earthquake-hit Gujarat in 2001 records the role women played in post-quake reconstruction. Women were found to be engaged in rubble clearing, in masonry for reconstruction, as well as in community work. They were taking part in community meetings about the quake, and were meeting other villagers to address the drought issues, which were also affecting the earthquake-hit areas in Gujarat. Women were seen taking extra efforts to bring the situation back to normal, to ensure a sense of security for the families for the community (Enarson, 2001).
Banaskantha, situated in the North of Gujarat in India is a drought-prone and arid area where the unpredictability of rainfall results in long drought spells. Lack of water is the main problem threatening the livelihoods of the people in this area. The main occupation is agriculture, and livestock is an essential part of the farming system, providing the main source of transport, power for agriculture, food during scarcity, and a source of cash income. The community falls back on livestock as a resource when the rains fail and crop cultivation is affected. In the long drought spells when families are forced to migrate in search of food and water, they also take their animals with them.

The responsibility for ensuring fodder for livestock lies mainly with women. Having assessed the threats and disruptions to their livelihoods from drought, women have formed themselves into a cooperative to ensure fodder security for animals during the dry spells, and it is managed by the women in the village. As a result of this initiative they are not dependent on relief during the drought periods, increase their capacity to support their own livelihoods (Bhatt, 1997).

Women do play a key role in the disaster preparedness activities. Their capacities need to be strengthened. One has to appreciate the concerns of vulnerable groups and especially the policy makers and administration need to accommodate these. Also efforts are required to provide necessary resources, information, skills to enable them make a positive change in risk reduction. Their specific needs need to be reflected in disaster preparedness measures.

4.4 VULNERABLE GROUPS AND PREPAREDNESS STRATEGIES

There are attempts to reduce the vulnerability of the groups, through various strategies especially strengthening their employment and livelihood options. In India, many schemes are operational and we shall discuss them in brief.

Food for Work Programme

One of the most important and effective instrumentalities for drought is the Food for Work Programme (FFWP) launched by the Government of India in January 2001. Under the programme, food grains were made available free of cost to the drought-affected states for employment generation. The states were given flexibility to provide food grains between 2-5 Kilograms per day and decide the price of these food grains for Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) population for the purpose of calculating the wages component in cash and kind.

Health and Nutrition Care

Disasters result in health and nutrition problems for the vulnerable sections viz., children, pregnant and nursing mothers, aged, infirm and destitute. This aspect was given equal importance. Various states are advised to take special care of the health and nutrition of the people particularly the vulnerable sections through different programmes of Mid-Day Meal Scheme for school children, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) for children and women, and Old Age Pension Scheme.
Integrated Child Development Scheme

This scheme is implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development. The food grains allotted under this scheme are utilised by the States/UTs under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) for providing nutritious energy food to children below six years of age and expectant/lactating women.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution makes allocation of food grains requested for by the nodal department. Further distribution of the allotted quantities is done by the nodal department, based on the requests received from the respective States/UTs. At the ground level, the scheme is implemented by the respective States/UTs. This scheme during distress has immensely helped women.

There are a number of regular programmes under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. These programmes are Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme, Employment Assurance Scheme, Jawahar Gramin Samridhi Yojana, Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, National Old Age Pension, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and like. All these programmes are utilised in drought mitigation and drought proofing. The convergence of these Centrally Sponsored Schemes with other policy initiatives can be an effective mechanism for providing relief for vulnerable sections of the society.

Several programmes have been launched in the aftermath of cyclone in Orissa in 1999, especially the Livelihood and Employment Restoration Programme, Food for Work Programme in farm and non-farm sectors. The livelihood sources that were addressed include supply of seeds and fertilisers, livestock rearing, agriculture tools and implements etc. The objective has been to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of society.

Disaster preparedness measures need to aim at sustainable livelihood programme. This has to keep in view the existing socio-economic conditions, occupational patterns, prevailing infrastructure facilities, local traditions, myths and traditional wisdom. The overall aim of sustainable livelihood policy should be to transform the present livelihood patterns in such a manner that it is able to ensure multi-level security systems. It must have food security, work security, social security and water security.

Micro-finance

Many existing financial tools and safety nets play an important role in reducing the vulnerability of hazard-prone population, particularly the poorest of the poor. Micro-finance can effectively be used to enhance disaster risk management by reducing vulnerability and increasing coping mechanisms. Micro-credit, micro-insurance, savings and other safety nets can contribute to disaster risk reduction and build on or expand traditional disaster and risk coping strategies.

In India Self Employed Women's Association provides micro-finance and safety nets to increase disaster resilience among the rural poor of Gujarat. As a long term response to the earthquake, SEWA together with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Gujarat, launched Jeevika which is a seven-year livelihood security project for earthquake-affected rural household in Gujarat. Contrary to typical disaster responses, Jeevika aims to rebuild livelihoods rather than provide relief. The Project embraces an
integrated demand driven and need-based approach to implement a comprehensive rural development agenda.

In Jeevika’s approach that prioritises livelihood reconstruction and strengthening as the major elements of disaster relief and mitigation, micro-finance plays a key role. Micro-finance and financial management build the capacities of communities and individuals to cope with recurrent crisis and enables them to achieve greater livelihood security. The first step in introducing financial management as a disaster mitigation strategy in the project area is to inculcate a culture of savings among the rural poor as a form of “self-insurance” which they can rely on to smooth consumption and meet production needs, and savings, the benefits of non-crisis periods to cover the crisis or drought periods.

Jeevika’s micro-finance interventions in the area are aimed at strengthening ex-ante coping strategies and providing easy access to affordable credit as a better ex-post coping strategy. By organising women into Swashrayee Mandalas which provide them with access to loans through internal lending, Jeevika attempts to reduce vulnerability. The Mandals are an effective delivery mechanisms for credit and relief services as they have established relationships and delivery channels.

A small booklet titled ‘Women’s participation in disaster relief and recovery’ (2005) sets out some interesting observations on disasters, their impact on women and the role women can play in the recovery process. It looks at the interventions of two NGOs in India and Turkey and their work with the women affected by the earthquake. The foundation for the support of women’s work (KEDV) in Turkey worked with women to overcome infrastructure problems. For instance, instead of waiting endlessly for electricians and plumbers, the women themselves got trained in these skills. They also began to save and plan for permanent shelters and learnt about earthquake-resistant features in a building from the women from the earthquake areas in India. The women also conducted their own surveys to find out the needs of affected families thereby equipping themselves with essential data when they negotiated with government agencies for specific needs such as housing.

Capacity Building

In Andhra Pradesh, twenty NGOs involved in disaster management train children to recognise cyclone warnings and act on them, build floating devices, rescue and treat the injured and get people safely into cyclone shelters. This early training forms part of the Community-based Disaster Preparedness Programme (CBPDP) being carried out by a network of local NGOs, Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts (CADME) with support from Oxfam Great Britain.

The children are taught the importance of acting immediately after a cyclone warning is broadcast on local radio. They are trained in rescue and evacuation activities, providing first aid and performing artificial respiration disaster drills are conducted by dividing children into various teams. The children divide themselves into their respective teams to warn, build floating devices, rescue, treat the injured and get others safely into cyclone shelters.

Disasters affect the poor and weak who are easily vulnerable but it is the weakest of the weak viz. children, women, infirm and destitute who are the most affected. In situations of scarcity, particularly the food consumption of these sections comes under threat and within households, these sections are required to cut on their food security for the young and the male members who are required to earn the bread for the family. Disasters,
especially repeated droughts set in malnutrition and hinder the physical and mental growth. This is one area, which has not been given so much importance and it would be worthwhile to work out strategies which would help in providing support to these vulnerable sections during the distress period. The effectiveness of the programmes like ICDS, Mid-day Meal Scheme need to be evaluated on their effectiveness and coverage. After these appraisals, it should be possible to carry out necessary changes in the programme contents and delivery systems to improve the impact especially during periods of distress.

Disaster preparedness for vulnerable sections needs to focus on:

- Sustainable livelihood programmes.
- Guaranteeing dignity and right to live.
- Special shelters especially for women and children, elderly and physically challenged.
- Building up a cadre of female relief workers.
- Training of women volunteers and children in preparedness activities including first aid, evacuation, search and rescue etc.

The UN Secretary General’s Report on Protecting the Vulnerable: Implementing the Millennium Declaration presented on 7 September 2004 has emphasised on the need to help the vulnerable categories of people. According to the report, in the Millennium Declaration, world leaders declared their commitment to ensuring, that children and all civilian population that suffer disproportionately the consequences of natural disasters, genocide, armed conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies are given every assistance and protection so that they can resume normal life as soon as possible. The pledges made in the Declaration regarding protecting the vulnerable remain as important as ever for achieving the vision of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world that was articulated by the Millennium Summit a few years ago.

Addressing Vulnerabilities in Emergencies

Interventions geared towards mitigating the adverse effects of disasters and crises are a vital part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. After all, it is the poor, the vulnerable and the oppressed who are the most affected by environmental degradation, natural hazards or the eruption of violent conflict. They are also the most likely to suffer the consequences in the form of death and displacement and the systematic loss of development gains.

The terrible consequences of disasters resulting from environmental hazards continue to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of the world’s poor. In 2003 alone, 600 million people were adversely affected by 700 natural occurrences, which caused economic losses exceeding US$ 65 billion. Approximately 75,000 people perished in those disasters – 30,000 of them were killed in seconds by the earthquakes in Algeria in May 2003 and in Bam, Iran, in December 2003.

A number of emerging trends suggest that the frequency of and vulnerability to such hazards will only get worse. The Earth’s climate is very likely to change over in the decades to come • the result of increase in the concentration of atmospheric greenhouse gases caused by human activity and short sighted government policies. In addition, there are the dangers of rising sea levels, as well as increased variability in rainfall and
temperature levels, resulting in floods, droughts, hurricanes and tornadoes. The likely socio-economic outcomes are not favourable and include changes in agricultural production patterns that in turn will have negative implications for livelihoods and migration trends. The ensuing competition for control of natural resources may exacerbate tensions between groups.

Growing vulnerability to natural hazards will also have significant implications for humanitarian and development actors. Poor countries will be least able to reduce the impact of droughts, flooding or disease; the resulting dependence on life-saving responses may divert time, energy and resources from activities that address long-term goals.

The events of the past twelve months serve as evidence that attention to risk-reduction and prevention strategies can curb vulnerability to natural hazards. Widespread flooding across South Asia in July 2004, although severe and deadly for many, had a severe destructive impact than comparable flooding a few decades ago. The difference was the result of the increased attention that has been paid in recent years to ensuring local preparedness and building response capacities. Similarly, the focus by humanitarian and development partners and donors on addressing and funding the structural obstacles to food security in the Horn of Africa has averted a major famine from the drought cycle that began in 2002.

Such examples have raised awareness of the important place that risk reduction must hold in efforts to achieve sustainable development, giving rise to many United Nations, and government initiatives to integrate disaster reduction into development planning and action. For example, an initiative of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, supported by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, UNDP and the World Bank, resulted in the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was endorsed by African heads of State in Addis Ababa in July 2004.

In addition to the loss of lives and livelihoods that occur in war zones, prolonged violence significantly alters political, social and economic relations, with immediate as well as more long-term implications. While some undoubtedly benefit from warfare and, have a vested interest in its continuation, it is generally the weakest members of societies - civilians, women, children, the elderly, disabled, displaced and refugees - who suffer the most and depend on the support of humanitarian and other actors to survive. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, lawlessness, the breakdown of government services and the plight of professional expertise to sustain those services have led to the almost total collapse of health and education systems in the areas affected by conflict.

The bulk of United Nations, Red Cross and NGO relief efforts is, in principle, dedicated to those who are most vulnerable. It is no less important, however, to help affected communities as a whole to overcome the shocks and stresses that deplete their coping mechanisms. In this way, their ability to push for changes can be restored and they may emerge from the crisis and be on to the path of development.

Strengthening support and protection for the internally displaced and ensuring a more focused planning and funding of post crisis transition are some of the ways in which the international community and United Nations Member States can help to stabilise societies and create the environment in which sustainable development can take place.

Those initiatives, however, are simply first steps, and there is still much to be done. The international community must harmonise its transition planning and fund-raising tools, bring
more coherence to need assessments and build local institutions so that national actors can be involved in their own transition from the beginning. Member States should work to strengthen national laws and national policies to address the needs and protect the rights of the internally displaced, taking into account the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The report urged the need for maintaining access to vulnerable population, which is necessary for creating an enabling environment for development.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Disaster management activities and plans, in many countries, fail to examine the needs of vulnerable sections of society or those requiring special attention. Their demands go unnoticed. It is not the question of making a distinction between the roles of women and men. What is required is taking into account and recognising the specialised skills, strengths of these groups to cope with crisis and involve them in emergency preparedness, and response processes. These vulnerable sections need to be a part of community organisations. Preparedness measures as the Unit outlined, are to be tailored to their needs and efforts geared to make a dent in the poverty, oppression and deprivation faced by these groups.

4.6 KEY CONCEPTS

Antyodaya Anna Yojana: It has been launched in 2000 and the objective is to ensure food security amongst the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas. It contemplates identification of one crore below poverty line (BPL) families who would be provided food grains at the rate of 35 kg per family per month.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS): This is a major wage-employment generation programme in the rural areas. The EAS is basically meant for creation of additional employment opportunities during the period of acute shortage of wage employment through manual work for the rural poor living below the poverty line.

Food Security: It is considered as a situation where people have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life.

Jawahar Gramin Sramridhi Yojana (JGSM): This programme aims at creation of need-based rural infrastructure at the village level.

Micro-finance: These are small loans that help poor people who wish to start or expand their small businesses, but are not able to get banks to
Millennium Development Goals: In 2001, all 191 United Nations Member States made a commitment to achieve certain goals by 2015. These are:

a) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
b) Achieve universal primary education
c) Promote gender equality and empower women
d) Reduce child mortality
e) Improve maternal health
f) Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
g) Ensure environmental sustainability; and
h) Develop a global partnership for development

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): It is a disabling psychiatric disorder that survivors of disasters may suffer. It can manifest itself even several years after the disaster. It is estimated that nearly 50 to 80 per cent of the survivors of a major disaster suffer from this disorder. One of the main features of PTSD is re-experiencing the past trauma in nightmares or as flashbacks. The patient may feel guilt, humiliation, rejection, or face acute anxiety or panic attacks, disturbed sleep and lack of concentration. Another feature is emotional numbness where they develop a feeling of detachment and estrangement from others. A third feature is autonomic reactivity, which results in angry outbursts, difficulty in sleeping and hyper excitability.

Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY): This was launched in 2001 by the Ministry of Rural Development by merging the on-going schemes of Employment Assurance Scheme and Jawahar Grameen Samridhi Yojana. The programme aims at faster growth in the rural areas by providing a demand driven infrastructure and increasing employment opportunities.

4.7 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


Websites
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Enarson E, "We want work: Rural women in the Gujarat drought and earthquake (www.colorado.edu/hazards/gr)
www.unidr.org/World_camp/2005/case_study_4-Microfinance
www.infochange.india.org/Disasters

4.8 ACTIVITIES

1) Explain briefly how a variety of disasters affect certain vulnerable groups. Prepare a matrix to show (a) type of disaster, (b) affected group and (c) specific impact on the group.

2) Outline your ideas on strengthening women's role in disaster preparedness.