# UNIT 4    NEEDS AND DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

**Structure**

## 4.0    LERNING OUTCOME

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the overall practice of carrying out assessments for disasters/emergencies
- Distinguish between types of assessments
- Know the procedures for carrying out an assessment
- Understand the significance of collecting and reporting information on emergencies/disasters

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of any assessment is to provide information and recommendations to make timely decisions regarding disaster response. Assessments are conducted whenever there is uncertainty about the nature of an emergency response.

**WHAT ASSESSMENTS ARE**
Assessment is the appraisal of any given situation prior to an intervention. This involves not only determining what the situation is, but also the background of why it

is that way and what are the opportunities and risks which might affect any effort to change the situation. Assessment thus serves the purposes of (a) providing a basis for decisions on priority needs and optimal program response and (b) providing a baseline reference for future monitoring and evaluation activities.

Assessment is generally considered a kind of evaluation, known as *ex ante* evaluation ( a critical analysis which selects and ranks various solutions prior to program approval). However, in emergencies or very unstable contexts, re-establishing this form of baseline picture is frequently required to the point that assessments begin to merge with monitoring activity (e.g., annual needs assessments).

**WHAT ASSESMENTS DO**
- Identify the impact a disaster has had on a society, and the ability of that society to cope;
- Identify the most vulnerable populations, especially old people, women and children, that need to be targeted for assistance;
- Identify the most urgent food and non-food requirements and potential methods of providing them in the most effective manner;
- Identify the level of response by the affected country/community and its internal capacities to cope with the situation, including those of the affected population;
- Identify the priorities of the affected population and their preferred strategies for meeting those priorities;
- Identify the level of response from other donor countries, the United Nations Humanitarian Agencies, private voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations and international organizations;
- Identify which types of in-depth assessments should be undertaken and
- Highlight special concerns that would not immediately be evident to non-emergency persons;
- Make recommendations that define and prioritize the actions and resources needed for immediate response.

Assessments are usually carried out when:
- An area has become newly accessible;
- When a situation has changed dramatically and cannot be reflected in regular monitoring systems, because they cannot provide information quickly enough or have been wiped out;
- When information is required on an area or a population group not reached by existing reporting systems;
- When information required is of greater depth than can be provided by regular reporting systems (e.g., understanding the causes of a problem requiring qualitative information and probing).

Where assessments are used in this fashion, it is critical that they feed into a broader monitoring system, allowing some record and analysis of trends. It is also typical that in emergencies or unstable contexts, assessments tend to involve more interpretation and analysis at field level than traditional centralized monitoring tends to do. Depending on the capacity of the assessment team, assessment reports may include program recommendations in addition to findings and conclusions. Initial assessments should also provide baseline data as a reference for further monitoring. Monitoring systems should be identified so that relief officials are able to determine whether a situation is improving or deteriorating. The systems must also be able to provide a

means of measuring the effectiveness of relief activities. Each assessment or survey should be designed to build upon previous surveys and expand the data base.

## 4.2  TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment Teams collect two types of information: what has happened as a result of the disaster and what is needed. The type of information that is usually available first to an Assessment Team concerns the effects of the disaster. Collecting this information is referred to as "a situation-based or disaster assessment". It identifies the magnitude and extent of the disaster and its effects on the society.  For example, a typical disaster assessment following an earthquake would be attempting to find answers to following questions:

**ILLUSTRATION: QUESTIONS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT OF DAMAGE**

1       How many persons have died?
2       How many injured?
3       What is the nature of injuries sustained?
4       How many houses have collapsed?
5       How many houses are partially damaged?
6       To whom do these collapsed/partially damaged houses belong?
7       What damage is caused to the public structures (like schools, hospitals, government offices, key installations etc.)?
8       How has the quake affected people's daily activities including earning opportunities?

The other information gathered is a needs assessment. It defines the level and type of assistance required for the affected population. It should be noted that the gathering of information for the situation assessment and needs assessment can be done together. The information collected in the initial assessment is the basis for determining the type and the amount of relief needed during the immediate response phase of the disaster. It may also identify the need for continued monitoring and reassessing of the unfolding disaster.

## 4.2.1 Situation or Disaster/Emergency Assessment

This assessment collects information on the magnitude of the disaster and the extent of its impact on both the population and the infrastructure of the society. Typical contents of such assessments include:

1       location and size of the area affected by the disaster
2       number of persons affected by the disaster
3       mortality and morbidity rates
4       characteristics and condition of the affected population
5       major health concerns with types of injuries and illness
6       emergency medical, health, nutritional, water, sanitation, shelter, education and livelihood support situation
7       extent of continuing or emerging threats
8       damage to infrastructure and critical support facilities
9       damage to homes and commercial structures

10      damage to agriculture and food supply system
11      damage to economic resources, and social organization
12      vulnerability of the population to continuing or expanding impacts of the disaster over the coming weeks and months
13      level of response by the affected country and internal capacities to cope with the situation
14      level of response from other donor countries and organizations.

## 4.2.2      Needs Assessment

The initial needs assessment identifies resources and services for immediate emergency measures to save and sustain the lives of the affected population. It is conducted at the site of a disaster or at the location of a displaced population. A quick response based on this information is aimed at helping reduce excessive death rates, and stabilize the nutritional, health and living conditions among the population at risk. A quick response to urgent needs must never be delayed because a comprehensive assessment has not yet been completed.

## 4.2.3      In-depth or Sectoral Assessment

In-depth assessment may refer to both situation-based and needs assessment. An in-depth assessment usually starts after the initial surveys and covers critical sectors (like food supply, water distribution system, nutrition, shelter and personal household needs, livelihood support, water and sanitation, health care, education, transportation, communication, agricultural activities, electric power, roads and bridges etc.).  These have to be addressed for medium and longer term relief as well as rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance. In-depth assessments are carried out by specialists in the sectors concerned.

## 4.2.4      General Characteristics of Assessments

Following are the general characteristics of all assessments:

- An assessment is only a "snapshot in time".
- Information changes over time and the significance of information changes too.
- If a disaster manager can identify the unfolding scenarios, monitoring will ultimately be more important than assessment.
- What you cannot see is often more important than what you can see.
- It is vital to use the first assessment to establish an ongoing data collection and analysis system.
- Most reports should be iterative, not detailed.
- The initial assessment should provide information that feeds directly into the program planning process.
- Timing of the report is vital. Without a point of reference, most assessment data are of little value.

## 4.3    TECHNIQUES OF ASSESSMENT

The techniques outlined in this section form the steps and key considerations for organizing an assessment. These are equally relevant for an initial rapid assessment or a larger more detailed assessment. Depending on time available, these could be shortened or elaborated up on.

## 4.3.1 Preparatory Planning

Given the rush of multiple agencies to the site following a disaster, it is essential to coordinate with key partners (like the concerned government departments, international humanitarian agencies, NGOs and Community Based Organizations) before the need for a rapid assessment arises. Such coordination with partners avoids duplication and provides a basis for all of the subsequent steps, particularly information sharing.

It is also essential to (a) discuss with partners and find out what information they need from the assessment and (b) prioritize information needs by considering how the results of the assessment are going to be used.

It is advisable to seek expert advice from survey specialists, statisticians and epidemiologists. By preparing to undertake assessments well in advance of an emergency, both the data required and the process most appropriate for its accurate and speedy collection can be identified and refined prior to the emergency.

Proper design of sampling and survey methods can increase substantially the accuracy and usefulness of assessment data. Standard survey techniques, questionnaires, checklists and procedures should be prepared to ensure that all areas are examined and that the information is reported using standard terminology and classifications. Further, consideration of local factors, social organization and hierarchies of power at this stage can help greatly in formulating interview methods and identifying useful sources of information.

An excellent measure of preparedness is writing up a brief assessment plan. Even where the assessment is rapid, what is needed is a clear and concise statement of the assessment objectives, a synopsis of what is known (relevant information available), and details about the information to be collected (what, how, where, when), the methodologies to be used, rationale for sampling, team composition, timetable, logistical support needed and information analysis and application. The level of detail can vary.

## 4.3.2 Information Collection

Data on the area affected by an emergency is often available from a variety of sources that contribute differently to an overall picture, depending on the quality and timing of data collection. As part of emergency preparedness, such information should be reviewed as an in-depth cross-sectoral exercise. Where the urgency of response and instability do not allow such an in-depth exercise, a more rapid review should still take place before initiating additional monitoring activities – particularly before an assessment. A quick review by those individuals charged with determining the need for the assessment would usually be followed by rapid background work by those who will carry out the assessment.

The review of existing information is expected to:

- Build an initial baseline that uses varied information and indicates important issues and challenges associated;
- Identify limitations in interpretation and information gaps;
- Provide an understanding of possible issues or high-risk groups for further investigation.

Broad cross-sectoral exercises for emergency preparedness or an assessment should cover as much as possible of the following:

- **Background on demographics** – population, growth rates, migration, ethnicity, family size, family structure

- **Background on livelihood patterns** - production, trade, import/export patterns nationally/regionally/locally; labour (paid/unpaid) division considering ethnicity, family structure, age, gender

- **National baseline data** – mid-decade goals

- **Capacities for response** – infrastructure, services, supplies and human resources relevant to basics of survival and protection, coping mechanisms of the poor

- **Information related to operational options** – mapping of transportation networks; geographic and seasonal barriers to mobility.

## 4.3.3 Reliability and Credibility of Sources and Information

An important aspect of data collection is the need for confirming the reliability of the source of information and the credibility of the information collected. The consistent application of the following tried-and-tested system is widely used by experts in their professional work (see Table 4.3: Information Reliability and Credibility).

### Table 4.3: Information Reliability and Credibility

| Reliability of Source | Credibility of Information |
|---|---|
| **A. completely reliable** – Refers to a tried and tested source which can be depended upon with confidence. However, in reality, such sources are extremely rare to find and should be kept for special occasions. | **1. Confirmed by other sources** is applicable when a different source than that originally reporting the information already existing confirms a piece of information. |
| **B. Usually reliable** – Refers to a source which has been successful in the past but for which there is still some element of doubt in a particular case. This could be used for those of known integrity like the UN agencies, military imagery, selected major NGOs, etc. | **2. Probably true** indicates confirmation of essential parts of a report by another source. Aerial imagery could be included in this category. |
| **C. Fairly reliable** – Refers to a source which has occasionally been used in the past and upon which some degree of confidence can be based. Selected Press sources and NGOs could fit in here. | **3. Possibly true** means that investigation of a reported fact or action has revealed no further information, however, the information is compatible with previous actions or background information available. |
| **D. Not usually reliable** – Refers to a source which has been used in the past but has proved | **4. Doubtful** is applicable to an item of information it tends to conflict with previously |

| | |
|---|---|
| more often than not to be unreliable. Again, selected Press Sources and NGOs could fit in here. | reported and validated information. |
| **E. Unreliable** – Refers to a source which has been used in the past and has proved unworthy of any confidence. | **5. Improbable** is applicable if an item of information positively contradicts previously reported and validated information. |
| **F. Truth cannot be judged** – Refers to a source which has not been used in the past. | **6. Truth cannot be judged** is applicable if any freshly reported item of information cannot be compared with any other categories. |

This system has been developed by the military and it identifies the reliability of the source providing the information and then, separately, the credibility of the information being provided. By consistently applying this approach, the Assessment Teams can identify the significance of reports received with some degree of confidence.

# 4.3.4 Interpretation, Forecasting and Reporting

Thorough analysis of the information gathered is a critical step in the assessment process. The Assessment Team should be careful to record and report the factual information as objectively as possible. In carrying out the analysis, the information has to be linked to the country-specific situation (for example, disaster history, traditional coping mechanisms, lessons learned from past, etc.) and possible future development. The Assessment Team should try to detect and recognize trends and indicators of problems, and to link the information to recommendations for action to be taken. Following guidelines are meant to make the work of Assessment Teams more effective:

- Analysis of data should be done by the whole team. This facilitates cross-checking and cross-sectoral thinking.
- Field-based cross-checking and analysis in the field enable direct feedback of tentative findings and conclusions to community leaders. This must be done with caution, as further cross-checking and comparison with other sites shapes findings and influences recommended actions.
- Teams must be allowed time to complete analysis and reporting before reassignment. This must be considered when team members are mobilized.
- Analysis should always include identification of further information collection or monitoring requirements.
- It is necessary to disseminate the results to decision makers. Provide feedback to parties concerned. Reports should include as a minimum: (a) a brief Executive Summary, (b) clearly distinguished findings and recommendations, (c) indications of the methodology, including sampling, information sources and tools, as well as the inherent limitations in analysis.

# 4.4 METHODS OF INFORMATION COLLECTION

It is useful to distinguish between the terms "data" and "information". Data is simply a collection of words, numbers, and other characters with a structure. Information is "useful data". Data becomes information when it is useful, meaningful, relevant and understandable to particular people at particular times and places and for particular purposes. What is information to one person can simply be useless data to another.

Following three are the important considerations concerning data collection in the assessment process:

- **Accuracy:** The information must agree with the reality it represents. The data on which it is based must be accurate.
- **Timeliness and Adequate Frequency:** Information must be produced as and when it is wanted. The frequency of data collection and reporting must match the rate of change in the situation being assessed.
- **Availability of and Access to Information:** Who should get what information? The way in which data is collected or the access to the data can affect the way it is routed, who it reaches, and where its flow may be blocked.

There is a range of data collection methods used. Following table outlines some of the most common ways of collecting data in emergencies/disasters:

## Table 4.4 : Selected Methods of Data Collection in Emergencies

| Method | Details |
|---|---|
| 1. Automatic initial self-assessment and local assessment by key elements in the system | Example is staff of "lifeline" systems. This can involve preplanned damage reporting by civil authorities and by military units. |
| 2. Visual inspection and interviews by specialists | Methods can include over-flight, actions by special point-assessment teams (including preplanned visits) and sample surveys to achieve rapid appraisal of area damage. |
| 3. Sample surveying of specific characteristics of affected population by specialist teams | Well conducted surveys have a number of advantages, not least of which is the relative confidence that may be attached to data collected using formal statistical sampling methods. There are several different types of sample surveys: Simple Random Sampling; Systematic Random Sampling; Stratified Random Sampling; Cluster Sampling. Formal statistical books could be consulted for details. |
| 4. Sentinel surveillance | This is a method used widely in emergency health monitoring, where professional staff establish a reporting system that detects early signs of particular problems at specific sites. The method can be applied to a variety of other problems where early warning is particularly important. |
| 5. Detailed critical sectoral assessments | This involves technical inspections and assessments by experts. It is required in sectors such as health and nutrition, food, water supply, electric power, and other infrastructure systems in particular. Critical sector assessments may be compiled from reports by specialists of these systems or by visits by specialist teams from outside. |
| 6. Continuing surveillance by regular "polling" visits | This also is a technique that is well-developed in epidemiological surveillance of casualty care requirements and emergent health problems. |
| 7. Continuing surveillance by routine reporting | As the situation develops, it will be especially useful if routine reporting systems can be adapted and used to develop a comprehensive picture of events. |
| 8. Key informant interviews | Such interviews could be conducted for key informants in the government, private |

| | voluntary organizations, NGOs, community based organizations and within particular groups of affected people, local officials, local community leaders, school teachers and leaders of groups of affected people (especially in food and displacement emergencies). |
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# 4.4.1 Rapid Assessment Procedures

Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) also known as Rapid Appraisal Procedures is a combination of informal methodologies like semi-structured and unstructured observations, key informant interviews, focus groups and informal surveys. These are combined with a number of techniques that help researchers and community members alike to communicate about complex concepts and relations, giving community members a more active role and helping researchers to understand a given issue in its broader local context.

The term "Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)" refers to a similar approach. 'Participatory rapid or rural appraisal' (PRA) employs basically the same techniques but includes a much stronger element of community participation and is usually considered an initial step in a process of participatory planning and action.

RAP is extremely useful for providing qualitative information and rough estimates on the order of magnitude for specific problems in often complex situations within a limited time frame. RAP methodologies are flexible and adaptable, making them useful for a number of contexts.

In an emergency assessment, particularly in the acute phase, RAP can help define the nature of an emergency, priorities for response, the potential development of a situation and its effects on the population, the subgroups who are likely to be most affected. This can be adapted for the shortest of emergency assessments to 3 to 4 a day or more in-depth versions. Methods used in RAP are the most appropriate for analysis using frameworks such as Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threat (SWOT) Analysis and vulnerabilities/capacities, as well as for analysis of coping strategies.

## A. Basic RAP Principles

- **Triangulation:**
More than one source of information, if possible at least three, should be used for validating and improving accuracy.

- **Optimal Ignorance:**
Knowing what not to collect is as important as knowing what to collect. This avoids gathering much irrelevant data and wasting valuable time.

- **Appropriate Imprecision:**
For early assessment and decision-making, a great degree of precision is not required. Questions such as is there a food problem or not, is there an epidemic or not, are more

appropriate than trying to assess the exact magnitude of the nutrition or health problems. The time saved may be used for investigating the causes of the problems and their time trends.

- **Rapid and Progressive Learning:**

Given the exploratory and iterative nature of RAP, new issues will be raised and explored from the data collected, leading to a deeper understanding of the problem and of their possible solutions.

- **Learning From and Along with People:**

Local perceptions of the problems and solutions are essential for planning culturally appropriate programs. This will avoid external misconceptions and give the local people a sense of program ownership.

- **Review of Existing Information:**

Consistent with the principle of triangulation, review of existing information is important, particularly where RAP is used in emergency contexts.

- **Sampling:**

Given the flexible nature of RAP, it is often assumed incorrectly that no sampling or only convenience sampling is used. RAP generally involves purposive sampling of some form, i.e., a conscious selection of cases based on certain criteria.

## B.     RAP Techniques

For each of the methods included in RAP – key informant interviews, focus groups, observations – a combination of the following techniques is used to facilitate information gathering:

**Timeline:**
As an initial orientation to a community or area, it is useful to identify key events locally. This is likely to involve identifying how and when the crisis has affected the local area.

**Ranking:**
Respondents may be asked to rank answers to a question, for example, health workers may be asked about the leading causes of death of under five children.

**Sorting:**
In pile sorting, respondents are given cards with a pictorial representation of the answers and asked to put them in one of a few piles, for example, "very important", "average", and "less important". Pile sorting is often used for very structured wealth ranking, classifying families into 'rich', 'average' and 'poor' (or a local scale meaningful to the community) though this is often too time-consuming and sensitive for use in emergencies. Alternatively, sorting can be blended with scoring. People can be asked to give score (say, 0 to 10) to the possible answers to a question, for example, what kind of wood is preferred for fuel. Scores may then be summed or averaged across individuals to produce an aggregated preference. Great care needs to be taken in the use of these numbers in making any conclusions.

**Proportional Piling:**

This is a visual form of estimating proportions. One hundred beans, sticks, or the locally current form of counters are used. Interviewees can be asked for example, to show the distribution of between women with husbands (married or not) and women without, making piles from the 100 counters, which represent each group. An initial answer can be used for further probing, breaking down distributions. This is most useful for getting some sense of the population profile where no background survey exists or can be conducted, as well as for understanding relative importance of food sources, disease prevalence etc.

**Seasonal Calendars:**
A seasonal calendar is usually drawn on the ground in the form of a chart, placing months or seasons (using locally appropriate terms) along the top or bottom of the chart, and tracing the trends of interest through the year. This can be used to understand annual patterns (normal and otherwise) regarding the environment, population movements, labor, agricultural production, disease trends, access to health services, market prices etc. It helps to identify key issues in livelihood strategies. This need not be repeated many times.

**Community Mapping:**
Community maps, drawn in groups, can be useful tools for assessing different perceptions of the same reality. For example, community maps drawn by women may be quite different from those drawn by men. Mapping can be a good orientation activity at the beginning of an assessment, particularly to establish a spatial understanding of patterns such as population movements, trade routes, resource distribution and population sub-groups, and to begin to identify key issues in livelihood strategies.

**Transect Walk:**
A transect walk is a simple observation technique. The researcher/assessment team member walks from one extreme of the community to the other with a local community member accompanying as a guide to answer questions along the way about what is observed. In the acute phase of an emergency, this can be combined with a checklist for semi-structured observation, or this can be used for unstructured observation and probing. Either way, it opens avenues for further questioning. Information can be recorded in a transect diagram ( a cross-section view of the community) and/or can be transferred onto a geographical map.

**Semi-Structured Interviews:**
Talking to the people affected by the emergency is an essential step in assessing the situation. The respondents may be key informants or community members selected according to one of the sampling strategies mentioned. Whether key informants or community members are interviewed, the techniques are similar. The assessment team does not use a formal questionnaire with standardized questions and answers. Instead, checklists of items to be discussed under each topic are used. For example:

**Topical Checklist: Water Availability and Access**
- Sources accessible (security, distance, ownership)
- Quantity available by family (seasonal variations, other variations in availability, line-ups)

- Factors affecting access for different groups (labor available and how this conflicts with other concerns, distance, transportation)

## C. Handling of RAP Techniques

For ranking, sorting and proportional piling, at least a dozen repetitions are required before researchers can safely draw conclusions on precise patterns for any one subgroup. After initial probing, it can therefore be useful to focus on a few key questions for which these techniques will be used consistently. Timeliness, seasonal calendars, community mapping and transect walks can be elaborated more easily in groups and require fewer repetitions before conclusions can be drawn. For assessments with severe time limits, these latter exercises can be done once, with subsequent cross-checking on key points.

## 4.5 Constraints in Conducting Assessments

At times, the Assessments Teams' work is greatly constrained by certain circumstances. Such circumstances make it difficult for the teams to conduct damage or needs assessments. Such a situation may arise from:

- Adverse weather conditions following disaster impact (like post-cyclonic low cloud and heavy rain);
- Lack of suitable aircraft for survey purpose;
- Difficulties of ground survey (perhaps caused by problems of access and movement);
- Inadequate planning and preparation to cover this requirement which has to cover a number of detailed aspects; and
- Loss of vehicles or vessels.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

In this Unit, we discussed what assessments are and what they do. Three major types of assessments have been explained along with the techniques for carrying out assessments and the methods of information collection. Some of the conditions that may create difficulties in conducting assessments are outlined. The importance of checking the reliability of source of information as well as the credibility of information collected is also highlighted. All these reports must have accuracy brevity and clarity. The assessment process is valuable for the organisation to initiate appropriate disaster responses.

## 4.7 KEY CONCEPTS

**Community Based Organization (CBO):** Locally based organizations wherein the community members come together for a common cause. Examples: *Mahila Mandals*, *Youth Clubs*, Farmers' Associations and Cooperatives

**Coping Strategies:** The term refers to various ways and means adopted by local communities to cope up with trying times (like any natural disaster or other emergencies) and survive the stressful event without much loss to self or the community. For example, such strategies include various ways of saving and storing food and essential supplies for use during and immediately following an emergency; using the change of sea water color, weeds and stock of fish to warn in advance of a forthcoming cyclone etc.

**Disaster Assessment:** An assessment providing information on the magnitude of the disaster and the extent of its impact.

**Displaced Population:** A displaced person is an individual uprooted from his/her home who is expected to eventually return. The terms "displaced population" refers to the groups of people who are displaced (either forced to leave their homes or the usual area they inhabit) on account of an emergency or a natural disaster. Such groups are eventually expected to return to their home/area after the negative spell of the event is over.

**Ex ante evaluation:** Refers to a critical analysis which selects and ranks various solutions – based on relevance, technical, financial and institutional feasibility, socio-economic benefit – prior to a program approval.

**Humanitarian Agencies:** Refers to those national as well as international organizations which come in aid of the affected people/victims during any crises situation (emergency, natural or man-made disaster) purely on humanitarian grounds. For example, the key UN humanitarian agencies are: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), The World Health Organization (WHO), The World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Agencies (OCHA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Key Informants:** These are the persons in a particular profession/occupation/locale who are believed to have better information than others due to their being in that particular profession, at that particular location. Examples include school teachers, religious leaders, political leaders, village/town level government officials, heads of local organizations etc.

**Needs Assessment:** An assessment identifying specific needs following a disaster along with the resources (available and required) and services for immediate emergency response in order to sustain the lives of the affected.

**Program Response:** Refers to specific sector-based programmatic response from an organization in order to restore the situation after a disaster. Example: shelter reconstruction and rehabilitation program of an agency.

**Rapid Assessment Procedures:** A flexible and adaptable package of assessment for collecting qualitative information and rough estimates about the magnitude of specific problems in emergency situations.

**Sectoral Assessment:** Refers to an in-depth assessment made by the subject-matter expert of a particular sector e.g., water and sanitation, education, health etc.

**Vulnerable Population:** Refers to those groups of people who stand a threat and are thus exposed to danger to life and property due to a given hazard or absence of capacities or both. They include children, especially unaccompanied children, the unaccompanied elderly, persons who are handicapped or chronically ill, single women and single heads of households.

# 4.8    REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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# 4.9    ACTIVITIES

1.    Assessment is the appraisal of any given situation prior to an intervention. Discuss.

2.    Distinguish between various types of assessments.

3.    Explain the methods of information collection.