

Disaster Management Duties

Introduction

386- 1 A disaster is any event or happening with or without warning causing and threatening death or injury, damage to property or the environment or disruption to the community which, because of the scale of its effects, cannot be dealt with by the emergency services and local authorities as part of their day-to-day activities.

1. Disasters are frequently described in quantitative and tactical terms like the number of dead and injured, the extent of damage to buildings and other physical resources, the number of homeless, the ultimate economic costs etc. Yet for victims and helpers both, it is the suffering that the disaster brings, the human terror, anguish and despair etc are most vital. People suffer not only physical damage, but also considerable psychological damage is caused by the disasters.
2. The police, who perform the central role in dealing with the problem, are therefore required to perform the role sympathetically, sensitively and with kindness. The welfare, morale and stress issues of the police force have to be attended to by the senior managers of the Police force in order to achieve best possible results.

Unpredictability

387. Most major disasters occur largely as unforeseen events. Any reasonable prediction or anticipation of a catastrophic event usually results in action intended to reduce the 'probable' to at least the 'possible' and ideally to the 'most likely'. The obviousness of the point that disasters are unforeseeable is often overlooked during the process of

post-incident enquiry when the clarity provided by hindsight reveals, the specific factors which could/should have been spotted and resolved in order to avoid the onset of the disaster.

The Initial Police Role

388. Although Police provides the initial response to an incident and, together with the other emergency services, conducts rescue and first aid activities, the sheer scale of a major disaster means that most of the core management functions involved in the post rescue phase are beyond the experience of most Police forces. An efficient management can do much to assist officers to cope with the onerous experiences associated with major disasters by way of planning in respect of predictable/foreseeable disasters and training, in general, for all types of disasters. In fact, the frequency of all categories of disasters, varying from epidemics to road accidents and perennials droughts and floods, is escalating, resulting in multifold growth of injuries, disabilities, diseases, and deaths, disrupting life supporting systems, and adding to the health, social and economic burden of an already impoverished people.

Features of Disasters

389. A disaster has the following main features:-

- Unpredictability.
- Unfamiliarity.
- Speed.
- Urgency.
- Uncertainty.
- Threat.

Types of Disaster

390. Disasters can be broadly divided into two categories –

(a) Natural - Natural Disasters are not controllable because, nature is not controllable.

(b) Man-made disasters. The Man-made disasters on the other hand are a rapidly increasing phenomenon in the present day Technological Society because there occur as a result of human failure or error or malfunction of some structure or system designed by man. Similarly, while there is sometimes an element of warning in natural disaster, there is generally none in man-made disaster and this lack of warning makes avoidance difficult.

The Classification

391. Following different types of disasters are prevalent under the various categories:-

(a) **Natural Disasters** - There can be of the following types.

- i. Floods
- ii. Landslides
- iii. Storms
- iv. Droughts
- v. Earthquake

(b) **Man-made Disasters:-**

- i. Fires
- ii. Explosions
- iii. Building collapse disasters
- iv. Industrial accidents
- v. Football Tragedies
- vi. Holocausts in Civilian Violence, Terrorism and mass shootings.

Floods

The cause for floods is chiefly the peculiarities of rainfall. Out of the total annual rainfall in the country, 75 per cent is concentrated over a short monsoon season of three to four months. As a result, there is a very heavy discharge from the rivers during this period causing widespread floods.

Landslides

Due to heavy rain, frequent landslides occur which caused damages to property, lives and obstruct the traffic.

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are considered to be one of the most dangerous and destructive natural hazards. The impact of this phenomenon is sudden with little or no warning, making it just impossible to predict or make preparations against damages and collapses of buildings and other man-made structures. About 50-60 per cent of total area of the country is vulnerable areas which are generally located in Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions, and in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Droughts

Drought is a significant environmental problem too as it is caused by less than average rainfall over a long period of time.

Natural Disaster Management in India

392. An integrated disaster management mechanism exists within government framework. At the Central Level, the National Crisis management Committee (CNMC) oversees all disaster related efforts. The NCMC comprises the nodal ministry and other support ministers. For natural disasters at the centre, the nodal ministry is ministry of agriculture.

Administrative Structure at Central Level

393. The Central Government, with its resources, physical and financial, does provide the needed help and assistance to buttress relief efforts in the wake of major natural disasters. The dimensions of the response at the level of Central Government are determined in accordance with the existing policy of financing the relief expenditure and keeping in view the factors, like (1) the gravity of a natural calamity; (2) the scale of the relief operation necessary, (3) the requirements of Central assistance for augmenting the financial resources at the disposal of the State Government.

Agriculture Ministry -- The Nodal Agency

394. The department of Agriculture and Co-operation (DAC), in the Agriculture Ministry, is the nodal department for all matters concerning natural disasters relief at the Centre. The National Contingency Action Plan (CAP) facilitates launching of relief and rescue operations without delay. The CAP identifies initiative required to be taken by various Central Ministries, and Public departments in the wake of natural calamities, sets down procedures and determines the focal points in the administrative machinery.

Committees at National Level

395. Working of various other committees at the national level for disaster management are follows:

(A) Cabinet Committee

The cabinet may set up a committee for effective implementation of relief measures in the wake of natural disaster. The secretary in the ministry of agriculture acts as the Secretary of this committee. In the absence of

such a committee, all matters related to the relief shall be reported to the cabinet secretary.

(B) National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)

Under the chairmanship of cabinet secretary, the NCMC has been constituted in the cabinet secretariat. The other members of this committee include the secretary to prime minister, secretaries of ministry of home affairs, defense, research and analysis wing and agriculture and co-operation along with Director, Intelligence Bureau an officer of cabinet secretariat. The NCMC gives direction to the crises management group as and when deemed necessary.

(C) Crisis Management Group (CMG)

A group under the chairmanship for the Central Relief Commissioner, comprising senior officers drawn from various ministries and other concerned departments, reviews every year contingency plan formulated by central ministries/department. It reviews various measures required for dealing with a natural disaster, and coordinates activities of the central ministries and the State governments pertaining to disaster preparedness and relief and obtains information from nodal officers on measures relating to the above. The joint secretary (NDM) and Additional Central Relief Commissioner is the convener of CMG. The CMG meets every six months.

Financial Arrangements

396.1 The centre plays a major role as far as mobilization of financial resources is concerned. The policy and arrangement for financing state governments to provide relief and rehabilitation measures in areas affected by natural calamities are governed by the recommendations of the finance commissions on the subject made

- from time to time. Under the existing scheme, a Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been constituted for each state with contribution from the Central and State Governments to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures.
2. A state level committee headed by the chief secretary decides the norms of assistance under each of the approved schemes. The norms so fixed could be modified by the Ministry of Agriculture, if these are significantly out of line.
 3. In addition to the CRF, a National Fund for calamity Relief (NFCR) has also been constituted to deal with calamities of rare severity. The fund is managed by the National Calamity Relief Committee, which is a sub-committee of the National Development Council, headed by the union agriculture minister. In normal circumstances, the state governments are required to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures utilizing the annual CRF allocations. They can, however, seek additional assistance from the NFCR in the event of calamity of rare severity.

Administrative Structure at State Level

397 At the State level, State level relief committee exist which is headed by Secretary, Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department. Secretary Land Revenue & Disaster acts a Relief Commissioner. In the absence of the Relief Commissioner, the Chief Secretary or an officer nominated by him is in overall charge of relief operations in the concerned State. The state headquarters have, in addition, a number of Secretaries who head the various departments handling specific subjects under the overall supervision and coordination of the Chief Secretary.

States Crisis Management Group

398 There is State Crisis management Group (SCMG) under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary/Relief Commissioner. This group comprises, senior officers from the departments of revenue/relief, home, civil supplies, power, irrigation, water supply, Panchayat (local self-government), agriculture, forests, rural development, health planning, public works and finance. The SCMG is required to take into consideration the infrastructure and guidance received, from time to time, from Government of India and formulates action plans for dealing with different natural disasters. It is also the duty of the Relief Commission of the state to establish an emergency operation Centre as soon as disaster situation develops. Besides having all updated information on forecasting and warning of disaster, the Centre would also be the contact point for the various concerned agencies.

399. **Administrative Structure at District Level**

- i. The District Collector is the Chairman of District level Relief Committee. The collector exercises coordinating and supervisory powers over functionaries of all the departments at the district level.
- ii. When a disaster is apprehended, the entire machinery of the district, including officers of technical and other departments, swings into action and maintains almost continuous contact with each village in the disaster threatened area.

Contingency Plans

400 At the district level, the disaster relief plans shall be prepared which provide for specific tasks and agencies for their

implementation in respect of areas in relation to different types of disasters. A contingency plan for the district for the different disasters shall be drawn up by the Collector and approved by the state government. The collector also coordinates and secures the input from the local defense forces unit in preparation of the contingency plans. These contingency plans lay down specific action points, key personnel and contact points relating to all aspects.

District Relief Committee

401 The relief measures are reviewed by the district level relief committee consisting official and non-official members, including local legislators and members of the parliament.

District Control Room

402. In the wake of the natural disaster, a control room shall be set up in the district for day to day monitoring of the rescue and relief operations on a continuing basis.

Coordination

403. The Collector maintains the close liaison with the central government authorities in the districts, namely army, air force and ministry of water resources, etc., who supplement the effort of the district administration in the rescue and the relief operations. The collector also coordinates all voluntary efforts by mobilizing the non-government organizations capable of working in such situations. The entire hierarchy, right from the central government (the department of agriculture and cooperation in the ministry of agriculture and irrigation) to the district level, and even the sub-

divisional level, is connected with a telecommunication system. The normal mode of telecommunication is overland telephone and telegraph, but in the times of stress and if there is breakdown of the overland system, radio communication is restored to

The role of the armed forces

404. State Government can requisition the services of the armed forces of the country to assist the State government during disaster emergencies, providing prompt relief to the victims even in the most inaccessible and remote areas of the country. The organizational strength of the armed force with their disciplined and systematized approach, and with their skills in technical and human resource management make them indispensable for such emergency situations. Besides, when disasters are spread over large area, it is usually beyond the capabilities of the administration to organize the relief activities, the armed force then called in to organize the relief measures.

Civil Defense and NGO

405. Related to the efforts of the armed forces, are the civil defense and home guard organizations are voluntary in nature and character and come in handy during emergency situations like natural disaster. Their aim - while not actually taking part in actual combat operation, like in army - is firstly to save lives, to minimize damage to property, and to maintain continuity of production, thus, while disaster situation often lead to chaotic condition where rescue and relief work is severely affected, these

organizations are able to coordinate and support efforts in a disciplined manner, so that both the army and the district officials are to carry out their respective activities efficiently.

The Role of Non-Government Voluntary Organizations

406. The NGO is a potential key element in disaster management. The NGO operating at grassroots level can provide a suitable alternative as they have an edge over governmental agencies for invoking community involvement. This is chiefly because; the NGO sector has strong linkages with the community base, and can exhibit great flexibility in procedural matters vis-à-vis the government.

407. **Activities of NGOs at Different Stages of Disasters**

- (i) **Pre Disaster:** Awareness and information campaigns Training of local volunteers Advocacy and planning.
- (ii) **During Disaster:** Immediate rescue and first-aid, including psychological aid, supply of food, water, medicines, and other immediate need materials ensuring sanitation and hygiene damage assessment.
- (iii) **Post-Disaster:** Technical and material aid in re construction Assistance in seeking financial aid monitoring.

The Role of the Community

408. In the event of actual disasters, the community, aware of its

preventive role can substantially reduce the disaster damage

Disaster Management and Police Response

409-1 The initial response to a disaster is usually provided by the emergency services supported by the local authority, but many agencies can become involved. The emergency services have to maintain a state of readiness so that they can provide a rapid response and alert local authorities and other services as soon as possible.

2. The police co-ordinate the activities of all those responding at and around the scene, which must unless a disaster has been caused by severe weather or other natural phenomena be treated as the scene of a crime and preserved accordingly.
3. The Police have to be very quick in its initial response to a disaster call or situation. When a disaster is predictable or foreseeable, such as a landslide, floods, etc., the police must keep itself in readiness to respond to it in a professional and competent manner. In other types of disasters or emergencies, such as major accidents, unfortunately happenings or natural calamities, promptness of the police response can help in saving a number of lives and fast return of normality.

Multi-agency involvement and Police participation

410-1 Although involvement of different emergency services like Fire Brigade, Police and Hospital Services is inevitable, some other Public Utility Services, such as local bodies and Gas Boards, etc. have to be involved also in most cases for dealing with the situation effectively.

2. If rescue and recovery work is to be effective, all these different agencies have to work together in a co-ordinate way all these agencies, therefore, have to be aware of each other's areas of responsibility and systems of working. Comprehensive discussion and agreement among these agencies in the planning, stage and communication of the decisions down the chain of command to the lowest functionary of each agency and their training is, therefore, of utmost importance so that they know as to who is responsible for what and are aware of their roles and responsibility and can appreciate the need for Multi-Service Involvement in such a situation.

Objectives of Integrated Police Response

411. The police response to a disaster will vary, just as the nature and effects of the disaster will vary and such Police response should be an integral part of a combined and coordinated operation involving different emergency services. All such services and agencies work to achieve certain common objectives. Some of these objectives are:-

- (1) To save lives,
- (2) To prevent escalation of the disaster.
- (3) To relieve suffering.
- (4) To safeguard the environment.
- (5) To protect property.
- (6) To facilitate criminal investigation as well as Departmental, Public or Judicial enquiry, if any ordered; and

(7) To restore normality as soon as possible.

412 Under the principles of Integrated Response to a disaster, the different emergency services, including police, should concentrate on the effects rather than the cause of the disaster and wherever possible should plan it in advance integration in emergency management embraces a number of concepts, some of which may overlap.

413. **Strategic Steps**

(a) **Mitigation** - encompasses measures designed to prevent the occurrence of a disaster or reduce the likelihood or severity of the disaster like strict security checks or toxic waste processing facilities in remote areas will reduce the likelihood of disasters.

(b) **Preparedness** - includes planning, public education, warning and training of resources in dealing with the situation.

(c) **Response** -constitutes the provision of emergency response at tile field such as evacuation, rescue, etc; and

(d) **Recovery** - will encompass long term activities which are necessary- to provide a rapid return to normality and to rebuild the affected community.

414 Whereas efforts aimed at mitigation may help in preventing or mitigating tile effects in certain types of disasters, disasters can happen any time and can happen as a consequence of human behavior and also as a result of an act of nature. One way for such

preparedness is identification of potential threat areas and preparation of contingency plan/manual.

Preparation of Disaster Manual

415. Each district police organization shall have a manual containing information regarding.

1. Various natural and man-made disasters
2. Myths about disasters and rumours to be destroyed
3. Panchayat, Municipal and local authority level
4. Demarcation of area -wards -villages
5. Duties of Zilla Panchayat, Panchayat Secretary, Municipal Councilors and their responsibilities
6. Accountability of each unit
7. Involvement of social welfare agencies, e.g. Aanganwadis --role of NGO's
8. Financial planning -funds from government and other sources
9. Role of educational institutions
10. Training to be imparted at various levels
11. Demonstrations and exercises
12. Co-ordination between various agencies and community
13. Documentation

Preparing for Contingency Plan

416. An Emergency / contingency plan shall contain the following aspects with appropriate details :-

(A) Brief introduction of the area

- (i) Topography
- (ii) Climate

- (iii) Demo graph
- (iv) Industry

(B) Natural & manmade disasters

History of natural and manmade disaster

(C) Command

- (i) Structure of the government at various levels powers and responsibilities
- (ii) Chain of command
- (iii) Role of emergency services

(D) Listing of emergency and other services

- (i) Their chain of command.
- (ii) Address and telephone numbers of the agencies
- (iii) Police, fire services, essential services, water and power supply, medical transport, post and telegraph, telephone, red-cross and NGO's.

(E) Activation of operations

- (i) Warning systems
- (ii) Receipt and dissemination

(F) Establishment of control room

(G) Co-ordination with various agencies

(H) Arrangements at scene of disaster

- (i) Responsibility and accountability of each agency

- (ii) Duties of first officer at scene
- (iii) Duties of control room staff, senior supervisory officer, incident officer, investigating officer, etc.
- (iv) Dissemination of information to agencies / departments concerned
- (v) Medical centre
- (vi) Collection point for survivors
- (vii) Shelters for survivors
- (viii) Temporary mortuary -identification of victims,
- (ix) Evacuation
- (x) Transport and traffic arrangements
- (xi) Management of law and order, VIP arrangements
- (xii) Role of media -to highlight accurate information -media liaison officer,
- (xiii) Communication system

(I) Public information

- (i) Announcements (requiring actions)
- (ii) Information releases
- (iii) Emergency broadcasting and telecast

(J) Rescue Operations

(K) Removal of debris

(L) Housing

(M) Education and Training :- Training in disaster management to be given to the community groups, voluntary personnel and government officials.

(N) Community groups:- It should focus on various skills that community can develop to meet disasters.

(O) Voluntary agencies: - It should take into account divergence in terms of academic preparations, experience and competence.

(P) Government officials

- (i) Primary duty to save lives
- (ii) Training at various levels -state, district, block and village. Training should be multi-direction including the following aspects:

- A) Orientation training
- B) Elementary training
- C) Basic training
- D) Specialized training
- E) Intensive training

(Q) Design and management of disaster information resource network

- (i) To establish a world-wide network of information systems related to disaster management
- (ii) Improved telecommunication system to help in quick collection of information
- (iii) Internet helps in training of emergency management community. It has the ability to send warnings of potential disasters.

(R) Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring culture and evaluation formula be evolved. This is done by an integrated team of experts.

(S) Demonstration of Emergency

Response Exercise:

There would be a need for simulation exercises/demonstrations. An exercise is to include:

- (i) Advance announcement through public address system
- (ii) Demarcation of area
- (iii) Involvement of all government / voluntary / local agencies
- (iv) Search and rescue teams to be equipped with latest proper tools, search dogs, first aid equipment
- (v) Use of dummies
- (vi) Demonstrations of air dropping of relief supplies
- (vii) Media should be associated

(T) Cadre of trained personnel and Training

Emergent need to establish a cadre

- (i) specialized programmes be designed to impart training.
- (ii) setting up of training institutes at various levels
- (iii) text books at school/college levels should incorporate information
- (iv) training to skilled /technical persons, artisans, engineering students.
- (v) training material relevant to local conditions be prepared.
- (vi) training regarding technological advances made.
- (viii) documentation of major natural disasters.

Role/Functions of Police

417. The primary areas of Police responsibility are as follows:

1. The saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services.
2. Co-ordination of the emergency services and other organizations
3. Traffic and crowd control.
4. The investigation of the-incident in conjunction with other

investigative bodies where applicable.

5. The collation and dissemination of casualty information.
6. Identification of victims.
7. The restoration of normality at the earliest opportunity.

Access and Crowd Control

418. Whenever a disaster takes place, the police should immediately cordon off the area and prevent people from thronging the scene. A large number of people try to reach the scene of occurrence out of sheer curiosity or with the intention of extending their assistance to affected persons, it becomes necessary that police establish an outer cordon around the site of the disaster to control access to the whole of the disaster site, if practical stricter access control shall be enforced by the police and it should be ensured that no unwarranted person gains entry to the scene of disaster.

Traffic Diversion

419. Immediate traffic arrangements shall be made to divert the traffic away from the scene of disaster. The motorists shall be suitably notified about the traffic diversion through the P .A. system, radio, TV as well as by the traffic policemen present at the spot. The area should also be kept clear of all the traffic so as to ensure that the vehicles of emergency services face no hindrance to reach the site. The obstruction of way to the site of disaster may delay the arrival of fire brigades, ambulances and other vehicles as well as the staff and is likely to affect the rescue and relief operations.

Crowd Control and Regulation

420. Adequate arrangements are to be made by the police to prevent the crowd to reach that site of disaster. Those who have already reached there should be asked to move away. The scene of disaster shall be cleared of all onlookers whose presence would only impede the job of the service personnel. Sometimes the public also gets agitated and displays their annoyance against the government which soon turns into a law and order problem. The police should deal with them effectively but tactfully. They should be properly equipped to deal with such a situation.

421. **Search, Rescue and Evacuation**

- I. During the disaster, normally the police is first to reach the spot. Till the arrival of other emergency service personnel, it should search the area and remove the casualties from the site. It should also extend full co-operation to other services and the local authority in the rescue and evacuation operations.
- II. In some circumstances it may be necessary to advise the public on whether they should evacuate a given area or stay put and shelter indoors. Such circumstances include risks to life or health from:-
 - (a) the release or threatened release of radioactive materials, or other hazardous substances;..
 - (b) the spread of fire;
 - (c) severe storms;
 - (d) flooding;
 - (e) earthquake; and

(f) landslide

(g) environmental contamination.

In the event of the release or threatened release of non-radioactive hazardous materials, additional information on the nature of the risk may be obtained from the fire service or other accredited sources. Once crucial factor in determining the area to be evacuated will be the forecast of speed and direction of the wind which can be obtained from the appropriate weather office.

- III. It is normally the police who recommend whether or not to evacuate and define the area to be evacuated. Their recommendation should, however, take into account the advice from the fire service on risks associated with fire, contamination and other hazards, from the ambulance and local authorities. The police can only recommend evacuation and have no power to require people to leave their homes.

Control and Co-Ordination

422. Three levels of police Command and Control may be developed:-

(a) **Forward control point:** Normally the first control to be established, under the command of the local area officer who would be responsible for initial communication links and deployment.

(b) Incident Control Post : To control and co-ordinate the management of the incident and provide a central point of contact for all emergency and specialist services. A coordinator should be appointed with responsibility for the control post, reporting to the area Police Chief or Commander.

(c) Major Incident Control Room: To co-ordinate resources to a

protruded incident under the control of" area Police Chief or Commander. Handling of media and setting up of a cell to inform the media about the real situation and casualties and to prevent spread of rumours and mis-information.

423. **Co-ordination**

- i. It is the police responsibility, in any disaster situation, to co-ordinate-the strategic roles of all the emergency services and other organizations involved. It would be desirable that due to the nature of certain natural disasters or major incidents this coordination role is handed over to another more appropriate service or agency. At all times, however, the personnel and resources of each service should remain under the command of their respective departmental heads. Where appropriate, the formation of a coordinating group from the key service and agency personnel will be quite useful. This group may be normally chaired by the police who will be responsible to maintain written records of its deliberations. Appropriate members of the group will also ensure that proper records are maintained of the incident.
- ii. In discharging the coordinating role, account shall be taken of the features of each particular disaster, together with the professional expertise of each of the emergency services and their statutory duties. It may be necessary to assign the control of specific functions to one or more of the emergency services or other agencies. For example, the fire service and Ambulance

service will normally have responsibility for the rescue, initial treatment and medical evacuation of casualties. In extreme circumstances, e.g. a terrorist incident, it may be necessary for the police to take executive action in respect of the total disaster.

424. **Scene Control and Legal Action**

- i. It is vital that the scene and surrounding area of any major incident should be protected for :-
 - (a) safety of victims, and
 - (b) protection and preservation of evidence.
 - (c) protection of properties of the affected persons against theft, looting, etc. during the disaster and its post impact period.
- ii. It must be accepted that large numbers of police officers will be required to achieve this aim and, therefore, the in charge of the district or incident commander should take early action for the reinforcements.
- iii. Unless a disaster has been caused by severe weather or other natural phenomena, the police would be required to treat the scene at and around a disaster as a scene of crime and preserve it accordingly. It has to initiate necessary legal action regarding registration of a criminal case and investigation of the crime. Police has also to facilitate inquiries carried out by the responsible accident investigation body such as Civil Aviation, Medical and other departmental investigating agencies. The police process casualty information and have responsibility for identifying and arranging for the removal of the dead. Wherever

appropriate, the police have to identify the culprits, arrest and subsequently prosecute them.

425. **VVIP/VIP Visits**

- i. Visits by VIP's can lift the morale of those affected by the disaster as well as those who are involved with the response. It has been seen that the Ministers, members of Parliament and members of legislature, local councilors, leaders of various political parties, etc. visit the scene of a disaster and the injured to mark public concern and see the disaster response. It may be possible that the scale of a disaster may in addition prompt visits of the Prime Minister, Governor, Chief Minister, etc. Sometimes their visit to the disaster site is likely to adversely affect the rescue operations, particularly if casualties' are still trapped, it should be ensured that their visits do not interrupt rescue and life saving work and the police, as coordinators of the disaster response, should explain the ground situation to them and try to avoid their visit, if possible. However, in case the visit becomes inevitable, it should fix up the timing of visits. The additional need for their security would also cause a problem. The police and the local services are, however, experienced at handling VIP visits and many of the usual considerations will apply to their visit to a disaster site.
- ii. It would be desirable to restrict media coverage of such visits, in which case the police should liaise with the government

press Officer to keep their number to minimum. It may also be necessary for the police to brief the VVIP/VIP beforehand about the details of casualties, damage and the nature of the disaster. It should, therefore, prepare a brief note for such briefings.

Reception Centre

426. If necessary, a reception centre for friends and relatives of victims will be established by the police (usually in consultation with the local authority and commercial, industrial or other organizations concerned) and staffed by the police, local authority and suitably prepared voluntary organizations. The fullest possible information should be given to enquirers seeking news of those involved in a disaster. This helps to ensure consistent and non-contradictory information being given out. Friends and relatives who may be feeling intense anxiety, shock or grief, need to be treated with sympathy and understanding. Access to the reception centre should be controlled to prevent those inside being disturbed by uninvited media representatives or onlookers.

Intimation Regarding Foreigners

427. If foreign nationals have been -or are thought to have been involved in the disaster, the police will inform the Consular authorities of the death or injury to any of their nationals by quickest possible means.

428. **DOs and DON'Ts With Regard to Earthquake**

(A) What to do Before an Earthquake

- ✚ Learn about causes and effects. Speak about them in a calm and composed manner
- ✚ Keep a torch light and a working transistor radio with spare batteries.
- ✚ Keep a list of telephone numbers like Doctor, Fire, Police, MRO, Ambulance, Water, Electricity etc., on a card and all your family members should know them.
- ✚ Arrange your home in such a manner that it is easy to move around.
- ✚ Attach shelves, gas cylinders, flower pots etc., to the walls of the room.
- ✚ Place heavy objects on the floor or in lower shelves.
- ✚ Teach all members of your family how to turn off electricity and gas supply.

(B) What to do During an Earthquake

- i. Keep calm and keep others calm
- ii. When at home or inside a building or auditorium
 - Do not rush to the doors or the exits: Keep well away from windows, mirrors and furniture.
 - Protect yourself by staying under the lintel of an inner door-frame, in the corner of the room, under a table or even under a bench or bed.
- iii. When on the road in built up area.
 - Walk towards an open place, in a calm and composed manner. Do not run and do not wander in the street or on the roads for sightseeing. You must keep the roads free for movement of rescue and relief teams.

- Keep away from buildings, especially old, tall buildings or detached buildings, electricity wires, slopes and walls. They are liable to collapse.

iv. When driving

- Stop the vehicle away from building walls, slopes, electricity wires/ cables and stay inside the vehicle.

(C) **Action after the Earthquake**

- ✓ Keep calm, switch on the transistor radio and obey any instructions you hear on the radio.
- ✓ Expect aftershocks.
- ✓ Do not turn on switches if you have electric connection in your house.
- ✓ Use your torch.
- ✓ If there is a fire try to put it out with help of people around you.
- ✓ Clean up any spillage of inflammable material like kerosene, oils, paints, alcohol etc.,
- ✓ If people are buried under the debris, call for help of the rescue teams and render your help. Do not attempt rescue all by you. You might injure yourself or worsen the situation of the persons under the debris.
- ✓ Avoid places where electric wires are hanging loose and do not touch any metal object in contact with them.
- ✓ Do not drink water from open sources/containers without filtering or purification.
- ✓ Eat something to make you feel better and more capable of helping others.
- ✓ When you can move out of the house carry with you

essential food, water container, torch, transistor radio and medicines you normally use at home.

- ✓ Do not go near damaged structures or enter badly damaged buildings.
- ✓ Do not go sightseeing or wandering in the streets aimlessly to see what is happening around. Keep the roads clear for the movement of relief/rescue teams.

429. **Weaker Sections : Special Care Area**

- i. When a disaster occurs, the weaker sections of society and the backward communities suffer the most. However, these communities are quite resilient and respond to relief. With encouragement support and relief, they turn the losses associated with disasters into opportunities.
- ii. Disaster management and mitigation should therefore, be organized around local recovery efforts. Such a community-based model feature defined roles for each stakeholder, conceived on the basis of her or his respective strengths and weakness in order to most effectively work towards the common interest. The ultimate goal of such an approach is to enhance community capacity and to increase effectiveness of relief and rehabilitation.

NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE (NDRF)

450. National Disaster Response Force was constituted under the statutory provisions of the Disaster Management Act 2005, for the purpose of specialized response to natural and manmade disasters.

1. NDRF is a specialized force, multi-skilled and high-tech capable of dealing with all types of Natural and Manmade disasters.
2. The said force has to function under the superintendence direction and control of the national disaster management authority and under command and supervision of Director General, NDRF.
3. NDRF had constituted some battalions all taken from the para-military forces including engineers, technicians, electronics, Dog squads and medical/paramedics, NDRF are equipped and trained to combat all natural disasters including four battalions in combating nuclear, biological and chemical disasters.
4. During the preparedness period/in a threatening disaster situation, proactive deployment of these forces will be carried out by natural disaster management authority in consultation with the State authority.
5. One battalion is located at Kolkata and one at Guwahati. Both are manned by BSF. One National Disaster Response force unit under the command of Kolkata is located at New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.



Sikkim Disaster Management Act

1. To provide for effective management of disaster, for mitigation of effects of disaster, for administering, facilitating, coordinating and monitoring emergency relief during and after occurrence of disasters and for implanting, monitoring and coordinating measures for construction and rehabilitation in the aftermath of disasters. The Sikkim State Disaster Act has been passed by Sikkim Legislative Assembly.
2. State government has notified Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority for laying down policies and monitors mitigation, prevention and preparedness and also oversees response.
3. During the period of disaster in an affected area the District Collector may issue directions to the officers of the government departments and local authorities in the affected areas to provide emergency relief in accordance with the Disaster Management Plans.

4. When an area is declared as Disaster Prone area or disaster affected area under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 16 of the Sikkim Disaster Management Act, 2006, the members of search and rescue teams, police force, fire services, home guards, civil defense, shall perform the following function under the supervision of the commissioner/district collector mainly

(a) giving of warning

(b) carrying out search and rescue operations and

(c) carrying out relief and rehabilitation operations.