CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

AND

SUGGESTIONS
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The vulnerability to disasters is high in India. Both major and minor disasters hit most of the States and UTs of the country. It is due to high population density, fast growing urbanization, industrialization, geographical and geological conditions, and partly due to unawareness and poor economic conditions of the people in general, of the country. The situation is further aggravated because of good length and breadth of coastal areas (241 out of 612 districts) of the country, which are prone to multi-hazard risks. Floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes, avalanches, landslides, etc. are the recurring phenomenon in India. The plains of the country are also hit frequently by floods and droughts. Hilly areas are highly vulnerable to disasters commonly in the form of earthquakes, avalanches, and landslides. Disasters lead to extensive loss of lives, livelihood, residential and commercial properties, infrastructural loss and ultimately a heavy loss to the economy of the country.

It has been realized over past some decades that the development can not be sustained unless disaster management activities are mainstreamed into the development programmes of the country as a national priority. Disasters really give big shocks to the economy of the country every year. The primary reason for such heavy losses can be attributed to the reactive and response centric approach adopted in the erstwhile DM activities without assigning due importance to the
pre-disaster arrangements, such as prevention, mitigation and
preparedness in a proactive and holistic manner. The response-centric
approach has not only been unsustainable but has adversely affected
the sustained development of the country.

Both type of disasters, major and minor severely hit the
economy of the country each year along with extensive loss of lives of
persons and cattle's. Infrastructural loss is enormous because it
diminishes the development arena of the country along with a heavy
loss to the economy and pushes back the country to decades.
Infrastructural losses take a long period in their recovery process.
After recent major disasters, including super cyclone in Orissa in 1999,
the Bhuj (Gujarat) earthquake in Jan, 2001 and tsunamis in the Indian
Ocean in December, 2004, Government of India decided to adopt a
multi-disciplinary and proactive approach in Disaster Management for
building holistic capabilities to cope with both natural and manmade
disasters.

Even after preparing fine strategies and planning for
mitigating the effects of hazards and disasters much could not be done
practically even in the high vulnerable areas of such hazards. Effective
planning and focus on prevention and mitigation would greatly help in
ensuring that the hazards will not transform into disasters and the
coping capacities of the vulnerable population may greatly be
increased. It needs systematic planning and coordination to ensure that
the Disaster Risk Reduction is constantly promoted and mainstreamed in the regular programmes of each department.

The damages from disasters depend upon the intensity of the disastrous events. During the last 2-3 decades the frequency of disasters and hazards has certainly been increased which is a matter of great concern. Data of major and minor natural disasters, that occurred in India during 1950-2012, indicate that floods and droughts cause the maximum damages because of their regular occurrence in various parts of the country, however, other disastrous events like landslides and avalanches in the hilly areas of the country, high frequency earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in some specified regions and climate related disasters are continuously occurring with increasing magnitude and frequencies. The man-made disasters are also an on rise in the country with time.

Disasters, in general partially disrupt the normal day to day life of most of the people of the affected areas and negatively influence the emergency systems, nevertheless, it depends upon the intensity and severity of the disasters. It may also be termed as a serious disruption of the functioning of the society, causing widespread human, material and environmental losses which affect the ability of the affected society. These always brought miseries to numerous people. It means that the after effects of the disasters are many, for example, floods, Tsunamis and cyclones result in the serious epidemics and they have drastic consequences, in general.
The Indian sub-continent has been exposed to disasters from time immemorial. Increase in vulnerability in the recent years has certainly been a serious threat to the overall development of the country. During 1999-00 to 2010-11, an average of about 26 thousand people lost their lives and many times more the people become affected by the occurrence of these disasters. Approximately one million houses are damaged annually by the occurrence of the disasters in the country. Disastrous event give rise to causalities, damage or loss of properties, infrastructure, environment, the built structure for the development, and means of livelihood on a wide scale which is beyond the capacity of the affected community, state or many times the country itself to cope with.

DIASTERS AND THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

The disasters, in general, ruin the economy of the region, state or of the country, depending upon the intensity of the events and the way of occurring. Those are the major hindrances in the path of development. In general, the hazardous effects of the disasters which have been experienced in Indian economy may be summed up in the following way;

(A) Heavy loss of lives and damages suddenly stop the process of development in the affected areas.
(B) Medical expenses suddenly rise to their extreme in the affected areas and the states are supposed to reallocate the normal fund process which affects badly the health programmes initiated by the government.

(C) Economic activities have generally been seen to be disrupted in the disaster prone areas. Government has to reset their fund allocations and this way it can not achieve the targeted goals of the development planning.

(D) Flood, drought, cyclones, cloud bursts, river or sea erosion, dam bursts and earthquakes are common on each year basis in many parts of the country which badly affects agricultural, industrial and service sector establishments.

Conclusively, it may be said that in general the disastrous events totally or partially destroy the running economic order in substantial manner. A number of direct and indirect effects may be observed on the occurrence of disasters which affect the economy badly, however, it depends upon the nature, magnitude, frequency and the intensity of the disasters. Hence, it is clear that disasters disrupt the net of development prepared by the government for economic and social development of the country. Rehabilitation process is very costly which exert extra pressure on the budget of the development, and it essentially affects the development planning negatively.
India is also prone to man-made and non-categorical disasters. Those are also not less destructive than natural disasters. Unfortunately, the intensity of man-made and non-categorical disasters is increasing. Man-made disasters are the emergency situations where the principal direct causes are identifiable with the human actions. Terrorism, class and caste conflicts, war situations have become an ever-increasing phenomenon. Epidemics, industrial and chemical hazards, crop failure, fire related incidents, road, rail, air and marine accidents, religious clashes, economic management disasters, dam failure and technological disasters are occurring frequently in the country, in which the civilian population suffers greatly with loss of lives and properties, disruption of basic services and means of livelihood.

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

The whole concept of disaster management or disaster risk reduction relies basically upon minimizing the impact of hazards and various types of disasters. Disaster management through reducing vulnerability is gaining importance internationally. The challenge before us is to introduce long-term sustainable disaster risk reducing management initiatives to the vulnerable sections of the society. Effective Contingency Action Plans are essentially be needed for dealing with contingencies arising in the wake of natural or man-made, and also to check non-categorical disasters as it provides launching of relief operations quickly and without delay.
Only Central Government is not capable to do concerted efforts towards disaster management and hence, the States and UTs are supposed to strengthen their disaster management programmes by providing more budgets for the sake of disaster management and by strengthening their disaster management machinery including disaster management units from upper to lower level.

Some states of the Indian Union have shown their seriousness in checking confidently the causes of disastrous or hazardous conditions. The formation of warning teams, vigilance teams, children protection teams and other such teams would certainly help practically to cope with the disastrous conditions. Schools, colleges Universities, NGOs and other institutions may be involved in generating awareness and also in defining a participatory and contributory role for the society during pre-disaster preparedness and post-disaster response.

**WHAT IS LACKING**

A conceptual thought process, driven by a sound fundamental approach and implemented through a well founded strategy of relief and rehabilitation. Those were the key areas of activity almost till 1999-00. Department of Relief and Rehabilitation execute disaster response, relief and rehabilitation measures. In the past, prevention/mitigation and preparedness measures were provided less importance while these efforts were urgently needed. There are still considerable gaps in the conceptual clarity and understanding of the
integral linkages and dynamics among hazards, disasters, natural environment, social and economic variables and development interventions. There is a need to have long-term and comprehensive institutional arrangements to address disaster issues.

PRESENT APPROACH AND WAYFORWARD

In the recent past, approach to disaster management has been, and is experiencing a palpable shift, initiated by the Government of India. The new approach is borne out of the new found belief that development process can not provide fruitful results unless disaster mitigation i.e., prevention measures are not taken seriously into account. Another cornerstone of the approach is that mitigation has to be multi-disciplinary, spanning across all sectors of development. The new policy also emanates from the belief that investments in mitigation and preparedness are much more cost-effective than expenditure on relief and rehabilitation.

Planners and policy makers while making policies for disaster management must engage all stakeholders and especially the community which should be benefitted from these policies and be taken on board to make the process more participatory. Such participation and consultations would also help the government to manage and run the entire process in a more pragmatic and transparent manner. The consensus in itself would facilitate a more effective implementation of policies.
Conclusively, it can be mentioned that there is an urgent need of good governance as it may be proved as a key to achieving sustainable development. An effective administration, therefore, must endeavor to limit the disruption that disasters cause to socio-economic system, which in the case of developing countries, tend to become unaffordable.

There is a great need for awareness and cultural change in the society so as to effectively work towards disaster prevention. Risk management should be an integral part of the strategy, procedures and culture. Besides having nodal and apex organizations in the higher hierarchy of the organizational structure necessary for policy formulations, guidance and coordination, what is more important is to have an organization with adequate capacities to implement the policies and action plans/strategies. It may be suggested that either a National Executive Committee for Disaster Management be set up to perform all functions related to disaster management or a separate and dedicated organization be created for implementation of policies and action plans at the national, state and district levels.

The legislative provisions should distinctly define the responsibilities of not only the newly created organizations but also the existing agencies and departments. It may well be prudent also to examine the applicability of joint, shared and collective responsibility for all activities concerning, and associated with managing disasters. Disaster management has to be integrated into our developmental plans
in a meaningful manner. We, therefore, need to translate prevention
and mitigation strategies for disaster management into a pragmatic plan
of action on a regular basis.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The preparedness and response phases in disaster management
are crucial and critical in reducing impact of disasters.
Involvement of multifarious stakeholders, therefore, need to
ensure efficient inter-departmental coordination and need to
constantly review and improve the systems in place. The
focus on these two areas, with holistic approach certainly may
help in bringing a tangible improvement in handling the
disasters.

2. Recovery phases, reconstruction and rehabilitation are the
critical phases of disaster management cycle. For these, such
plans should be made that those may offer opportunity to
reduce risk from future hazards.

3. One of the positive impacts of disaster is that the government
runs on "Build Back Better" approach, i.e., the new
constructions should be better than before, such as houses and
commercial complexes should be made on "Reduce Risk"
basis. It should also be kept in mind that the money, spent on
reconstruction of houses, commercial complexes and
infrastructure, etc. should be spent in a holistic and honest way which could provide a way to development in the real sense.

4. As disasters are frequent in 27 of the 35 states and UTs in the country, a large number of trained personnel are needed. Disaster management requires trained resource to deal with complex situations effectively to mitigate the impact of disaster on human life and property.

5. National Policy on Disaster Management describes its approach to capacity building. Capacity development is much more than training, however, it includes human resource development, equipping individual with understanding, skill and access to information, knowledge and training that enables him to perform effectively. Different ministries and departments of the government should follow the rules of coordination among them so there should be no wastage of money.

6. At the occurrence of major disasters, International assistance should be welcomed but there should be no dependency on the foreign aid for disaster management. India, in general, did not seek assistance during the relief and response phases, however, it generally welcomes sharing of expertise and also technical assistance based on various international
developments. As a signatory to the Hyogo Framework of Action, India is also committed to achieve the priorities and the objectives through systemic and institutional efforts. It should be kept in mind at the time of accepting funds from abroad that accepting more help from abroad may be harmful for the economy for so many causes.

7. The trigger mechanism, early warning system and more importantly, the dissemination of warning need to be very effective. The sequence of activities must be thoroughly rehearsed and must unfold in a flawless manner.

8. Recovery should ensure making the area, in terms of its infrastructure and livelihood, less vulnerable to any future disasters. It must be clearly understood that immediate rescue and relief is important from the point of view of saving lives and properties, what is even more important is to ensure that people whose lives are saved can make a sustainable living and face the next crisis, if it ever confronts them, from a position of strength and resilience. It certainly means that the long-term recovery should be integrated as a part of the development process albeit with some priority over other development projects.

9. During recovery period the Government should make plan to develop the afflicted area fully in all respects. The strategy
for recovery and rehabilitation should be all inclusive encompassing recovery and reconstruction in the fields of health, employment, education, welfare and essential aspects related to social, economic, political and psychological areas.

10. Corruption, i.e., corrupt practices should not enter at any stage in the recovery and rehabilitation phases of disaster management which is imperative to be ensured. The Planning Commission and the planning departments at the state or local levels must ensure that the projects are implemented with a sense of priority and commitment. There is also a need to club the development plans which are purely for prevention and mitigation of disasters. Corrupt practices should strictly be checked by the government through its monitoring agencies. Honest and dedicated dignitaries may be appointed for the proper implementation of the plans made for the disaster affected areas. It may lead a way of development.

11. Lackadaisical approach at all level be in planning, organizing or in the service delivery of disaster management needs to be viewed seriously and responsibility should invariable be fixed for lapses wherever required.