CHAPTER 4 - MANAGEMENT OF DISASTERS - EXISTING MECHANISM IN INDIA

4.1 INTRODUCTION
The recurrent occurrence of various types of disasters in the world resulting in high number of fatal casualties in developing and under-developed countries, forced the United Nations to declare the decade of 1990s as the International Decade for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDNDRR). Yokohama declaration of 1995 also solicited the nations to institutionalize disaster management framework at various levels, have political will and disaster management to be included in all developmental projects and plans. The Government of India set up High Powered Committee (HPC) in August 1999 (before the Orissa Super Cyclone) to institutionalize disaster management framework in the country. HPC submitted its report in October 2001, giving priority to mitigation over rehabilitation and reconstruction, how to command, coordinate and control a disaster, identifying various types of disasters and recommendations for setting up disaster management framework at national, state and district levels. Following one of the HPC recommendations, the functions of disaster management were transferred from Ministry of Agriculture to Ministry of Home Affairs in February 2002. (DM IN INDIA – 2009)

The constitution of disaster management framework was put in back burner due to general elections in 2004. It got revived after the South Asian Tsunami of 26th Dec 2004. The DM Bill was presented in the Parliament in May 2005 and it got the approval and became DM Act on 23rd December 2005. (DM Act – 2005) Tenth Five-Year Plan 2002-2007, for the first time, included an exclusive chapter, entitled, ’Disaster Management: The Development Perspective’. It has been mentioned in the plan that the development cannot be sustainable without mitigation being dove-tailed into the development process. Disaster mitigation and prevention were adopted as essential components of the development strategy. The Disaster Management Act 2005 envisaged DM framework at various levels; National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), chaired by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, as the apex body for disaster management in the country, the State Disaster Management Authorities
(SDMAs), chaired by the respective Chief Ministers at the state level, except in Delhi where Lt. Governor is the Chairperson and the Chief Minister is the Vice Chairperson and the District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), chaired by the respective District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners and co-chaired by the elected representative of the Zilla Parishad (Pradhan) in the respective districts. The act also provides for creation of National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) for institutional capacity development of the first responders and the community, networking with other national and international level similar institutions, training, research and documentation. NIDM also coordinates the capacity building efforts of disaster management cells in State Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs) and is also offering a few distance education programmes in disaster management in collaboration with the World Bank. The DM Act also mandated creation of National Disaster Resource Force (NDRF), the first of its kind in the World, exclusively for management of disasters in the country. Initially eight battalions were raised from among the four para military forces, viz. Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Indo Tibetan Border Police and Central Industrial Security Force. The Government, increased the strength of NDRF to 10 battalions in 2010 and sanctioned two more battalions in 2012. The two additional battalions are being provided by the fifth para military force, Sarva Sushashtra Bal (SSB). Each battalion has six companies and each company has three self contained teams, with team consisting of 45 personnel. The NDRF personnel are highly trained, are young, have state-of-the-art equipment for managing disasters and can handle all types of natural and man-made (less terrorist attacks, stampedes and law and order problems, which are police and specialized forces functions) disasters, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies.

NDMA has prepared and issued national disaster management policy. (National DM Policy, MHA, Govt of India – 2010). The themes of this policy are:

- Identifying the role and the responsibilities of all stake-holders.
- Capacity development among all the stake-holders, including community and the first responders.
- Community-based disaster management, including formulation and execution of plan at the grass root level.
- Cooperation with agencies at national, regional and international levels.
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- Techno-legal regime, research and concern about the future disasters.

4.2 ORGANIZATION OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

India has a federal system and in the federal system of Government the Central and State Governments have specific roles. However, the subject of disaster management does not specifically find mention in any of the three lists in the 7th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, i.e. in Center, State or in Concurrent lists. On the legal front, there is no enactment either of the Central or of any State Government to deal with the management of disasters. However, the country has integrated administrative machinery for management of disasters at the National, State, District and Sub-District levels. India has been divided into 36 jurisdictions known as states and union territories for the administrative purposes. The six union territories are centrally administered, while, thirty states have elected state governments. The 36 states and union territories are divided into about 676 districts (as in 2014). Each district is administrated by a Collector and District Magistrate. As certain judicial powers are vested to the Collectors and hence District Administrator is called Collector and District Magistrate.

As far as Disaster management is concerned, it is the responsibility of local administration, under the supervision of the State Government and facilitated & supported by the Government of India. An institutional Framework under the Disaster Management Act is shown in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK UNDER DM ACT 2005

Institutional Frame Work
Under the Disaster Management Act 2005
4.3 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

4.3.1 NODAL MINISTRIES - The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for coordination of relief and response and overall natural disaster management and the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is the nodal Ministry for drought management. Moreover, at the Government of India level or the federal level there was and still is a Central Relief Commissioner. The Central Relief Commissioner is a second official in hierarchy in the Ministry, below the Secretary, either an Additional secretary or a Joint Secretary. The main job of the Relief Commissioner was to arrange for relief after drought or famine and help the state governments. Other Ministries are assigned the responsibility of providing emergency support in case of disasters that fall in their purview are indicated in Table No 4.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disaster</th>
<th>Nodal Ministries MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disaster Management(other than Drought)</td>
<td>Ministry Of Home Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought Relief</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Accident</td>
<td>Ministry of Civil Aviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Railway Accident</td>
<td>Ministry of Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Disasters</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment and Forest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Disasters</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Disasters</td>
<td>Department of Atomic Energy</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: national DM policy, MHA, GoI - 2009

At the Central level, following decision-making and standing bodies are responsible for disaster management (National DM Policy, MHA, GoI – 2009):

- **Union Cabinet** headed by the Prime Minister.

- **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** NCMC is under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. All crisis emergencies, like hijacking, riots, serial bomb blasts, etc are
managed by the NCMC at the Centre. NCMC also carries out the implementation of the decisions taken by the Cabinet. Secretary, NDMA is a permanent invitee to this Committee.

● **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**  
NDMA is an apex body of Central Government for Disaster Management in India. It is responsible for and has the authority for laying down the policies, plans, and guidelines, to be followed by Ministries and Departments of the Central Government for disaster management. The NDMA is mandated to coordinate the enforcement and implementation of the policies and plans for disaster management and arrange for and oversee the provision of funds for mitigation measures, preparedness and response. The NDMA is also mandated to frame guidelines for the minimum standards of relief to be provided to persons affected by disasters and give directions regarding relief in loan repayment or grant fresh loans on such concessional terms as may be deemed appropriate. The NDMA can take such measures for prevention of disasters, of mitigation of its effects, or for preparedness and capacity building for dealing with a threatening disaster situation or disaster.

● **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)**  
A multi-disciplinary, multi-skilled, high-tech National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) of twelve battalions has been set up for dealing with all types of disasters capable of insertion by air, sea and land. This is a disaster related response force. All the battalions are equipped and trained for all natural disasters. Presently four battalions are trained in CBRN disasters. However, all battalions are being trained in managing CBRN disasters, in addition to the natural disasters. Each battalion, as mentioned above, has 18 self-contained specialist search and rescue teams of 45 personnel each including engineers, technicians, electricians, dog squads and medical/paramedics, including a qualified doctor. The total strength of each battalion is approximately 1,158. These NDRF battalions are located at twelve different locations in the country based on the vulnerability profile of India, to cut down the response time for their deployment. During the preparedness period/in a threatening disaster situation, proactive deployment of these forces has been carried out by the NDMA in consultation with state authorities. Two teams of each battalion are on half an hour notice and another two within two hours and the remaining six hours mobilization time schedule, to move by air, road or rail.
The National Disaster Mitigation Resource Centers (NDMRC), are to be co-located with the NDRF battalions. These will also serve as repositories for NDMRC bricks of relief stores for 25,000 affected people, in each of the twelve locations. These will cater to the emergent requirements especially for the first 72 to 96 hours. At Kolkata and Bhatinda/Ludhiana, additional bricks of stores for 50,000 people each will be located for high altitude areas. These stores will supplement the reserves maintained by the respective states/UTs. In addition, these centers will assist in running mock drills and capacity development programs. During disasters, besides responding with DM resources, they will act as facilitators to the states/UTs in deployment of central resources and provide much needed additional link to the centre.

- **National Executive Committee (NEC)** NEC is the executive arm of the NDMA. Home Secretary is the chairperson of this committee. All the Secretaries of 14 concerned departments/ministries at the Centre and Chief of Staff of the Chief of Staff Committee (CISC) are the members of the NEC. NEC also carries out the orders given out directly by the Government of India. It has its HQ in MHA. There is a Joint Secretary (DM) who coordinates the disaster related issues and is also the ex-officio Member Secretary of NEC. Secretary, NDMA is also a Member of NEC.

- **Technical Organizations** India Meteorological Department (cyclone/earthquake), Central Water Commission (floods), Building and Material Promotion Council (construction laws), Bureau of Indian Standard (construction norms), Defence Research & Development Organization (nuclear/biological), Directorate General Civil Defence provide specific technical support in coordination of disaster response and management functions.

### 4.4 STATE LEVEL

The State Government is primarily responsible for management of disasters. The State has appropriate institutional setup for comprehensive hazard mitigation, preparedness, response and disaster relief and recovery.

- **Administrative Set Up** The State has a dedicated administrative setup for disaster management at all levels with suitable horizontal and vertical linkages at various levels. The responsibility to cope with natural disasters is essentially that of the State Government. The role of the Central Government is supportive in terms of supplementation of physical and
financial resources. The Chief Secretary of the State heads a state level committee, known as State Executive Committee (SEC) which is in overall charge of the relief operations in the State. Instead of Relief Commissioner, the post is now known as Secretary, Disaster Management. In many states, Department of Revenue, is the coordinating department. However in some States like in Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Home Department is responsible for the management of disasters. State Governments usually have relief manuals and the districts have their DM and contingency plan that is updated from time to time, after an actual disaster, or after undergoing annual mock exercise. Each state has a Disaster Management Cell, located generally in the State Administrative Training Institute. Major funding for the faculties of the Disaster Management Cell comes from the Central Government. Each cell is supposed to carry training in disaster management and prepare plans and documents. The Government of India is working with the State Governments to restructure the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation into Department of Disaster Management, with enhanced responsibility to include mitigation and preparedness along with relief and rehabilitation.

**State Disaster Management Authority.** The states have been asked to set up State Disaster Management Authorities under the Chief Ministers with Members nominated from the experts, ministers and bureaucrats with Chief Secretary as the Member Secretary. He/she is also the Chairperson of State Executive Committee (SEC). All decisions of the Authority are deemed to be a decision of the Government and no further references are required in order to implement the decisions taken by the Authority. Most of the States have constituted SDMAs, but a few of them only are functional. SEC is responsible to implement the decisions of the SDMA and that of the NDMA in the State.

### 4.5 DISTRICT LEVEL:

The Collector of the district is the administrative head for all matters within the district. The Collector is an Indian Administrative Service cadre official. Under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 each district is mandated to have a district disaster management authority, who will make a District DM plan, set up an Emergency Operations Centre at the District HQ and for capacity development, carry out activities for disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation activities.
The district administration is the focal point for implementation of all governmental plans and activities. The actual day-to-day function of administering relief is the responsibility of the Collector/ District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner who exercises coordinating and supervising powers over all departments at the district level.

At the district level, the Collector & District Magistrate is the chief coordinator and focal point for coordinating all activities relating to prevention, mitigation and preparedness apart from his existing responsibilities pertaining to relief and response. Each District is supposed to have Incident Response Team (IRT) at District, Sub District and local level, with each IRT consisting of designated Incident Commander, Deputy Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Information Officer and Liaison Officer as Command Staff. Besides the IRT consists of Planning, Operations and Logistics & Administrative Teams as per the Guidelines on Incident Response System issued by NDMA in July 2010. For mitigation, preparedness, general awareness and capacity development, programs are required to be formulated in order to build the capacity of the District to face the disasters squarely. District also has a Crisis Management Committee headed by the Collector/Deputy Commissioner.

4.6 URBAN BODIES LEVEL - The responsibility to manage disasters in the urban areas rests with the Municipal Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer. The urban local body (Municipal Corporations/Councils) are responsible for putting in place techno-legal regime and its compliance, training and capacity building of municipal staff, formulation of the City Disaster Management Plan, conducting general awareness programs in the urban areas, functioning of fire services, setting up of search and rescue teams, operationalizing emergency medical teams, setting up ambulance services and such other activities, like mitigation projects for urban flooding, rain water harvesting, widening and cleaning drains, particularly storm water drains, etc., to be notified by State Department of Disaster Management from time to time.

4.7 BLOCK AND TEHSIL LEVEL - At the block/Tehsil level, Incident Response Teams headed by Sub Divisional Officer/Tehsildar have been constituted. Such teams will help for drawing Disaster Preparedness Plan at sub division/tehsil/village level also. In this Teams. The constitution of the IRT will be same as at the district level. Officers from concerned departments
and representatives of local panchayat body can be associated as invited members to the IRT. The Team is responsible for all the aspects of disaster management including mitigation preparedness, response and relief.

4.8 PANCHAYAT LEVEL - In each Panchayat, a Disaster Management Committee is responsible to see all activities in disaster management. The Panchayat is also required to constitute a Panchayat Disaster Management Team consisting of officials and non-officials to organize training for them to enable them to discharge their duties properly.

4.9 VILLAGE LEVEL - At village level a Disaster Management Committee consisting of officials and non-officials is required to be constituted. The committee is responsible for awareness generation, warning dissemination, community preparedness plan, adoption of safe housing practices and organizing and cooperating relief in post disaster situations.

4.10 OTHER INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS -
Other than the national, state, district and local levels, there are various institutional stakeholders who are involved in disaster management at various levels in the country. These include the police and para-military forces, civil defense and home-guards, fire services, ex-servicemen, non-government organizations (NGOs), public and private sector enterprises, media and HAM operators, all of whom have important roles to play.

4.10.1 ARMED FORCES - The Armed Forces constitute the core of the government’s response capacity and are supposed to be the second responders in a major disaster, but generally become the first responders, if located nearby. The Indian Armed Forces are supposed to be called upon to intervene and take on specific tasks only when the situation goes beyond the capability of civil administration. Due to their ability to organize action, speed of operational response and the resources and capabilities, the Armed Forces have played a major role in emergency support functions such as communications, search and rescue operations, health and medical facilities, transportation, power, food and civil supplies, public works and engineering and maintain law and order especially in the immediate aftermath of disaster. Disaster management plans should incorporate the role expected of them so that the procedure for deploying them is smooth and
quick. The Army should nominate Lead Formations, region-wise, who should be equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and given proper training in handling such equipment. They should also take part in the general awareness programs of the community, seminars, conferences on DM and mock exercises on various types of perceived disasters, conducted by NDMA and SDMAs.

4.10.2 EXTERNAL LINKAGES - The Government of India is a member of various international organizations in the field of disaster response and relief. While, as a national policy, no request for assistance or appeals is made to the international community in the event of a disaster, assistance offered suo motto is accepted. Linkages exist with the following organizations:

(a) UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), which has been made responsible by UN General Assembly mandate for all international disaster response.

(b) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), responsible for mitigation and prevention aspects of disaster management.

(c) UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) System. Streamlining Institutional Arrangements for Disaster Response.

4.11 CONCLUSION

India has formulated the DM framework as per the UN Charter and its contents and intents are being appreciated all over the World. Many a countries, especially our neighbours including Pakistan have drawn their National Disaster Management framework on the lines of India’s DM Act 2005 which gives detailed DM framework at all four levels of administration, namely Centre, State, District and Local levels. Response force at the Centre level, viz NDRF has been raised to respond to any type of perceived disaster anywhere in the country. State Disaster Response Force is being created at the State level. Civil Defence has been revamped to act as Collector’s DM force, immediately on occurrence of a disaster. For training purposes NIDM has been institutionalized for capacity development of community, responders and NGOs, networking, documenting and for research purposes. Penal section has been incorporated and lastly financial cover has been given by starting mitigation and response funds at various levels. A beginning has been made but momentum has to be maintained to sustain it.