Chapter-6

ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

“NGO’s are Non – profit organizations or associations of private citizens with a common interest to assist the disaster affected people”. NGOs are typically values based organizations which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. NGOs range in their size and scope from large charities to regional, national and community based self help groups. They include research centers, religious institutions and professional associations. NGOs have contributed immensely in the development of our marginalized sections and backward areas through their selfless service. NGOs have more competitive advantages and flexibility of operations in fields like awareness generation, community level preparedness and capacity building of communities.

Volunteerism and social service has deep roots in India. Non – Governmental Organizations are playing very important role in different stages of Disaster reduction and different elements are attributed for its successful operation. The NGOs have some important skills for rescue, coordination and for relief activities. They have the flexibility to respond quickly and efficiently at the local level and are often the first organizer group to reach the disaster site. For any Ngo, Commitment is very important for rehabilitation, cooperation and reconstruction.
Today, NGOs play an important role in disaster response and mitigation indifferent regions. India and natural disasters have had a long unfortunate relationship together. Floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and landslides have been recurrent phenomena. NGOs are active in responding to various disasters in different phases. In the immediate phase, the NGO response focused on emergency food relief, temporary shelter, emergency medical aid, debris removal and habitat restoration, trauma counseling, and raising families. Some NGOs also distributed temporary shelter materials among disaster – affected people soon after the disaster. Rejuvenating people’s spirits and raising awareness about reconstruction challenges was an important part of NGOs intervention.

The Non – Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been providing support in critical sectors like health, education, water supply and sanitation, shelter and infrastructure, restoration of livelihood, food security and nutrition, environment, etc. India’s multi – hazard risk and vulnerability to natural and man – made disasters, NGOs have been playing a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance to disaster – affected people in most of the severe disasters like the Latur earthquake in 1993, Orissa super cyclone in 1999, Bhuj earthquake in 2001, Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, Kashmir earthquake in 2005, Barmer floods in 2006, Kosi floods in 2008, cyclones Aila and Laila and the more recent cloud burst in Leh in August 2010, apart from participating in providing relief to disaster affected communities in various other localized disasters.

The selfless way in which the NGOs often come forward to assist the disaster victims in different parts of the country is appraisable. In spite of several constraints, NGOs reach the affected people after a disaster promptly, help in the establishment of temporary relief camps, and contribute to building community resilience to face disasters. This paper examines how NGOs can play an important
role to highlight the roles played by various agencies during the different stages of disasters occurred in India and also examine especially the role of government.

There has been a paradigm shift in the approach to disaster management during the last one decade. The shift is from a relief centric approach to a multi dimensional endeavor involving diverse scientific, engineering financial and social processes to adopt a multi disciplinary and multi sectoral approach with stress on building up capabilities of community to enable them to work towards their own risk reduction. The role of NGOs in this context therefore assumes added significance.

The High Powered Committee (HPC) on Disaster Management carried out a nation – wide consultation process with over 600 NGOs to address the lack of a well – coordinated network between the government systems and the NGO sector and also among the NGOs themselves. HPC recommended a nationwide network of NGOs for coordinated action encompassing all aspects of disaster management. The Disaster Management Act, 2005 has given legislative back – up to this endeavor by entrusting the State Executive Committees and District Authorities with the responsibility to advise, assist and coordinate and District Authorities are mandated to encourage the involvement of NGOS and voluntary social welfare institutions working at grass root level in the districts for disaster management.

The role of NGOs in the pre – disaster phase should include awareness generation, education, training, and formation of village level Task Force. Disaster Management Committees and Teams, development of Disaster Management Plans, conduct of mock drills, vulnerability assessment and coordination with Government and non government agencies. The NGOs can play a key role in the immediate aftermath of disasters by extending assistance in rescue and first aid, sanitation and hygiene, damage assessment and assistance to external agencies.
bringing relief materials. During the post disaster phase, the NGOs can take a lead by providing technical and material support for safe construction, revival of educational institutions and restoration of means of livelihood and assist the government in monitoring the pace of implementation for various reconstruction and recovery programs.

We need to encourage NGOs already active at grass root level at each district or sub – district level. The larger NGOs can provide technical and material support to these NGOs since they are already working closely with the community and have better appreciation of their vulnerabilities, needs and the capacity for revival so as to bring them back to the pre – disaster stage at the earliest.

A well – coordinated approach giving a lead role to local NGOs with necessary linkages with larger NGOs and District Administration will go a long way in institutionalizing the role of NGOs in disaster risk reduction.

6.2 India’s disaster risk and Vulnerability

India’s topography, geo – climatic conditions as well as the prevalence of socio – economic vulnerability among the marginalized and weaker sections of the population makes it one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. About 40 million hectares of land in India is identified as flood – prone and on an average 18.6 million hectares of land gets flooded annually. More than half of India’s total area of 3.28 million square kilometers falls in moderate to high seismic risk zones, with the Himalayas, the Rann of Kutch, the of Kutch, the Assam – Meghalaya Region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands being the most active regions signifying very high damage risk. Of the nearly 7,500 km along coastline, approximately 5,700 km is prone to cyclones arising from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Cyclonic storms and storm surges during high tides in the fragile
coastal areas every year threaten the lives, property and livelihoods of the coastal poor. The hilly regions of India are susceptible to forest fires, landslides and snow avalanche hazards. The emerging concerns of climate change pose serious challenges, impacting the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in coastal areas and the mountains regions. The most vulnerable to landslides are the Himalayan Mountains followed by the North – Eastern hill ranges.

The impact of over a million kutchha houses getting destroyed annually due to floods and other disasters and large tracts of agricultural land getting silted during floods, results in widespread malnutrition, homelessness, disruption of education and erosion of livelihoods, mostly felt by the poor. The growing vulnerability of populations affected by both intensive and extensive events leads to the exclusion of a large number of people from the benefits of the expanding market economy. The increasing concentration of people in large and medium cities has not been matched with the growth in the supply of housing and civic amenities. The high demand for land has led to the use of marginal land such as floodplains unstable slopes and reclaimed and which are prone to natural hazards for building houses. People living in unplanned and unregulated settlements are particularly exposed to floods, which are compounded in urban areas by the obstruction of natural drainage and blockage of storm water drainage. The taming of rivers by construction of embankments has also had its adverse impacts. The trends and patterns of climate – induced hazards are of late presenting more extreme events not only in known hazard prone areas, but also in new areas, such as Barmer in Rajasthan that experienced unprecedented floods in 2006. Climate change will increasingly contribute to the vulnerability of over millions of people living in rural areas of India who are directly dependent on climate – sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forests and fisheries, and on natural resources such as
water, mangroves, minor forest produce and grasslands for their subsistence and livelihoods.

Major disasters that struck the country in the recent decades include the Latur Earthquake in Maharashtra in 1993, Chamoli, Earthquake in Uttarakhand in 1993. Super Cyclone in Orissa in 1999, Bhuj Earthquake in Gujarat in 2001, Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, Kashmir Earthquake in 2005, Barmer Floods in Rajasthan in 2006, Kosi Floods in Bihar in 2008. Cyclone Aila In West Bengal in 2009, the Cyclone Laila in Andhra Pradesh and more recently the devastating cloudburst in Leh in August 2010. There have been many other disasters in the past two decades that have had lesser yet devastating impacts.

The coordination of Non – Governmental Organizations (NGOs) among themselves and with government agencies has been improving over the years and NGOs have made significant contributions in most of the recent disasters. The NGOs that responded to the Orissa Super cyclone of 1999 came together under the banner of the Orissa Disaster Mitigation Mission (ODMM) for coordination purposes. After the Gujarat Earthquake of 2001, a network of NGOs under the banner of Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan, popularly called “Abhiyan”, helped to establish a network of information kiosks called SETUs for two way information exchange between communities and the Government in the earthquake affected areas. After the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004, in Nagapattinam in TamilNadu, more than 500 NGOs responding to the Tsunami came together as the NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (NCRC) to collect, collate, and share information. In Bihar during Kosi Floods, Sphere India supported the setting up of the inter – agency working groups at the state and district levels. Besides the formal arrangements, informal community based systems also exist in many areas, such as the civil society flood early warning systems that operate through
community groups in the villages covering the flood – prone areas from upstream Assam to even the downstream villages in Bangladesh. Most of these have been isolated experiences of synergetic partnership between civil society organizations with government institutions, facilitated to a large extent by the senior administrations at the field level.

The experience of civil society actors in many immediate posts – disaster situations, facing serious operational constraints in extending their services to the disaster – affected communities, makes it imperative to search for appropriate institutional mechanisms for efficient coordination between multiple stakeholders before, during and after disasters, especially in disaster – prone areas which face recurring disasters. In India, the leadership and facilitation of such coordination arrangements for improving the effectiveness of disaster management (DM) at the national, state and district levels will have to be vested with the institutional mechanisms created as a part of the Disaster Management Act 2005 (DM Act 2005)

6.3 Institutional and legal Framework

After the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 26th December 2004, the national leadership in India pioneered the mainstreaming of disaster management in development planning by envisioning a paradigm shift by moving away from a reactive post – disaster relief – centric approach to a more proactive approach of strengthening pre – disaster preparedness, mitigation and emergency response capabilities in the country. The GOI enacted DM Act 2005, a law on disaster management (Act 53 of 2005 on 23rd December, 2005) to provide the statutory legitimacy for the required institutional mechanisms at the national, State and district levels for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of disaster management plans, ensuring
measures by the arms of the Government for prevention and mitigating effects of disasters and for undertaking a holistic, coordinated and prompt response to any disaster situation. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was established as the apex body for DM in India, under the Chairmanship of the Hon’ble Prime Minister; the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) were established under the chairmanship of the respective Chief Ministers; and the District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) were established under the Chairmanship of the District Collectors, Deputy Commissioners or District Magistrates respectively and were co–chaired by the elected representative of the respective District. In order to ensure a holistic approach involving the concerned ministries and/or departments, mainstreaming of disaster management into their plans for disaster management has been made mandatory.

The DM Act 2005 recognizes disaster risk and vulnerability in the specific geographic areas may induce disasters. The proactive approach in the DM Act 2005 to address disaster risk and vulnerability through pre – disaster preparedness and multi – stakeholder participation, including coordination of the activities of the NGOs at various levels. Sections 38 (2)(a), 22(2)(j) and 30(2)(xix) of the Act mandate every State Government, SEC of SDMA and DDMA respectively for collaboration with stakeholder agencies including NGOs for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of DM. Similarly the Act mandates NGOs to act in an equitable and non – discriminatory manner for the purpose of assisting or protecting the disaster affected communities or for providing relief to the affected communities or while dealing with any effects of threatening disaster situations and has fixed the responsibility to monitor this on SEC and DDMAs of the State vide sections 24(j) and 34(I) respectively. The above provisions ensure that the concerned DM interventions being addressed are supported and facilitated by the
civil society organizations working at the grass roots and also takes care of the ground realities.

The new institutional framework for DM envisages policy formulation and preparation of Guidelines and Plans by NDMA at the national level and implementation of the same through State, district and sub – district level government departments and agencies. The DM Act, 2005 provides for the specific roles for Local Bodies in DM including Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIS) as well as Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) such as Municipalities and Municipal Councils.

As per the DM Act 2005, the Central Government provides the overall coordination of emergency response in disaster situations, in close cooperation with NDMA; emergency response has been made the responsibility of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF); and Training and Capacity Building is the responsibility of the NIDM, with the support of the Centers for Disaster Management at the ATIs.

The primary responsibility for DM rests with the States. The institutional mechanisms put in place at the Centre, State and District levels will help the States to manage disasters in an effective manner. Traditionally the DM activities at the State levels were handled by the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation. In most of the States, this department has been renamed as the Department of Disaster Management. These Departments play a very active supportive role to State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs).
The institutional structure outlined in the DM Act 2005 and the National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM) essentially promotes the new holistic and proactive approach to DM without disturbing the other mechanisms that existed in the country. The NPDM, prepared by NDMA and approved by the Cabinet in October 2009, was released by the Prime Minister of India on 10th January, 2010 at the NDMA meeting. The NPDM enunciates the national vision of a safer and disaster resilient India where the process of holistic and integrated disaster management will hinge on the community, with momentum and sustenance through the collective efforts of all government agencies and NGOs. The Policy also enunciates community based DRR through participation of civil society stakeholders, to be co-ordinate by the SDMAs and DDMAs. The States continue to have the primary responsibility for DM with the District Collector, Deputy Commissioner or District Magistrate as the cases may be, acting as the real disaster manager on ground. The Act and the Policy emphasize the accountability factor for different actors.

The NPDM clearly lays down the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in disaster preparedness, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and response. It also encourages the NGOs to work for awareness generation, empowerment and training of communities for disaster risk reduction. The Policy also seeks the involvement and contribution of NGOs for owner-driven reconstruction (ODR) in post-disaster situations. The role of NGOs, CBOs and the other stakeholders has been recognized as potential partners in the NPDM.

As stated earlier, the most important development in DM in India in recent times is the enactment of the DM Act 2005 that has established requisite
institutional mechanisms for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of disaster management plans at the National, State and District levels. Sections 35 and 38 specifically emphasis the coordination of actions with NGOs. The NPDM also States the national vision for community mobilization and participation in DM and aims to provide momentum and substance through the collective efforts of all government agencies and NGOs. There is emphasis on community based disaster management, including last mile integration of the policy, plans and execution and early warning dissemination. Promoting a productive partnership with NGOs is a prominent thrust area in the NPDM.

NDMA has the responsibility for laying down policies, plans and guidelines for DM at the national level, while the SDMAs will lay down policies and plans for disaster management in the State. SDMAs will, inter alia, approve the respective State Plans in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the NDMA, coordinate the implementation of the respective State Plans, recommend provision of funds for mitigation and preparedness measures and review the development plans of the different departments of the State to ensure integration of prevention, preparedness and mitigation measures. The DDMAs will act as the planning, coordinating and implementing bodies for DM at the District level and will take all necessary measures for the purposes of DM in accordance with the Guidelines laid down by NDMA and the respective SDMAs.

Local authorities including PRIs, ULBs, District and Cantonment Boards and Town Planning Authorities will ensure capacity building of their officers and employees for managing disasters, carrying out relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the affected areas and will prepare disaster management
plans (DMPs) in consonance with the Guidelines of the NDMA, SDMAs and DDMAs.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) has the Union Home Secretary as the Chairperson and the Secretaries of the GOI in the concerned Ministers/Departments as members. NEC is the executive committee of NDMA, and is mandated to assist the NDMA the discharge of its functions and also ensure compliance of the directions issued by the Central Government. NEC will monitor the implementation of Guidelines issued by NDMA. The State Governments have constituted the State Executive Committees (SECs) to assist the SDMAs in the performance of their functions. The Chief Secretaries to the State Governments will head the respective SEC and coordinate and monitor the implementation of the National Policy, the National Plan and the respective State Plans. The SECs will also provide information to NDMA relating to different aspects of DM in the respective States.

NIDM, in partnership with other research institutions, is responsible for capacity development, along with training, research, documentation and development of a national level information base. It will network with other knowledge – based institutions and function within the broad policies and Guidelines lay down by NDMA. It will also organize the training of trainers. DM officials, community representatives, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The DM Act 2005 has mandated the constitution of the NDRF to respond effectively to a threatening disaster situation or a disaster. The NDRF is a multi – disciplinary, multi – skilled, high – tech force for responding to all types of disasters and are capable of insertion by air, sea and land. Presently NDRF has
eight battalions drawn from the BSF, CRPF, CISF, and ITBP and two more battalions to be developed in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have been approved by the Cabinet. The NDRF battalions are located at different locations in the country based on the vulnerability profile in such a way that they will be able to be developed to any disaster affected areas with minimum response time. The NDRF units will impart training programmes for community capacity building in improving disaster preparedness and for strengthening public awareness on disaster risk and vulnerability. NDRF will also impart basic training to the State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) in their respective locations. It is also proposed to set up a Nagpur for the NDRF and other first response agencies to provide training for trainers and to meet other national and international commitments.

NGOs consider disaster response as a continuum between Disasters and Development. However, their resource base may not permit them to sustain their operations in the long – run. NGOs invariably bring diverse the divide between disasters and development.

Post disaster, in the short term, NFOs respond with relief materials and services while in the long term some of them contribute to long term recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation as well as community based disaster risk reduction. The diversity of response strategies that come with NGOs help complement each other and in turn complement government work. Some NGOs specialize in delivering sectoral response like health, food, wat-san, food security and livelihoods etc. while the others target their response towards vulnerable children, elderly, handicapped, excluded, etc among the affected population.

Disaster response is one of the important means to check the spiral of poverty which is driven by disasters. Entrenched/chronic poverty is seen to be one
of the constant features of districts affected by seasonal emergencies. Recovery strategies and actions undertaken by NGOs after a disaster aim at ‘building back better’. There are specific operational challenges in organizing and completing a proportionate and time bound disaster response in such districts before the next round of disaster arrives. An efficient post disaster service delivery system needs to be built at district level that has space for NGOs, community and other humanitarian actors to complement the governments’ capacity for preparedness and disaster response.

Globally, humanitarian assistance has been governed by common principles and believes in placing the humanitarian imperative first to ensure that human suffering is alleviated. The common principles adhered to in this regard are – first, the right to life with dignity; second, the right to protection and security; third, the right to receive humanitarian assistance. It is important to strongly recognize that Red Cross is an important part of the non – Governmental disaster response capacity and the humanitarian response system. Similarly UN agencies, as per their respective mandates, work loosely with various ministries and line – departments to support the disaster response.

Both the Governments and Civil Society Organizations are expected to act in accordance with the code of conduct provided by the Red Cross, People – in - Aid and Sphere Standards in Disaster Response and the Humanitarian Charter.

6.4 NGO Scenario and Disaster Management in India

NGOs are organizations registered under various Indian laws such as the Societies Registration Act, 1860, Section 25(1) of Companies Act, 1956 meant for non-
profit companies, or State-specific Public Charitable Trust Acts. NGOs work on a variety of areas like humanitarian assistance, sectorial development interventions and sustainable development. NGOs play important roles in different stages of the Disaster Management Cycle.

Volunteerism and social service has deep roots in India, since time immemorial, even though it received special significance during the freedom struggle through the Gandhian concept of Shramdaan, implying the offering of free labour for some noble cause like rural development, construction of social assets and public infrastructure and amenities, etc. In post-Independent India, the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been providing support in critical sectors like health, education, water supply and sanitation, shelter and infrastructure, restoration of livelihoods, food security and nutrition, environment, etc. Given India’s multi-hazard risk and vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters, NGOs have been playing a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected people in most of the severe disasters like the Latur earthquake in 1993, Orissa super cyclone in 1999, Bhuj earthquake in 2001, Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, Kashmir earthquake in 2005, Barmer floods in 2006, Kosi floods in 2008, cyclones Aila and Laila and the more recent cloud burst in Leh in August 2010, apart from participating in providing relief to disaster affected communities in various other localised disasters.

In the recent past, the role of NGOs in disaster management (DM) has started changing from providing post-disaster relief to strengthening pre-disaster preparedness and mitigation through capacity building, public awareness campaigns, mock exercises, workshops and conferences, etc. NGOs have also started to collaborate with corporate entities in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the field of DM at
State, District and Sub-district levels. Till recently, the work of NGOs in the field of DM has been mostly sporadic, reactive, responsive and driven by local level compulsions in the geographic areas where they are implementing development projects and very often they faced enormous challenges in coordinating with the government machinery and even among NGOs themselves.

In line with its mandate as envisaged in the Disaster Management Act 2005 (DM Act 2005), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has circulated National Disaster Management Guidelines on Role of NGOs in Disaster Management defining the role of NGOs in disaster management.

NGOs are organizations that are non–profit making, voluntary and independent of government, engaged in activities concerning various societal and developmental issues. The NGO sector has always been very vibrant in India, and is based on the concept of volunteerism and care for the fellow citizens. Many organizations also undertake DM activities, as a core area of ongoing work in the case of some agencies while some others participate only in post – disaster response when the communities they work with face sudden emergencies. A very large number of NGOs, both international and national, have significantly large field presence that often extend across a number of States. They are well organized in terms of operations, administration and finances. Their work is complemented by local and community based organizations, which are most spontaneous and informal in nature, and work at the grassroots levels often from within communities.

Several NGOs have access to significant resources in the form of money, material, equipment, human resources, knowledge and skills to deal with disaster related situations through various communities – centric processes and approaches. Many have very systematic and time – tested arrangements for accessing
international humanitarian resource. Many of these humanitarian players have significant sectoral competencies with proven track records and demonstrated results by virtue of their work in various parts of India and also in other countries. NGOs work in the sectors of women and child care, health, education, livelihood promotion, water and sanitation, shelter and habitat promotion, advocacy and various other aspects of disaster preparedness, mitigation and response. NGOs play a significant role in slow onset disasters such as droughts, through work that is developmental and at the same time reduces risk as well as responding to the relief needs.

The strong field presence of many NGOs at the national, state, district and sub-district levels, even extending to remote settlements in far flung areas indicate the high credibility and acceptability that they enjoy with local communities. The strong contact with local community groups like Self Help Groups (SHGs), farmers groups, youth groups, women’s groups, village health committees, watershed committees, etc. and their participation in the local level implementation of government’s flagship programmes and their innovative approaches in employment generation, income generation, poverty alleviation and natural resource regeneration and climate change adaptation/mitigation projects make them ideal partners in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction (DRR) in development plans at various levels.

NGOs not only work on their own but also work in partnership with other national and international organizations, UN agencies, community based organizations, local governments, and self help groups and government bodies. Over the years NGOs have also come together through networks, coalitions and alliances so as to offer value added humanitarian services, notable examples being Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), Voluntary Action Network India
(VANI), Sphere India, Alliance for Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (AADRR), and Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA).

The Red Cross and its affiliates generally termed as non–government humanitarian agencies, though not falling strictly under the category of NGOs, are very significant humanitarian players in the disaster management arena in the country. The Red Cross has country wide presence with national headquarters in Delhi, State headquarters in the State capitals and field offices in most districts of the country.

The NGOs, CBOs, corporate sector entities and the faith based organizations who have extended humanitarian relief assistance to disaster affected communities in some of the most devastating disasters in India in the past have been able to reach the remote settlements and provide their assistance to people who were not reached earlier by routine channels of provision of relief to the disaster affected people. Many of these organizations have demonstrated profound sensitivity to the needs of excluded and marginalized sections, especially the elderly and the differently disabled and have advocated for the need to recognize the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Both NGOs and the Red Cross work by engaging volunteers and paid humanitarian professional staff. The international humanitarian organizations, UN Agencies and the international affiliates of the Red Cross have contributed significantly in the development of a large pool of skilled human resource in the country that are readily deployed in any disaster situation. Government agencies have often made use of this resource.

There is a large scope for improving the engagement of NGOs in DM and on efficiently utilizing their unique advantages and core competencies by
strengthening humanitarian coalitions, alliances and NGO networks. There is also need to strengthen public awareness, capacity building and knowledge management. Institutional mechanisms for the advocacy and engagement of NGOs with government agencies on DM concerns requires to be strengthened. Replication and scaling up of community level good practices has to be promoted. Humanitarian advocacy needs to be carried out for public policy/system reform, awareness on entitlement and grievance redressal. There is need to promote quality, accountability and do no harm principles and standards. Promotion of the principle of collaborative, consultative and unified action to complement and supplement government action in DM is of critical importance. The sector also needs to work concertedly for promoting community participation, good governance, accountability and transparency.

- During the period 2002 to 2007, in collaboration with MHA, Government of India, a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Project was implemented by UNDP in 176 districts in 21 states of the country. As a part of this project, training programmes and mock exercises were conducted at the national, State, district and sub – district levels, DM Plans were prepared at the district, block and village levels, task forces were set up at the village and gram panchayat levels from the DRM Project, UNDP has drawn up a DRR project, in collaboration with NDMA, MoUD and MHA, GOI for strengthening the institutional mechanisms; for DM at the State and district levels and for addressing Urban Disaster Risk in the megacities and large cities.

- The electronic and print media play a very significant role in creating awareness and in disseminating information to the general public on DM
related issues. They often also act as watchdogs to ensure that the larger public interest is safeguarded.

- Private sector engagement in post-disaster situations, especially in distributing relief assistance to disaster-affected communities as a part of their Corporate Sector Responsibility (CSR), needs to be augmented with special emphasis on strengthening pre-disaster preparedness and mitigation in disaster-prone areas with the help of local NGOs. The Bhopal Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas leak highlights the need to prepare Off Site DM Plans in industrial units that deal with hazardous chemicals.

6.5 Challenges and Opportunities

Key challenges and opportunities in disaster management need to be identified and steps taken for building synergy among Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (GO-NGO)

- NGOs can play a very important role in mobilizing communities and in linking ULBs with corporate sector entities for initiating DRR related activities.

- The strong linkages which NGOs have with grassroots communities can be effectively harnessed for creating greater public awareness on disaster risk and vulnerability, initiating appropriate strategies for strengthening the capacity of stakeholder groups to improve disaster preparedness, mitigation and improving the emergency response capacities of the stakeholders.

- In addressing the emerging concerns of climate change adaptation and mitigation, NGOs can play a very significant role in working with local communities and introducing innovative approaches based on the good practices followed in other countries.
• NGOs can bring in the financial resources from bilateral and multilateral donors for implementing pragmatic and innovative approaches to deal with disaster risk and vulnerability, by effectively integrating and converging the various government programmes, schemes and projects to create the required synergy in transforming the lives of at-risk communities.

Some of the challenges encountered while responding to disaster are the following:

• **Weak Coordination:**

Inadequate coordination among government officials and Civil Society humanitarian personnel results in weak response and suboptimal performance, as well as differences in the quality of inputs provided by different NGOs.

• **Brief time spans for relief interventions:**

Many NGOs provide relief in the first 15 to 60 days, shut down the operations and move away without any linkage to long term rehabilitation and recovery of the disaster-affected communities.

• **Neglect of remote and inaccessible disaster-affected areas:**

Inadequate physical access to the affected communities and officials hampers assessments, information coordination, convergence and sustained operations.

• **Tendency to rush to the epicenter of disasters:**
While the epicenters require special attention, it is also equally important to ensure that the peripheral areas impacted by disasters are not neglected or ignored while formulating intervention strategies.

- **Inadequate adherence to humanitarian standards and good practices:**
  In general, there is a growing realization the global instruments setting minimum standards in disaster response have not been contextualized to India.

- **Inadequate transparency and accountability to donors and disaster affected communities:**
  The process of disaster relief is sometimes seen as a charitable humanitarian activity which does not require the practice of transparency and accountability towards donors and disasters affected communities.

- **Neglect of Rural Urban Diversity and Primacy of Attention to Rural Areas:**
  The humanitarian assistance is still primarily targeted towards rural areas and the diverse needs of vulnerable urban poor are often not addressed adequately.

- **Lack of clear exit strategy during transition:**
  Most often, the scope and timeline of the response is not defined. When an NGO withdraws from the area, the communities are left to fend for themselves.

- **Advocacy Role of NGOs – “Do No Harm Approach”:**
  Development projects, if not formulated with a comprehension of disaster risk and vulnerability profiles at the local levels, can increase disaster risk and vulnerability of people, assets, environment and their livelihoods.
At the same time there are numerous opportunities that are provided by the NGOs, as given below, which need to be optimally utilized.

- **Setting up a Functional NGO Coordination Platform during non-emergency times** will ensure that appropriate coordination happens during response operations and development interventions.

- **NGO institutional arrangements** need to be made in order to collaborate in developing the roadmap for short, medium and long term operational strategies and plans.

- **Common accessibility to disaster affected areas** can become a reality if NGOs engage with local bodies, district and State level disaster management focal points right from developing DM planning and operational strategies.

- **Focus on the most vulnerable** needs to be the approach for responding to disasters as well as reducing disaster risks. Updated information should be maintained to support this.

- **Setting and Committing to Minimum standards by NGO:**
  Ready and user-friendly instruments for humanitarian standards need to be adopted and contextualized as a collective initiative, along with transparency and accountability principles to be institutionalized at all levels.

  - Institutionalizing Knowledge Creation and Management: Consolidation of institutional learning processes and creation of a public domain knowledge bank as well as educational programmes will support long term improvements in capacities.
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<th>Issues</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Geographic spread of NGOs</td>
<td>Develop a database of NGOs at all levels working on disaster management focusing on geographic outreach and thematic capacities of the organizations (Action DDMAs with the help of NGOs)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Volume of support provided by NGOs</td>
<td>Compile statistics on quantum of support provided by NGOs at all levels, both international and national (Action NDMA, SDMAs and DDMAs)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Institutional mechanisms</td>
<td>Establish meaningful engagement with concerned government bodies such as Planning Commission Finance Commission, NDMA, nodal ministries, state level bodies, district level bodies, local level bodies and other stakeholders. (Action: National, State and District NGO Task Forces in DM)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Establishing inter agency mechanisms for coordination and networking activities (information</td>
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and knowledge management, training and capacity building, collaborative advocacy, quality and accountability) at all levels (Action NDMA, SDMAs and DDMAs)

| 5 | Accessibility | Establish protocols for cooperation and ensure access to the affected areas with support from government agencies at respective levels like NDRF and SDRF that have good logistics base to reach inaccessible areas (Action: NDMA, SDMAs and DDMAs) |
| 6 | Community participation | Ensure community participation in assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring of activities at all levels (Action: NDMA, SDMAs and DDMAs) |
| 7 | Focus on most vulnerable rather than only on epicenter | National level: Advocate will all actors to reach out to gap areas State level: Coordinate among actors to identify gap areas. |

**6.6 Role of NGOs in Disaster Preparedness**
The NGOs play an important role in different phases of disaster management and risk reduction, but very often the efforts of the NGOs do not succeed in achieving desired results due to lack of effective coordination with other stakeholder groups, especially government machinery, and among the NGOs themselves. In the absence of proper Guidelines on the role of NGOs in DM, the huge capacity of NGOs, CSOs and faith-based organizations available in India is not being optimally utilized. The ad hoc systems of NGO operations also raise certain concerns. We need to bridge the gaps in implementation of disaster management framework, to institutionalize the role of NGOs in disaster management and to strengthen the quality and accountability of NGOs in India.

The provisions of the DM Act 2005, desire the National DM Plan be developed, reviewed and updated annually. The Plan shall include the measures to be taken for preparedness and capacity building. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 -2015 adopted by over 168 governments across the world including India specifies five priorities for action in the holistic framework for reducing disaster risks. The High Powered Committee (HPC) on DM Plans set up by the Government of India in 1999 carried out a nationwide consultation process with over 600 NGOs to address the issue of coordination between the governments’ machinery and the NGO sector and also among the NGOs themselves at the national, state and district levels. HPC recommended a nationwide network of NGOs for coordinated action encompassing all aspects of disaster management. The DM Act, 2005 provided the legislative back up to this endeavor by entrusting the SECs with the responsibility to advise, assist, facilitate and coordinate the activities of NGOs engaged in DM.

6.7 Role of NGOs in Disaster Mitigation
Due to India’s geographical topographical and geo-climate features, the country is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. In the recent past, India has also experienced several man-made disasters. The MIC gas leak in the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in 1984 is estimated to be one of the most devastating chemical disasters in the recent history. During the past two decades, India has witnessed several natural disasters, most important of them being the Uttarkashi earthquake 1991, Latur earthquake 1993, Jabalpur earthquake 1997, Chamoli earthquake 1999, Bhuj earthquake 2001 and the Jammu and Kashmir earthquake 2005, the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, the Super cyclone in Orissa in 1999 and a few devastating landslides and snow avalanches. In addition, several States in the various regions of the country face recurring floods, while large areas in several parts of India experience more frequent and longer periods of drought. The frequency, intensity and the impact of disaster has been increasing in the recent past. The number of multi-hazard prone districts has alone increased as indicated in the Vulnerability Atlas for various natural disasters prepared by the Building Materials Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) of the GoI. Many areas that were predominately drought-prone like Barmer in Rajasthan are now witnessing unprecedented floods. The cloudburst in Leh in August 2010 created unprecedented devastation by destroying and damaging houses, public amenities, infrastructure and assets and causing loss of lives and injury to people in several villages. Such disasters pose serious threats to the lives and livelihoods of the people in the affected areas, especially by increasing the vulnerability of the marginalized sections, especially of the aged and differently able. The increasing frequency and impact of disasters is likely to get further aggravated due to the complex challenges posed by climate change, exploitation of natural resources.
The vulnerability caused by a disaster is aggravated by the loss of livelihoods, with consequences on the overall well-being and standards living standards of people. A recurrent cycle of disaster of any kind can cause destabilization of the entire economic and security architecture of communities unless buffers are put in place and planned for as part of the resilience strategy. The recurrent outbreaks of disasters aggravate the overall vulnerabilities of people, particularly those of the marginalized to a greater extent. The conditions of living are rendered even more at risk as flow of investments to a region in adversely impacted, leading to setbacks in development opportunities. Invariably state resources are also sparse in reaching such areas due to their weak political leverage. The lack of development of infrastructure that can directly result in people’s well being – health, education, power, transport, communications - renders such areas acutely impacted by disaster and people more vulnerable to risks. In India, volunteerism and community based movements have formed the backbone of society since time immemorial and these efforts have helped to sustain communities through times of shocks and stresses. The role of NGOs remains crucial in all phases of DM.

It is thus important to be prepared within our long term development programmes to respond to emergencies in a timely, effective and efficient manner, which will thus reduce the vulnerability of poor people. A DRR programme envisages improved integration of our DM work with our developmental work and will require increased efforts to strengthen the capacities of vulnerable men and women, thereby lessening the impact that disasters have upon them. It will also require post – disaster recovery work to, as a minimum, not compromise people’s future safety, and, at best, take advantage of new opportunities for improved safety. Mitigation, if mainstreamed appropriately, is an internal part of the
development process, and can in a very subtle way achieve a lot of benefits in terms of avoided disasters. Prevention/Mitigation and preparedness from the two prongs of the DRR strategy. This is also in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the priority actions stated therein, under which efforts to reduce underlying risks and mitigating disasters through education and appropriate pre-disaster are urgently required. The actions stated under this section are very directly related to community action and the work of NGOs, for both development and DM related activities.

6.8 Inclusive Approach towards Natural Disasters

Till recently, the approach to Disaster Management has been reactive and relief centric. A paradigm shift has now taken place at the national level from the relief centric syndrome to holistic and integrated approach with emphasis on prevention, mitigation and preparedness. These efforts are aimed to conserve developmental gains as also minimize losses to lives, livelihood and property.

Section 2 (e) of the Disaster Management Act 2005 defines disaster management as follows:

Disaster Management means a continuous and integrated process of planning, organising, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for-

1) Prevention of danger or threat of any disaster.

2) Mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences.

3) Capacity-building.
4) Preparedness to deal with any disaster.

5) Prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.

6) Assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster.

7) Evacuation, Rescue and Relief.

8) Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.

The HPC, which was constituted in August 1997 under the Chairmanship of Shri J.C.Pant. HPC members were drawn from the Ministries, States, NGOs and experts from relevant fields. It was the first attempt in India towards evolving a systematic, comprehensive and holistic approach towards all disasters. The original mandate of the HPC was confined to the preparation of management plans for natural disasters only. However, it was expanded to include man-made disasters as well in order to develop an effective plan of action that would encompass disasters of all origins and shades. The Terms of Reference of the HPC were subsequently enlarged to include man-made disasters also with the approval of Prime Minister of India. Representation from concerned Ministries dealing with industrial, nuclear, biological, chemical disasters were ensured by way of inclusion of experts from these Ministries.

The HPC thus constituted five sub-groups to go into details of five major classifications as decided by the HPC.

**SUB GROUP I- WATER AND CLIMATE RELATED HAZARDS**

(a) Floods and drainage management

(b) Cyclones, tornadoes, Hurricanes
(c) Hailstorms, cloud bursts, Snow Avalanches, Heat and Clod Waves Thunder & Lightening

(d) Sea Erosion

(e) Droughts

**SUB GROUP-II- GEOLOGICALLY RELATED HAZARDS**

(a) Earthquakes

(b) Landslide, Mudflows

(c) Soil Erosion

(d) Dam Bursts and Dam Failures

(e) Mine Fires

**SUB GROUP-III CHEMICAL, INDUSTRIAL AND NUCLEAR RELATED DISASTERS**

(a) Chemical and Industrial Disasters

(b) Nuclear Disasters

**SUB GROUP –IV ACCIDENT RELATED DISASTERS**

(a) Road, Rail and other transportation accidents including Waterways.

(b) Mine Flooding

(c) Major Building Collapse
(d) Serial Bomb Blasts

(e) Festival related Disasters

(f) Urban Fires

(g) Oil Spill

(h) Village Fires

(i) Boat Capsizing

(j) Forest Fires

(k) Electrical Disasters and Fires

**SUB GROUP-V BIOLOGICALLY RELATED DISASTERS**

(a) Biological Disasters

(b) Food Poisoning

(c) Cattle Epidemics/Pest Attacks

A typical Disaster Management continuum as shown below, comprising of six elements i.e., Prevention, Mitigation and Preparedness in pre-disaster phase, and Response, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in post-disaster phase, defines the
The High Powered Committee (HPC) on Disaster Management carried out a nation-wide consultation process with over 600 NGOs to address the lack of a well-coordinated network between the government systems and the NGO sector and also among the NGOs themselves. HPC recommended a nationwide network of NGOs for coordinated action encompassing all aspects of disaster management. The Disaster Management Act, 2005 has given legislative back-up to this endeavor by entrusting the State Executive Committees and District Authorities with the responsibility to advice, assist and coordinate the activities of NGOs engaged in disaster management. The District Authorities are mandated to encourage the
involvement of NGOs and voluntary social welfare institutions working at grass root level in the districts for disaster management.

The role of NGOs in the pre-disaster phase should include awareness generation, education, training, and formation of village level Task Force. Disaster Management Committees and Teams, development of Disaster Management Plans, conduct of mock drills, vulnerability assessment and coordination with Government and non-government agencies. The NGOs can play a key role in the immediate aftermath of disasters by extending assistance in rescue and first aid, sanitation and hygiene, damage assessment and assistance to external agencies bringing relief materials. During the post disaster phase, the NGOs can take a lead by providing technical and material support for safe construction, revival of educational institutions and restoration of means of livelihood and assist the government in monitoring the pace of implementation for various reconstruction and recovery programmes. Since NGO movements across the country are already working with the marginalized and excluded sections of society on a variety of development projects, such activities can be mainstreamed with disaster mitigation work and can lead to an inclusive DM approach.

Risk and Vulnerability Assessment has to be seen as an integral part of the decision support system at all levels – community, block, district, State and national level. The risk and vulnerability assessment focuses on long-term disaster mitigation. The assessment related components of a decision support system include the mapping of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities. Moving further ahead, local action planning can be effective to find viable solutions that are based on local capacities and understanding of the context. Such planning is being increasingly done by NGOs in many States of the country down to the village and neighborhood level. In view of this, NGOs should take up a role of
facilitators to promote following components as disaster mitigation initiatives of developing or disaster preparedness planning:

(i)  Multi hazard mapping, including development of different hazard maps at community levels and collating them for block, district and higher levels, using PRA, remote sensing and GIs based community information systems.

(ii) Vulnerability mapping, including local level assessment covering geographical location, structures, occupations, living pattern, cultural practices etc.

(iii) Capacity mapping, including identifying capacities from community level upwards, incorporating indigenous coping practices and identifying capacities of CBO and NGOs.

(iv) Action planning for disaster mitigation, based on local actions towards targeted achievements of avoidance of adverse impact of disasters through multi stakeholder participation, should extend to participatory implementation and monitoring processes.

Livelihoods are the key to sustainability of capacity building measures in a community. The sustained availability of resources is ensured through sustainable livelihoods. Livelihoods can be made sustainable through building in securities and diversifying the livelihood base. Disasters cause long term and secondary impacts through their impact on livelihoods, and thus this needs to be a priority for mitigation action. Most marginal segments such as landless labor, artisans, and people dependent on other peoples’ livelihoods are the most economically vulnerable and often invisible, and need to be given special attention. NGOs can
play a critical role for identification of options and supplementary livelihoods are the most economically vulnerable and often invisible, and need to be given special attention. NGOs can play a critical role for identification of options and supplementary livelihoods to enhance overall livelihood security. Sensitization and training of local groups, formation institutions, material suppliers and markets are priority actions that need to be taken up.

Given the enormous potential of the youth dividend in the demographic profile of the country, NGOs can play an extremely important role in mobilizing youth for DRR in their neighborhood by carrying out appropriate capacity building efforts through the National Services Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), and National Cadet Crops (NCC). Scouts and Guides, etc. Specific actions to be taken under livelihood vulnerability reduction will include capacity vulnerability analysis for mapping of livelihood patterns in the area, identification and livelihood vulnerabilities and reducing livelihood vulnerabilities. Vulnerability reduction has to be carried out through insurance and micro finance, policy measures, preventive measures against specific risks associated with vulnerabilities, research and knowledge sharing on best practices, linkages with livelihood programmes of Governments – JNNURM, MGNREGA and other employment schemes, and cash for work or food for work components in other development programmes.

Actions for building livelihood capacities will include promoting alternative livelihoods, strengthening SHGs or other livelihood institutions like cooperatives, capacity building and skill specific vocational training programmes. These actions also include the creation of local resources through research and action projects in the area, establishing local level information and knowledge resource centers for collection and dissemination of desired information, advocacy, etc. building
livelihood capacities also requires linkages to promote logistics capacities and improve infrastructure, development projects in the area to boost local economy and create livelihood opportunities, and establishment of grain and fodder banks in rural areas and vocation based reserves in urban areas.

➢ Water and Sanitation

Water and sanitation are critical infrastructure elements that are needed to mitigate disasters, and are also priority needs of a community in the aftermath of a disaster. Water and sanitation needs are more critical for women, as they are directly related to reproductive health. They are also directly related to public health issues. Major areas of work in the water and sanitation sector are based in the local context, and can be addressed by NGOs to a very significant extent.

Damage and impact analysis of the area and assessment of the needs of the disaster-affected population has to be carried out based on the social and political structure of the population, estimated number of vulnerable people and their demographic characteristics, local capacity and resources, possible long term environmental impact assessment and future risks associated with the response rehabilitation and recovery interventions.

Systems should be promoted that help reduce vulnerabilities arising from poor access to water, poor water quality, poor access to toilets, vector problems, and inadequate solid waste management, sewerage and drainage. Excreta disposal is a significant source of water and sanitation related problems in the disaster context, and needs to be addressed. All these measures will be achievable in a sustainable manner only through adequate attention to the development of local human resource capacity through appropriate sensitization, education and training.
Shelter, Public Buildings and Infrastructure

Making existing houses and public buildings safe from disasters is a crucial component of disaster mitigation, NGOs can play a pivotal role in this by sensitizing local communities and training masons and construction workers, who are mostly in the informal sector, in multi-hazard resilient construction techniques.

The first step has to be rapid assessment of structural safety of buildings, followed by retrofitting of vulnerable public buildings. Special strengthening of lifeline buildings such as hospitals, health centers, schools, disaster shelters, and buildings and infrastructure of emergency response agencies, including the restoration of amenities like power, water supply, etc., requires special attention.

At the same time, ensuring future safety of new houses and public buildings will require research, documentation and communication of appropriate materials and technologies for disaster resistant construction. Promotion of transferable indigenous technologies with appropriate adaptation and promotion of local materials and skills, and low tech, low cost technologies is very important in this process.

Disabled – friendly Construction:

During rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, NGOs should take care of the needs of PWDs. When planning reconstruction by NGOs, they must assess whether houses, toilets and water sources are easily accessible to PWDs. Basic design standards for designing and planning buildings and utilities for PWDs, as per prevailing Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) codes, must be adopted while constructing new buildings and utilities by NGOs. In the absence of any BIS codes for any PWD friendly design, the best international standards of other countries
should be referred. In existing individual or public buildings, NGOs should find possible solutions in making the houses, toilets and water sources accessible to PWDs.

Non structural mitigation is also a very important aspect of building safety, and can avoid a very large percentage of losses and casualties. This should include heavy and hazardous building content, hazardous materials stored or used in buildings, and material with potential of falling, dislodging, flying or floating that can cause injury and damage.

For all of the above action areas, awareness and sensitization of end users including house owners, families, students, teachers, decision makers and users of buildings and facilities needs to be carried out, prompting them to take local action to reduce risk. Special training will have to be provided to service providers, including architects, engineers, mansions and other construction workers, local emergency response agencies and support volunteers including CBO members. Mitigation actions should also link relief, rehabilitation and development. This will be achieved through incorporation of basic mitigation principles in cross cutting manner in actions at all stages of disaster management, including relief, rehabilitation, development and preparedness.

- **Awareness, Education and Capacity Building**

  Disaster prevention begins with information. Information for mitigation purposes at community level has to be delivered in different forms, level of details and packaging for the various stakeholder groups, with a special focus on frontline workers. NGOs have a direct role in the sensitization, orientation, education and training of most of the local stakeholders, and an
indirect role through advocacy for promoting education in higher and specialized levels.

Education of field officials and practitioners is indispensable for achieving disaster mitigation, and can be directly taken up by NGOs. It should be designed to address the specific vulnerabilities of the local area, identify vulnerabilities and capacities, link local disaster management plans with development plans, and ensure disaster risk reduction mainstreaming in all development projects.

Basic awareness and sensitization of the general public is also a primary need under disaster mitigation capacity building, and is a key area of work for NGOs. Awareness campaigns on safe construction and habitat development and on sustainable development and environment friendly lifestyles are important. Sensitization events, mass media campaigns, rallies, public advertisements, messages have to be used to reach out with these issues. Special messages on radio, television, and print media are also effective and should be used. The electronic and print media can play an extremely important role in this sensitization process by raising public awareness and also by providing accurate information about alert and early warning messages issued by the concerned nodal agencies.

Education and sensitization of school children has widely been recognized as the basic building block for future risk reduction. This has to include understanding disasters, kinds of disasters, causes and impacts, vulnerability and capacity, and appropriate actions before, during and after disasters. Children also need to understand the role of various stakeholders and the steps to school safety
and community safety. NGOs can influence formal education streams, and can take up informal education programmes to address this need.

Education to higher – level students is also significant and needs to include specific disaster management education relevant to the stream of higher education. Disaster mitigation inputs need to be mainstreamed in study of architecture, urban and rural planning, natural resource management, different branches of engineering, different branches of medicine and health, social sciences, social work, media and communications, and NGOs can take up advocacy and technical support work where needed and possible.

Training to special skill holders is a context specific need that can be met very effectively by NGOs. Special skill training on disaster resistant technologies to masons and other construction workers, and health and education workers is very important. Attention needs to be paid to the inclusion of the women’s work force within all these sectors. Training to community volunteers, particularly those related to development fields such as education, livelihoods, health, water and sanitation is also very important and should be taken up by NGOs in the respective areas.

Under all of these groups, training and capacity building should be according to social capacity at community level. Cross cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS should be given appropriate coverage. Supportive work of research and knowledge management should also be carried out at the local and strategic levels to ensure quality and sustainability of capacity building interventions. Engagement with the media and use of information and communication technologies such as community radio and internet will be important to reach out to large target groups in short times.
Overall, NGOs will have a direct role in mobilising, creating public awareness, providing capacity building interventions like Imparting training to most of the local stakeholders including general public on DRR. NGOs will also play a major advocacy role for promoting education in DRR at higher and specialized levels. NGOs should also influence formal education streams, and take up informal education programmes for educating school children in disaster risk reduction. NGOs should complement and supplement the role of NIDM and the State ATIs already working in the area of disaster management capacity building in the government sector. Over time, the efforts should be consolidated into a collaborative knowledge management and capacity building initiative of the humanitarian sector.

6.8 Fundamental Principles of Disaster Response

The following principles of ideal humanitarian response are largely aspirational and they reflect the good practices in humanitarian response in disaster contexts. Most governments and international, national and local level NGOs try to adhere to these principles while responding to disasters in their jurisdictions.

The Humanitarian Imperative:

- To prevent and alleviate suffering; to protect life and health (improve human conditions);
- To ensure respect for human beings, and the right to receive / offer assistance.

Neutrality:

- Not to take sides in the hostilities / controversies based on political, racial, religious or ideological identity (non – partisanship / independence)
• Transparency and openness are key neutrality. Neutrality cannot mean non-action for an organization that has adopted a human rights approach. Defending human rights should not be seen as a partisan activity.

**Impartiality (non-discrimination):**

• Aid is delivered to all those who are suffering, based on their needs. The assessment of needs is rights-based.

• This principle includes both the proportionality to need as well as the principle of non-discrimination.

**Do no harm:**

• “Do no harm” or minimize the harm relief workers may be doing by being present/providing assistance in conflict situations.

• Need to take steps to minimize the harm when aid is an instrument of war (denying access, attacking convoys), an indirect part of the dynamics of the conflict (create jobs, gives incomes in form of taxes) or exacerbates the root causes of the conflict by securing “rebel” activities.

**Accountability:**

• four stakeholders (beneficiary community; national/local authority; donor & aid agency)

• Aid agencies are held accountable to both beneficiary communities (needs for assistance & protection are met, with dignity) and the donors (assistance provided for the proposed purpose).

• Coordination among organizations is thus a key part of this principle.

**Participation of affected populations:**

• Humanitarian action tends to look at short – term needs and forget the responsibilities to give sustainable aid in a way that realizes the right of affected populations to participate in decisions that affect their lives. It is,
However, important to build on capacities in the affected population, and promote the participation of beneficiaries in all that we do.

Understanding local customs and traditions is important while working with local communities; but also in understanding local values when connecting them to internationally recognized human rights. Some interventions require particular sensitivity to local customs. While local culture/custums vary, human rights are universal and applicable to all human beings, no matter what the cultural setting, and must be paramount.

6.9 Techno – Legal and Techno – Financial Regimes

Integrated and effective disaster management is a function of an efficient techno – legal and techno – financial regime. During the post – Independence years, disaster management activities had a post – disaster relief based orientation. With the prime responsibility of disaster management vested with the State Governments, with the Central Government playing supportive role, the prevalent institutional mechanisms was dependent on directions from the crisis management committees and groups at the national and state levels. The financial provisions for disaster relief were drawn from the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), granted by successive Finance Commissions. The Calamity Relief Funds were designated while a national fund was utilized for unexpected or high impact events. Later, a provision was made for earmarking 10% of the CRF for disaster mitigation purposes including procurement of equipment and capacity building programmes, wherein mitigation actions can find a place. Further, for the period 2010 – 2015, the GOI has accepted the allocation of an additional amount of Rs. 525 Cores for building capacities in the administrative machinery for better handling of disaster.
response and for preparedness of district and state level disaster management plans as per DM Act, 2005, as recommended by the Thirteenth Finance Commission (TFC).