

Disaster Management in Tribal Areas of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The Himachal Pradesh has a state emergency plan for disaster management, also all twelve districts of the state also has a disaster management plan. It can be, and is called upon to assist when necessary, but there is a lack of awareness in the public. The aim of present research is to study the process and administrative practices of different disaster plans of the tribal districts administration and to analyze different types of disaster risk and their intensity in tribal areas. This paper will provide important information in three mutually reinforcing areas viz. disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation management. The overall aim of this research paper is to facilitate actions by different stakeholders to prevent / mitigate disaster and climate risk, and enhance preparedness and analysis capacities for effective disaster management in the tribal districts. It further seeks to identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the internal and external stakeholders throughout the entire cycle of disaster management, i.e. pre-disaster, during disaster and post disaster phases.

Keywords: *Disaster Management, Himachal Pradesh, Tribal Areas, State Executive, State Emergency*

Introduction

Tribal areas are very scattered and difficult to reach. Maximum tribal area covered with snow throughout the year. So it makes difficult for civil administration to reach there. Tribal areas are one of the most multi-hazard prone areas of state. The National Disaster Management Authority has been established at the centre, and the State Disaster Management Authority at state and district authorities at district level are gradually being formalized. In addition to this, the National Crisis Management Committee, part of the earlier setup, also functions at the Centre. The nodal ministries, as identified for different disaster types of function under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Home Affairs (nodal ministry for disaster management). This makes the stakeholders interact at different levels within the disaster management framework. The institutional framework at the State level is called as State Disaster Management Authority which is headed by the Chief Minister, the State Executive Committee is headed by the Chief Secretary, and the State Crisis Group is headed by the Relief Commissioner. In the Himalayan State like Himachal Pradesh, the geo-physical locations, rocks and soil strata and difficult hilly terrain has the different type of hazards. The natural as well as anthropogenic (man-made) hazards have also been identified and discussed. There is a professionally competent, efficient

and well trained Incident Command at state level. The most important components of Disaster Management at district level is Deputy Magistrate command by which all preparedness, prevention and mitigation measures are implemented and interlinked with developmental activities.

Objectives:

To study disaster management in Tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh

To identifies roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

Disaster Management

“A planned approach for the prevention of Disaster, preparedness and response to Disasters, and recovery following disasters”.

I) Institutional and Policy Framework

A) District disaster management authority.

Section 25 of Disaster Management Act 2005 & National Policy on Disaster Management 2009 mandates establishment of District disaster management authority for every district and provides its composition. District disaster management authority will be headed by the respective District Magistrate/District Collector (DC)/Deputy Commissioner as the case may be, with the elected representative of the Local Authority as the Co-Chairperson ex officio. District disaster management authority will act as the planning, coordinating and implementing body for Disaster Management at District level and take all necessary measures for the purposes of Disaster Management in accordance with the Guidelines laid down by the National disaster management authority and State disaster management authority. It will, inter alia, prepare the District Disaster Management plan for the District and monitor the implementation of the National Policy, the State Policy, the National Plan and the State Plan concerning its District. The District disaster management authority will also ensure that the Guidelines for prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response measures laid down by National disaster management authority and State disaster management authority are followed by all Departments of the State.

B) State Executive Committee:

The crisis management group at State and districts level have been constituted for the State. The State Crisis Management Group is headed by the Chief Secretary. The State Crisis Management Group shall normally handle all crisis situation and advice and guide the District Crisis Management Group.

C) Centre for Disaster Management (Himachal institute of disaster management):

Disaster Management Centre at Himachal institute of disaster management was established by the State Government as per the guidelines of the Central Government under the Ministry of Home Affairs. After the issuance of the Notification of Disaster Management Act-2005, the Disaster Management Centre, Himachal institute of disaster management is organizing trainings on

Disaster Management to different stakeholders. The Disaster Management

D) District Disaster Management Committee and Task Forces:

This district level Committee will function under District disaster management authority and assist it in implementing various tasks of District disaster management authority. It will ensure effective and concerted response by Government people participation at district level. The main objectives of this team are to:

- Provide a forum for communication, information exchange and developing consensus.
- Co-ordinate, eliminate duplication and reduce gaps in services.
- Mobilize and provide timely assistance and material support to disasteraffected Community.

E) State Emergency Control Room:

There is a State Emergency Control Room in the HP Secretariat, Chhota Shimla, Shimla, and Himachal Pradesh 171001 to provide Secretarial support to the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority and also facilitate the functioning of the Authority. 1070 is the Helpline Line No. of State Emergency Control room which is operational 24 x 7. This Control Room will receive the information from various sources. It contact with the District Disaster Control Rooms, Police Control Rooms.

F) Incident Response System Position (IRS) :

The Incident Response System Positionorganisation functions through Incident Response Teams in the field. Responsible Officers have been designated at the State and District level as overall in charge of the incident response management. The Responsible Officers may however delegate responsibilities to the Incident Commander,who in turn will manage the incident through Incident Response Teams. The Incident Response Teams are pre-designated at all levels; State, District, Sub- Division and Tehsil/Block. On receipt of Early Warning, the Responsible Officers activate them. In case a disaster occurs without any warning, the local Incident Response Teams respond and contact Responsible Officers for further support, if required. A Nodal Officerdesignated for proper coordination between the District, State and National level in activating air support for response.

G) District emergency operation center:

The District emergency operation center is the hub of activity in a disaster situation in the district. The District emergency operation center is connected with State emergency operation center in the upstream and other in the downstream including other field offices during emergencies. District Emergency Operation Centre plays a vital role in Emergency Operation activation in the district and have following roles and objectives during occurrence of any disaster and normal time. This center coordinate all disaster related activities in the district starting from preparedness to rehabilitation and reconstruction. During Emergency, District

emergency operation center coordinate with Nodal Officer of Emergency Support Functions and they provided with sufficient telephone connections for effective coordination during crisis. On the basis of the message received from the forecasting agencies, warning issued by District emergency operation center for the general public and the departments, which play a vital role during emergencies. Issuing correct and timely warning are the prime responsibilities of District emergency operation center.

II) Roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders

A) Administrative Preparedness

Deputy Commissioner of Kinnaur, Lahul & Spiti and Chamba ensure that preparedness of departments and status of the same is discussed in monthly meetings. Head of each frontline department ensure that the departments are prepared to meet the challenges of any emergency/disaster. Nodal officers of each of the frontline departments ensure quarterly updation of District Disaster Management Resource Inventory and submission of the same to District Revenue Officer, Nodal officers of each of the frontline departments report to Head of Department. District Disaster Management Authority ensures the establishment of Emergency Operation Centre, at district level.

B) Community and local level participation

In the event of disaster communities are the first responders and hence there is no better alternative to community and local level capacities for disaster response. Communities' take action to help themselves in the absence of necessary outside response. Community Participation plays a very important role in evacuation with medical first aid, light search and rescue, search and rescue extrication from damaged buildings and debris clearance support fire fighting. Tribal community at Panchayat level has been equipped with medical supply, communication such as radio, TVs, extrication equipment. Panchayat has established local early warning systems in higher vulnerable areas.

C) Search & Rescue Teams:

After any disaster, main activity is search and rescue. By effectively performing this activity loss due to disasters can be minimized. It has become a highly specialized function; the first responder agencies are not sufficiently trained or equipped for undertaking these operations. Search and Rescue activities include, but are not limited to, locating, extricating, and providing immediate medical assistance to victims trapped in exigency situation. The District Commissioner, in conjunction with local authorities is responsible for the search and rescue operations in an affected region. Search and rescue teams include fire fighters, NDRF, home guard and police are the first responders.

D) Damage and Loss Assessment Teams:

Damage Assessment Teams are multi-disciplinary teams, whose members have knowledge of disaster affected area, physical characteristics of the region, language etc. These officials should share a

common interest and commitment, and set up immediately after disaster. It should include zilaparisad members, agricultural officer to assess the crop damage, executive engineer of public works department to assess the damaged houses, supritandant of police to maintain the law and order situation, NGOs and volunteer organizations, Tehsildar, etc. This team immediately assess the damage undergone due to disaster and report it to the concerned department to get the immediate relief material from the government.

E) Different Stakeholders' role:

Tribal authorities coordinate with Home Guards, national cadet corps, national service scheme, sports and youth clubs, women based organizations, and faith based organizations and local Non-Governmental Organizations for disaster management. Tribal authorities encourage and empower the community and generate awareness through their respective institutional mechanisms. Efforts to promote voluntary involvement are actively encouraged.

F) Role of media:

The media plays a critical role in information and knowledge dissemination in all phases of disaster. The versatile potential of both electronic and print media needs to be fully utilized by administration. There is a effective partnership between administration and media in the field of community awareness, earlywarning and dissemination, and education regarding various disasters. Media play important role in community education, awareness and preparedness at the tribal areas

G) Private Sector Participation:

District Authorities ensure participation of corporate sector in activities related to disaster management. The corporate sector is expected to provide resources to the government under corporate social responsibility. All non- government agencies while rendering emergency support functions on the ground function under the overall command of the district authorities through the Incident Commander.

III) Analysis and Discussion

A) Effective Warning System: Dissemination of information is as important as forecasting which is still lacking behind. Absence of warning system is experienced in many cases. There is need of effective warning system in tribal areas.

B) Focus on Mitigation: Present system works more on Disaster response than preparedness and mitigation Implementation Absence of Strict laws and many times poor implementation of laws is a major drawback of system as we know if houses are made as per norms then causalities and economic losses will be minimum for disasters like earthquake. Building codes and laws are made but there is no compulsion to follow them.

C) Awareness: Very poor awareness level among tribal community .Common belief among tribal people that managing disaster or protecting their life is responsibility of Government only.

Also disaster is given priority only after occurrence, no efforts are done for reducing vulnerability or discussing, creating awareness as ongoing process.

D) Recommendations for improvement: Tribal community is major stakeholder in Disaster Management. It plays important role at each stage of Disaster Management Cycle .We can reduce vulnerability by creating awareness, giving them proper training which can help in disaster preparedness and response. We can provide trained manpower by giving training to informal groups .There is need to bring change in perception of people from Disaster response to Disaster Risk Management.

Conclusion

There is need for proper coordination between different departments and stakeholders for effective implementation of Disaster Management. Strict implementation of building codes and laws is important for reducing vulnerability in tribal areas. We can reduce Economic vulnerability by insuring public as well as private properties. We need to strengthen Warning system and Communication system for effective implementation of Disaster Management

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