



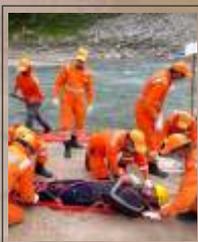
AAPDA SAMVAAD

FLOOD PREPAREDNESS



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ANIL K. MALIK ON
CIVIL DEFENCE





Civil Defence Capacity Building Workshop

The community is invariably the first responder to any disaster situation. Adequate awareness and preparedness of the community to respond to any such situation can be crucial in mitigating the damage and the suffering. Civil Defence, being a community-based voluntary organisation, is an asset for disaster rescue, relief and rehabilitation at the community level. In addition, it can also play a stellar role in community capacity building and public awareness.

In its efforts towards further strengthening of Civil Defence, NDMA organised a one-day conference on "Capacity Building of Civil Defence Personnel in Disaster Management" on May 29, 2018. "The idea is to have an interaction to understand the initiatives taken at the State level and the need to strengthen capacity through standardised training programmes," said Lt. Gen. N. C. Marwah (Retd.), NDMA.

Director-General, Fires Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards; Director-General, National Disaster Response Force; Director, National Civil Defence College, Nagpur and representatives from Ministry of Home Affairs and various State Governments attended the conference.

Preparedness for Amarnath Yatra

In its efforts to improve preparedness and response mechanisms in the event of a disaster during upcoming Amarnath Yatra, the NDMA conducted simultaneous mock exercises along the Baltal and Pahalgam routes on June 25, 2018.

Mock exercises were conducted at critical areas along the Baltal and the Pahalgam-Chandanwari routes covering both natural as well as man-made disasters.

NDMA experts trained the participants on key aspects of disaster management such as the formation of Incident Response Teams, coordination among various participating agencies, evacuation, medical preparedness and trauma counselling.

Both the mock exercises began with Co-ordination Conferences on Day 1 (June 22) followed by Table-top Exercises on Day 2 (June 23).

Senior officials from all the important departments such as the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Rashtriya Rifles, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Army, police, health, Civil Defense, transport, fire and other emergency services attended these preparatory meetings and participated in the mock exercises.



The annual Amarnath Yatra to the cave shrine in south Kashmir began on June 28 and will continue till August 26, 2018.

Review of 'Aapda Mitra' scheme

NDMA conducted two video conferences on June 6 and 8, 2018 with concerned States to review the progress in implementation of 'Aapda Mitra' scheme for training of community volunteers in disaster response in selected 30 most flood-prone districts in 25 States of the country.

The scheme aims to equip 6,000 community volunteers with the skills to respond to their community's immediate rescue and relief needs in emergency situations such as floods, flash-floods and urban flooding. •

THINK WATER; THINK LIFE

Conserving it not only means groundwater resources for our future generations but also reduced risk of flooding and better irrigation systems. Traditional rainwater harvesting techniques have been doing this for ages and there's plenty to learn from them. Here are a few:



Kuhls - Diversion channels which have carried water from glaciers to villages in the Spiti area of Himachal Pradesh for a long time. Where the terrain is muddy, these are lined with rocks to keep it from becoming clogged.

Kuis - Kachcha structures (10-12 m) dug near tanks dug near tanks to collect seepage; usually covered with planks of wood. Mouth of the pit is narrow and gets wider as it goes deeper. These can also be used to harvest rainwater in areas with meagre rainfall. Found in Bikaner and Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

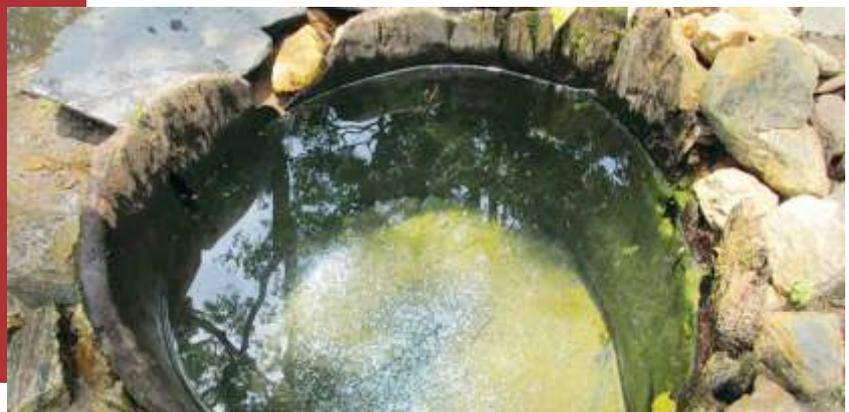


Ahar Pynes - Indigenous to south Bihar, this irrigation system leverages the natural marked slope of the terrain. It is embanked on the remaining three sides. Pynes are diversion channels made to utilise river water in agricultural fields. Starting out from the river, they run through fields to end up in an ahar.



Zabo - Literally meaning 'impounding run-off', the system is practiced in Nagaland. It consists of a protected forestland towards the top of the hill, water harvesting tanks in the middle, and cattle yards and paddy fields at the lower sides thus combining water conservation with forestry, agriculture and animal care.

Panam Keni - A native to Wayanad district of Kerala, panam kenis are special wells. Made by soaking the stems of toddy palms in water for a long time so that the core rots away until only the hard outer layer remains. These cylinders are then immersed in groundwater springs in fields and forests. A source of abundant water even in the hottest summer months.



Ramtek Model - Named after the water harvesting structures in Ramtek, Maharashtra. An intricate network of groundwater and surface water bodies, this system consists of tanks forming a chain from the foothills to the plains. Once the tanks located in the hills are filled to capacity, the water flows down to fill successive tanks, generally ending in a small waterhole which stores the residual run-off as well.

UTTAR PRADESH PREPARES TO TACKLE FLOODS



“Bachao! Bachao!” yelled the locals when they saw two young boys drowning in Gorra near Deoria. The river was in spate and rescuing them was going to be a tough task. Not for the trained NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) personnel though. They arrived in two motorboats, jumped into the river and rescued the boys.

Meanwhile, in Gorakhpur, river Rapti continued to rise above its danger level and three villages in its vicinity had to be evacuated. These villagers were brought to relief camps; given food and water and medical assistance.

Similar activities were underway at different locations across 23 flood-affected districts. These activities were being monitored closely by NDMA's (National Disaster Management Authority) Maj. Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Datta who would later analyse the entire exercise for coordination gaps and suggest ways to fix them.

While the reactions to this event were real, the event itself was thankfully not. The flooding and its aftermath were simulated scenarios for a mock exercise on flood preparedness.

Uttar Pradesh is highly vulnerable to floods, which affect some or the other part of the State

every year. Of the total geographical area of 240.98 lakhs hectare, approximately 73.36 lakhs hectare land is flood prone. A flood damages crops, houses, public utilities and may also trigger other emergencies such as outbreaks of diseases.

The exercise began with a heavy rainfall warning in the catchment areas of major rivers - Ganga, Ghaghra, Gandak, Rapti, Ramganga, etc. as well as their tributaries - from the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Districts were advised to mobilise their resources, issue warnings to the people and evacuate low-lying areas.

Flood-related scenarios such as isolation of villages, cases of drowning, breakdown of telephonic communication, marooned people. "Air Force helicopters were used for aerial surveillance. Army personnel were appointed as observers. Food packets were dropped, first aid was administered, simulated evacuations were carried out. In short, we tried to create situations as close to reality as possible. The stakeholders now know exactly how to respond when a real flood occurs," said Maj. Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Datta.

The exercise was conducted by NDMA in collaboration with the State administration. "Aimed at assessing the preparedness and response mechanism of all agencies in the densely populated State, the exercise helped spread awareness about the Do's and Don'ts and basic preparedness, mitigation and prevention measures for flood amongst



communities who battle floods year after year," said Lt. Gen. N. C. Marwah, Member, NDMA.

He added that the number of volunteers which participated in the exercise was overwhelming. "District Collectors were surprised to find at least 5,000 volunteers and allied forces at the district level who can be utilised for disaster response."

Most flood-prone districts
Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Bahraich, Barabanki, Gonda, Faizabad, Ambedkarnagar, Basti, Sant Kabirnagar, zamgarh, Mau, Balia, Deoria, Kushinagar, Gorakhpur, Siddhartha Nagar, Badaun, Farrukhabad, Bijnor, Balrampur, Shravasti, Maharajganj

In the post-exercise analysis, done through video-conferencing, all the participating districts discussed the challenges faced during the exercise. The one major obstacle that participants felt would hamper operations during a real-life situation was their lack of expertise in using communication devices such as satellite phones. "Better communication will ensure better coordination," said Gen. Datta while emphasising on the need for

training and regular practice in using wireless communication devices.

This was the first such large-scale flood preparedness exercise carried out in the State. Ms. Aditi Umrao, Project Director, Emergency Operations, Uttar Pradesh SDMA, said this exercise worked like a refresher course for those engaged in disaster management, officials and volunteers alike. It has enhanced our preparedness and response mechanisms, she said, adding that "We have updated our resource inventory and learned our lessons well. Uttar Pradesh is prepared to deal with the floods this year."•



ANIL K. MALIK ON CIVIL DEFENCE



Civil Defence is considered to be an asset for disaster response at the community level as well as for the capacity building of communities. In its efforts towards its further strengthening, NDMA organised a one-day conference on the subject in May 2018. To understand the role and functioning of Civil Defence in India, Aapda Samvaad spoke with Shri Anil K. Malik, Additional Chief Warden, Delhi Civil Defence.

Q. Please explain the structure and role of Civil Defence in India in brief.

A. Civil Defence in India is primarily organised on voluntary basis except for a small nucleus of paid staff and establishment which is augmented during emergencies. The organisation is headed by the Director General, Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards. He is assisted by a battery of staff under all the three heads.

Civil Defence is meant to deal with immediate emergency conditions, save lives, minimise damage to infrastructure, protect the public, restore vital services and facilities that have been destroyed or damaged by disaster and keep up the morale of the masses. Earlier, it was meant to ensure civil protection during a war. However, over the years, its role has shifted from management of damage against conventional wars to also include threat perceptions against both natural as well as man-made disasters.



Q. What role can it play in disaster management in India?

A. The amendment in the Civil Defence Act in 2010 paved the way for utilisation of Civil Defence in Disaster Management in the country. The National Policy on Disaster Management 2009 and the National Disaster Management Plan 2016 also envisage capacity building of Civil Defence personnel.

An ever-increasing threat from natural and man-made disasters means an even greater responsibility on the part of Civil Defence. It can assist in evacuation, search and rescue operations, providing first aid, distribution of relief material, smooth management of traffic, spreading official information and warnings, etc. during and after a disaster.

In addition to rescue, relief and rehabilitation, it can play a stellar role in the field of community capacity building and public awareness in addition to rescue, relief and rehabilitation.

During normal times too, it can take a leading role in spreading awareness among the masses by educating and training schoolchildren, youths as well as community members. It can also play a role in sensitising government officials about Civil Defence functions and their role in a disaster situation. It can also use this time to build its own capacity by upgrading the skills of its volunteers.

Q. How can we motivate youths to join civil defence?

A. Being a community-based voluntary organization, the success of Civil Defence depends on what it gets from the public at large. It is, therefore, necessary to generate and sustain public interest in Civil Defence through adequate public awareness measures, registration drives, etc. The



more people know about Civil Defence and the recognition and prestige that comes it, the more they would be motivated to join.

Q. How can the efficiency of our civil defence be improved?

A. Regular activity, in terms of training, mock drills and exercises, coupled with public awareness measures will go a long way in improving the efficiency of our civil defence. Also, aligning them with the local police station, fire services and hospitals to help them get a first-hand experience in handling emergency situations will help improve their efficiency. This will prepare them to respond better during disaster situations.

Q. Which countries have a commendable civil defence system in place?

A. Many countries around the world have an enviable civil defence system in place. There's a lot to learn from the Civil Defence set-ups in Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom and Russia.

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) boasts of a huge number of volunteers who are trained in various skills and swiftly provide their



services in case of a disaster. SCDF also conducts emergency preparedness programmes for generating mass awareness.

Emergency Management Australia (EMA) is an example of a community-based system with a large reach in a big country. EMA focuses on recruiting and training volunteers, who are also periodically recognised by the government.

Similarly, the civil defence set up in the United Kingdom and Russia do exemplary work in supplementing governmental efforts in disaster situations.



Q. What were the takeaways from the workshop conducted by NDMA?

A. This workshop served as a platform to exchange best practices and lessons learnt from each other. For example, the representative from Madhya Pradesh informed that the State has created a digital recognition system to authenticate the identity of civil defence volunteers. In case of an emergency, an automated SMS alert is sent to the volunteers in that area. Now, Delhi is also contemplating developing such a system.

Such workshops also motivate us and keep the tempo going. •

FLOODS



Before

- Ignore rumours, Stay calm, Don't panic
- Keep your mobile phones charged for emergency communication; use SMS
- Listen to radio, watch TV, read newspapers for weather updates
- Keep cattle/animals untied to ensure their safety
- Prepare an emergency kit with essential items for safety and survival
- Keep your documents and valuables in water-proof bags

During

- Don't enter flood waters. In case you need to, wear suitable footwear
- Stay away from sewerage lines, gutters, drains, culverts, etc.
- Stay away from electric poles and fallen power lines to avoid electrocution
- Eat freshly cooked or dry food. Keep your food covered
- Drink boiled/chlorinated water
- Use disinfectants to keep your surroundings clean

After

- Do not allow children to play in or near flood waters
- Don't use any damaged electrical goods, get them checked
- Watch out for broken electric poles and wires, sharp objects and debris
- Do not eat food that has been in flood waters
- Use mosquito nets to prevent malaria
- Don't use the toilet or tap water if the water lines/sewage pipes are damaged



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