

AUDIT COURSE - DISASTER MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Dr. DEVI K., Department of Geology and Environmental Science

INTRODUCTION

The participation of the community in a disaster situation depends a lot on its awareness of handling a disaster. Education and awareness can be targeted at two levels - the departmental level and the community level. At the departmental level, the training on how to provide disaster related education to the personnel is a crucial issue. Awareness could be generated through lectures, workshops, seminars, training and debates etc. This can be undertaken by different organizations that conduct training at their own level e.g., Disaster Management Institute (DMI), Bhopal. At the community level, education, training and awareness, all put together, are the key factors to community participation. Well-trained people will have more role-clarity on disaster reduction. and preparedness programmes. They will therefore contribute substantially towards disaster management. This topic attempts to discuss some of these issues.

CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training have an important role to play in planning and implementing disaster management strategies at both the pre-disaster and post-disaster stages. Education and training are interdependent concepts. Disaster management covers a wide range of functions and skills, which include planning and organising day-to-day management activities, counter-disaster operations, crises management work, recovery functions and specific tasks related to information and communication. Therefore, carefully structured and implemented education and training programmes are needed for development of competence and organisation of expertise.

The role of education programmes is often differentiated from the role of training programmes in bringing about the required changes. While the education programmes are supposed to focus on knowledge, concepts, understanding and analysis, but the training programmes are required to pay more attention on improvement of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the trainees. In essence, both education and training overlap. Education adds the essential 'why' dimension to the 'how' initiated by training. Training develops an understanding of the distinctive purpose and practice with which disasters should be approached. It imparts knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with disasters. It also creates commitment and improves individual and collective performance in decision-making under disaster conditions.

No disaster management programme can achieve its objectives unless the community participates in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of disaster related tasks. The entire approach to disaster education and training is dependent upon volunteers, social workers, functional specialists and the people at large.

AUDIT COURSE - DISASTER MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Dr. DEVI K., Department of Geology and Environmental Science

SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

People will be able to contribute their best only if they understand the significance of issues involved in disaster management. Adequately trained, aware and well-informed people could act as human resources in disaster management. At the community level, awareness can be generated through the media, public meetings, community awareness programmes, door-to-door campaigns, lectures, discussions, social gatherings, community functions etc.

Long-term and short-term mitigation measures could be captured and projected through the various media to strengthen disaster preparedness. Medias should be informative, suggestive and analytical in all the three stages of the disaster management cycle, namely predisaster, during-disaster and post-disaster. In the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction, media can be used to extract opinions and provide expert solutions on suitable building materials, model houses, right topography for building new houses, do s and don'ts in the construction work etc

Community level preparedness and surveillance systems could be effectively achieved through systematic training programmes and educational campaigns for all the stakeholders in disaster management. In the context of disaster management training, it is the community, NGO activists, local government functionaries that require training. Panchayati Raj members and self-help groups also need to be instilled with requisite skills and knowledge to carry out disaster management tasks.

The nature of disaster education would vary from region to region depending on the type of disaster and its impact on people and infrastructure. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to lessen the negative effects of disasters by resorting to management techniques related to preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response. Disaster education and training could play a crucial role in this direction.

PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Training at different levels is an essential part of disaster preparedness. The community, NGOs and the government officials should be trained in various aspects of disaster management. As the people are generally illiterate and hail from a rural background, it will be more suitable if NGOs, along with the village panchayats, organise training programmes so that people can take part in them actively and develop a culture of self-help in disaster related preparedness, prevention and mitigation activities. Various types of training can be imparted to different stakeholders in disaster preparedness. These stakeholders are:

Community: People should be trained in the field of earthquake resistant construction. Young people should also be trained in rescue and relief such as helping the injured by providing them first aid. The most important benefit of community awareness is that the community is able to judge their strengths and weaknesses and identify the areas in which they really need outside assistance. There should be



AUDIT COURSE - DISASTER MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Dr. DEVI K., Department of Geology and Environmental Science

specialised training modules for specific target groups. Government officials, NGOs, CBOs, school-teachers and local leaders need specific training capsules that inculcate knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with disaster situations.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs): The NGO functionaries should be trained in the methods of spreading public awareness amongst the people and also in the post-disaster activities such as providing rescue and relief, identifying the target group, distributing relief aid and supplies, as well as conducting damage assessment

Government Employees: The staff in the governmental sector should be trained to coordinate and manage the different stages of disaster management so that they are able to work as disaster managers at the time of natural disasters.

PEOPLE'S AWARENESS

The main aim of community awareness programmes is to make the community more informed, alert, self-reliant and capable of participating in all activities and programmes of disaster management in close collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations.

In disaster mitigation programmes, local people should be made aware of the following:

- The vulnerability of the area to-natural disasters
- The types of risks and elements at risk due to natural disasters
- Nature of mitigation measures that should be adopted
- Significance of a local preparedness plan
- Availability of resources and extent of governmental help at the time of disaster
- The importance and need of community participation
- Value and significance of early warnings and related communication
- Importance of information-sharing

ROLE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTES

- In India, we have the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, University of Delhi, University of Pune, University of South Gujarat and other educational institutions which have taken up the task of strengthening government's efforts in conducting research on impacted communities, designing rehabilitation initiatives, disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development in its Tenth Five Year Plan emphasized the need for integrating disaster management in the existing education system in India.

AUDIT COURSE - DISASTER MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Dr. DEVI K., Department of Geology and Environmental Science

- One of the important initiatives taken by Govt. of India includes recommending various Boards to incorporate disaster management in the curriculum of school and professional education and design disaster management plans for their institutions.
- In addition to this Govt. of India has specially created around 15 institutes that offer courses on Disaster Management across India. Notable amongst them being the National Center for Disaster Management (NCDM) set up by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the Centre for Disaster Management set up by Y S Chavan Academy of Development Administration, and Disaster Management Institute, Bhopal. NCDM is also the nodal agency for coordinating relief and rehabilitation work during natural calamities.
- The Status Report of Disaster Management Education in India (2008) highlights that modules of disaster management training has been made mandatory in NCC (National Cadet Corps), NSS (National Service Scheme), Scouts and Guides, National Yuva Kendras (NYKs), Civil Defence, Sainik Board

CONCLUSION

Education, training and awareness are the most important and most effective non-structural disaster mitigation measures. The local people should be made aware of the vulnerability levels to different types of natural disasters in their area. They should also know the elements at risk and expected losses that could be faced due to these disasters. People should also be in the know of the existing contingency or preparedness plans for specific disasters, as well as about the availability of resources through governmental and non-governmental organisations at the time of disaster. These organisations should play the role of facilitators by providing education and training material required for disaster preparedness and mitigation activities. There is a need for a multidimensional approach to education, awareness and training, which concentrates on varied training techniques and tools. Learning is the essence of education and training. The training programmes should enhance the ability of the target group to use the skills and information imbibed for fulfilling specific tasks within the disaster management framework. The education and training programmes must therefore highlight the steps to be taken to meet the special needs of the most vulnerable categories of people. The government, NGOs, CBOs, media, as well as education and training institutes should also come forward to organise disaster education programmes throughout the country. The initiatives for improvement have to come from the communities themselves.

REFERENCES

Carter, W. Nick, 1991, Disaster Management: A Disaster Manager's Handbook, Asian Development Bank, Manila.

Prakash, Indu, 1994, Disaster Management:, Rashtriya Prakashan, New Delhi



AUDIT COURSE - DISASTER MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Dr. DEVI K., Department of Geology and Environmental Science

Sahni, Pardeep, Alka Dhameja and Uma Medury (Eds.), 2001, Disaster Mitigation: Experiences and Remedies, Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi.

Sahni, Pardeep and Madhavi Ariyabslnu (Eds.), 2003, Disaster Risk Relocation in South Asia, Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi.

Sharma, Vinod K (Ed.), 1995, Disaster Mariagement, IIPA, New Delhi.