International Journal of Academic Research and Development
ISSN: 2455-4197
Impact Factor: RJIF 5.22
www.academicsjournal.com
Volume 2; Issue 5; September 2017; Page No. 1154-1156

Organizational layout for disaster management in India

Monika Jakhar
Research Scholar, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Abstract
Disasters are not bounded by political, social, economic and geographic boundaries. Its occurrence put impacts on all. Considering the severity of disasters and their impacts, an active paradigm shift in disaster management has been pursued by India from a relief centric approach in the post to the current holistic one which encompasses all facets of disaster management. Therefore, an attempt has been made to describe the process of setup of institutional mechanism in the nation.

Keywords: disaster management, socio-economic boundary

Introduction

Development of disaster management in India

Disaster management in India has developed from a very basic setup to an organized structure; from single faculty domain to a multiple stakeholder organization; and from a relief-based approach to a 'holistic approach for reducing vulnerability'. Its roots are in "British Raj" when multiple disasters hit the country. These were Bihar-Nepal Earthquake of 1937, the Famines of 1900, 1905, 1907 & 1943. During the British era and post-Independence years, disaster management was largely limited to post disaster relief works, food-for-work programmes etc., under a Central Relief Commissioner who headed the State Relief Commissioners. During this time, the DM Structure was activity-based and functioned under Relief Departments. (Sulphey, M. M. 2016) [3]. Basic limitation of this structure was that it works only at the post-disaster fronts. This was relief-oriented policy.

Structural layout of disaster management in post-independence era

After independence, the work of disaster management continued with the Relief Commissioners in each state, their roles were limited to distribution of relief material and money in the affected area. As the occurrence of flood and drought is much frequent this lead to limit the scope of Disaster Management to these two hazards only. Moreover, as these two has a direct relation with agriculture sector, disaster management in India become associated with agriculture. In each five-year plan, flood disasters came under "Irrigation, Command Area Development and Flood Control". At that time disaster management structure was post disaster activity-based and it functioned under the relief department. It had only single approach that is 'financing relief'.

The beginning of a new permanent organized setup has its traces in decades of 1990s with set up of a disaster management cell under the Ministry of Agriculture, following the declaration of the decade of 1990 as the 'International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction' (IDNDR) by the UN General Assembly. This was later moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs. (Thattai, Deeptha V, 2017) [4] It was also the decade when India faced a number of devastating disasters other than flood and drought such as Latur Earthquake (1993), Malpa Landslide (1994), Orissa Super Cyclone (1999) and Bhuj Earthquake (2002). Flood and Drought which were earlier in the central stages now gives way to these new calamities. Tsunami of December, 2005 was the final blow to old approach of dealing with disaster. All these reoriented the policy frame and action. Now the shift has been made toward the holistic approach to deal with disasters, with cumulative action and response from all important ministries. In 2003 the Disaster Management Division was shifted from Agriculture Ministry to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Now, a new hierarchical structure for disaster management was evolved.

Result and Discussion

Organizational structure of disaster management in 21st century

There is a clear shift from relief and response to prevention and preparedness. Now, disaster management started to include early warning systems and forecasting and monitoring for various hazards, particularly weather related. In later stages, a structure evolved in which information flow in the form of warnings, alerts and updates about the upcoming hazard. In this new organization representatives from different ministries and departments were included. Some ministries were designated as the nodal authorities for particular type of disaster. It led to development of multi-level links between these ministries and the disaster management framework.

It was in 2002, when a High-Powered Committee on disaster management suggested to establish a separate organizational structure to address disasters and to enact of a suitable law for disaster management. HPC also identified thirty one disasters in the country and categorized them into five sub-groups i.e I – Water and Climate Related Disasters; II - Geologically related disasters; III- Chemical, Industrial & Nuclear related disasters; IV- Accident related disasters; V – Biologically related disasters. (Sharma, Vinod.K. 2012) [5].

Earlier Five Year Plan documents generally did not included

issues relating to the management and mitigation of natural and man-made disasters. For the first time in the Xth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) in the backdrop of the Orissa Super Cyclone and the Gujarat Earthquake, issues relating to disaster management received adequate attention. The Xth Five Year Plan set in motion the process of shift in focus from relief and response centric disaster management to laying greater emphasis on the other elements of the disaster management cycle viz., prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. The Status Report on Disaster Management (2004) clearly stated that development, to be sustainable, and has to take into account the disaster mitigation needs. The XIth Five Year Plan tried to consolidate the process by giving emphasis for projects and programmes that develop a culture of safety and mainstreaming of disaster prevention and mitigation in the development process. In 2011, the Planning Commission, Government of India, has also constituted a Working Group on "Disaster Management", as a part of the formulation of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017).

These development leads to organization of disaster management frame work and for this a bill was introduced in 2004 in parliament which adopted in August 2005 as Disaster Management Act, 2005 [1]. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was established under this act. A new definition for Disaster management was also provided by the act which is continuous and integrated process of planning, organizing, coordinating and implementing measures required for preventing disasters, mitigating the risk, capacity building, increasing the preparedness levels, response actions, disaster assessments, evacuation, rescue and relief and rehabilitation".

The act helped in mainstreaming disaster management as

1. It made mandatory involvement of many development related sectors.
2. It directs each of such sectors to develop and execute their own disaster management plan.
3. It makes separate allocation of resources for disaster management.
4. It provides provisions of training facilities for various stake holders at National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).

After act NDMA became the nodal authority for all disaster management works in the country. It became the policy making body that frames broad guidelines for the all ministries at the centre and authorities at the state level. The state authorities further issue guidelines for departments at the state level and for district authorities. In same way district authorities direct administration, departments and local authorities. There are Executive Committees at each level which are responsible for execution of the tasks assigned by the Authorities.

Present organizational layout for disaster management in India

The organizational structure of disaster management in India is changing after the Disaster Management Act of 2005 [1]. The new setup, after the implementation of the Act, is evolving; while the earlier setup is also somehow continues. Thus, both structures co-exist today. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at the centre and State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) at state level have been established and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) at district level authorities are being formalized gradually. Apart from this, National Crisis Management Committee, which is the part of the earlier structure, is also functioning. The nodal ministry under new setup is Ministry of Home Affairs but still different ministries performs central role in different disasters. However stakeholders' involvement remains largely same. Stakeholders interact at different levels with the disaster management framework. In this transitional and growing setup two different features of the disaster management structure can be identified.

1. The structure is hierarchically organized and functions at four different levels –
   - Centre,
   - State,
   - District
   - Local.

   In both the setups which is the new one and one that existed prior to the implementation of the act. Each preceding level guides the next levels activities and decision making.
2. This is a multi-stakeholder setup, various relevant ministries, government departments and administrative bodies involve in all decision making and implementation.

Interface between the stakeholders

The junction between different stakeholders and the disaster management structure is permanent and backed by Disaster Management Act of 2005 [1]. All decisions taken for establishment of the bodies and committees for managing disasters and the government orders taken out to implement these decisions are backed by the act. These decisions direct the composition of the organization by identifying the stakeholders to be involved in Disaster Management framework. But these do not define the role to be performed by each stakeholder. So while the involvement of stakeholders in the interface is compulsory and lasting one, the nature of interface is decided by the knowledge or relevance of the stakeholder to the disaster management framework. The knowledge based interfaces came forward when the stakeholders serve as 'service providers' to the framework. For example, India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Central Water Commission (CWC) under Ministry of Science & Technology and Ministry of Water Resources respectively, provide information on weather and climatic data and the potential hazards to the nodal authority. These institutions are also involved with disaster planning activities such as flood zoning and flood plain management in case of CWC, and hazard mapping and database generation in case of IMD. The institutions under the Department of Space provide technical support by monitoring the weather elements and providing satellite based communication.

Conclusion

It is important to give emphasis on aiming at consolidating the process by streamlining the existing institutional mechanism

which will avoid multiplicity of structures and will have a clearly defined responsibility matrix to obtain optimum results. Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction needs in all the components of development initiatives in a holistic manner is also need of the hour. And if disaster risk reduction is taken as the common denominator of all developmental plans to achieve the objective of inclusive growth, keeping in view the geo-climatic vulnerabilities at micro level and the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged segments of community who are the worst sufferers in case of any disaster, the objective of disaster risk reduction as well as multi hazard preparedness can be met to a large extent.

References

1. The Disaster Management Act, 2005.
2. National DM Plan, 2016.
3. MM Sulpher. Disaster Management, 2016, 284-285.
4. Deeptha V, Thattai R, Sathyanathan R, Dinesh, Harshit Kumar L. Natural disaster management in India with focus on floods and cyclones, 2017.
5. Vinod K Sharma. Natural Disaster Management in India Environment and development view point, 2012.
6. National Policy. On Disaster Management, 2009.
7. MHA. Disaster Management in India Ministry of Home Affairs Report, 2011.
8. GOI, Planning Commission, Report of Working Group on Disaster Management for the Twelfth Five Year Plan.