

Disaster Management

Largely in the Context of Earthquakes

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Timing is critical – especially for facilitating and governing initiatives of varied stakeholders, before they begin their own initiatives.

In the lack of timely policy interventions, mechanisms and resource inputs, disaster management loses collective synergy.

Overall Disaster Management Approach

- Plans for involvement and ownership of the affected in their rehabilitation.
- Should become an opportunity for improving development indicators of the region. Must cease to see rehabilitation and development as two independent stages.
- Should focus specifically on the most vulnerable and use disasters to reduce old/existing vulnerabilities
- Must strengthen local governance – the dynamics and politics of external aid through GO and NGO interventions tends to disempower them rather than otherwise.
- Rehabilitation measures must ensure strengthening of local economy and livelihoods.
- Should integrate compensatory assistance with a system for insurances – would reduce the politics of aid
- Intensive focus on Educating citizens to ensure and institute safety.
- Promote decentralized management of services and infrastructure by local governance as a developmental approach to ensure that in a disaster the collapse of centralized systems do not lead to a complete collapse of all infrastructure across the affected region.

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Phase: I *First 10-15 Days*

Relief Coordination

- Relief Depots – Identified and upgraded apriori
- Coordination mechanism imperative – Relief material, Volunteers, Rescue
- Mandated NGO-GO coordination system – Hub and sub-hubs
Health Coordination

Governance

- **Information centers critical – investment in district/micro-level information systems of all districts and towns on specific parameters required**
- Availability and access to rescue equipments
- Structured platform for civil society action but any regulation in first 10 days could backfire except in case of violence and looting
- Quick and extensive completion of immediate cash assistance. Problems with equating this assistance with compensations for those targetted as ‘affected’

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Phase: I *First 10-15 Days..* Cont..

Governance contd..

- **Handpicked individuals from Government and Civil Society.**
- Policy announcement for orphaned children – controlling unauthorized adoptions
- Health
- Epidemic control
- Planning for orthopedic patients who will return in 3-6 weeks.
- Setting system and approach for ‘trauma’ care – differentiating the bereaved and affected from the ill. **Cannot let loose, quacks on affected communities**
- Focus on already existing vulnerable sections before disaster (disabled/ailing in hospitals/aged/animals in confinement etc)

Shelter

- Immediate Shelter in Tents and Community structures/safe buildings. Are they in place?
- **Temporary shelter policy based on ‘people supported to rebuild basic shelters’**

Grievance redressal and human rights violation

- **Planning and mandating for legal redressal / grievance mechanism – normative mechanism required**

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Phase: II *Next 30 days*

Coordination:

- **Single Window State mechanism** necessary for communicating guidelines and policy frameworks, receiving feedbacks etc. Cannot be personality specific
- Aid agencies coordination must be mandated by State for facilitating the channeling of funds with a common rehab approach

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Phase: II *Next 30 days* Cont..

Shelter & Habitat:

- Material for **semi-permanent** shelter made available and community involved in reconstruction
- Permanent shelter policy framework put into place and opened up for consultations
- **Relocation Policy/in-situ– guidelines required based on technical parameters and valid developmental considerations of community**
- Rubble clearance policy
- In Towns and Cities especially land on which temporary sites established tend to become permanent sites; evacuation not easy

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Phase: II *Next 30 days* Cont..

Governance:

- **Food Relief especially, stopped by the third week. PDS strengthened and made the main medium of distribution**
- Overall framework for *civil society action* in all critical spheres laid out and made transparent
- Inviting and instituting system by which a standard pool of resource institutions and individuals are requisitioned to the disaster hit area immediately after the rescue period is over. **(especially in areas of health/education/children/shelter/information coordination/legal support)**
- **Special wing instituted for monitoring rehab of most vulnerable; Media management on this critical – over reaction by media leads to knee-jerk reactions by Government which starts snow-balling**

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Phase: II *Next 30 days* Cont..

Governance contd..

- Damage assessment not only in terms of physical assets lost but also value of productivity lost and period. (policy should be driven by that)– **norms for damage assessment needs standardization.**
- Assess damaged water harvesting structures, farm structures and ensure that the farming season is not lost. Specialized institutions partner State Governments.

Timing of damage assessment important. Two damage assessment create confusion/coercion/corruption.

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Phase: II *Next 30 days* Cont..

Health:

- Policy for disabled and permanent spinal injury patients
- Ensuring in-situ and institutional physiotherapy mechanism when patients get out of hospitals
- Post-operative corrective measures planned
- **Prosthetics and aids/equipments regularized through any one or two experienced institutions. This needs to be regulated**

Grievance redressal & Human Right Violations:

- Judicial system set up ideally in partnership with professional lawyers collectives/organizations. (Identification and capacity building of these requires to be prioritized)

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Phase: III *Month 2 to 6*

Shelter & Habitat:

- Material availability, access, and exemptions critical
- Capacity building for construction facilitated at all levels including traditional masons.
- **Quality management systems in place – a regulated and instituted role of the state as part of ensuring safety in future disasters.**
- **Based on consultations, all key policies relating to land and shelter should be frozen, including that of tenants (a critical issue for towns and cities)**
- Retrofitting and permanent shelter must be initiated ideally together – ensure lower levels of willful destruction of the standing structures.

Livelihoods:

- Self-employed and small shop owners/vendors etc should be prioritized quickly for assistance
- **Broad developmental framework for desirable directions of livelihood sector charted out. And broad consensus with civil society actors developed.**

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Phase: III *Month 2 to 6*

Governance:

- **Citizen facilitation centers must become prioritized and mandated systems for rehab facilitation and disaster management.**
- NGOs roles/areas of operation/extents of commitment must be clearly mandated and documented (NGO must be qualified and identified according to areas of expertise – too all encompassing phrase)
- Quality standards and measures for enforcing the same- in livelihood and shelter rehabilitation measures needs to be instituted.
- Technology facilitation centres have a critical role in integrating traditional technologies/wisdom which have been well-tested and those based on contemporary scientific practices.
- **Environment policy for and during disasters critical to guide appropriate practices in livelihoods and habitat rehabilitation measures.**
- Mechanisms to disseminate and distribute monetary assistance and compensations critical – such as bank accounts. Will reduce possibilities of corruption.
- Disaster audit system developed and instituted

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What is urgently required?

- A generic approach and policy for disaster management
- Specific policy for cities and towns; Specific for rural
- Strong enforcement of environmental legislations and norms in all large and small developmental projects across the country
- Developing and Creating a Steady and committed resource pool of institutions/ individuals/experts
- Specific capacity building, mandated disaster mitigation programmes and earmarked allocations for disaster mitigation with municipalities and district administration/gram panchayats especially
- Clear manuals and checklists for each phase with all district administrators
- National media campaign on issues of safety and mitigation
- Educational curriculum made mandatory

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Thank you!