

## Chapter – III: Planning of Disaster Preparedness

*Planning for disaster management is the first stage of the disaster management cycle, on which the effectiveness and success of the remaining components largely depend. Multi level planning system was established for disaster management. Significant gaps and delays in the implementation of the laid down system existed in the country.*

### 3.1 National Plan for Disaster Management

#### 3.1.1 Absence of National Plan for Disaster Management

National Executive Committee (NEC) was to prepare the National Plan for disaster management of the country and this was to be approved by NDMA. The Plan was to be then circulated to the Ministries and Departments which were to draw up their own plans in accordance with it.

The National Plan was to include:

- i. measures to be taken for prevention of disasters, or the mitigation of their effects;
- ii. measures to be taken for the integration of mitigation measures in the development plans;
- iii. measures to be taken for preparedness and capacity building to effectively respond to any threatening disaster situations or disaster; and
- iv. roles and responsibilities of different Ministries/Departments of the Government of India in respect of measures referred above.

NEC constituted a Working Group (February 2007) for assisting them in preparation of the Plan. The first meeting of the working group was held in March 2007, which finalised the format for

obtaining inputs from various Ministries and Departments.

We noted that information had been submitted by all the Ministries and Departments by August 2007 but no action had been initiated by either NEC or the Working Group. The Working Group, in fact, never met again after its first meeting in March 2007.

We noted that NEC in its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting held in May 2008 decided that:

- i. the Ministry and Department may designate a nodal officer at the level of JS for preparation of the National Plan and coordination with all the stakeholders; and
- ii. institutional mechanism for preparation of the National Plan may be worked out.

To implement these decisions, MHA structured the National Plan into three parts:



MHA constituted (September 2008) three different committees to prepare the three parts and also a facilitation committee to act as coordinating and monitoring body on behalf of NEC. In a meeting of the facilitation committee, it was decided (April 2009) that the National Response Plan should be prepared by MHA in respect of disasters under its purview. MHA was also to review the progress of National Mitigation Plan prepared by various Ministries and Departments.

Audit noted that till December 2009, no work on the Response Plan was initiated by MHA. In December 2009, National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) was directed by MHA to undertake the work relating to preparation of the Response Plan. However, after six months, MHA passed on (June 2010) the complete responsibility for the preparation of National Plan to NIDM, to be prepared by September 2010. Status of the National Plan was as follows:

#### **(a) National Mitigation plan**

Ten identified nodal central Ministries for various disasters were to prepare their disaster specific Mitigation Plans. Seven

ministries<sup>11</sup> had sent their plans to MHA, which were pending with NDMA for comments. We noted that the Ministries of Environment and Forests, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare had not sent their plans (September 2012).

#### **(b) National Response Plan**

NIDM submitted the draft National Response Plan in April 2012. MHA stated (September 2012) that the draft plan was circulated to all the concerned Central Ministries, States and UTs for their comments before its finalization.

#### **(c) National Capacity Building Plan**

Preparation of this Plan was assigned to NIDM in September 2008. It was still under preparation (August 2012).

We noted that NEC and MHA had not developed the National Plan for disaster management even after a lapse of more than six years of the enactment of the Disaster Management Act. Absence of disaster management plan at the national level had a trickledown effect on the states as they did not have a framework of reference to base their plans. Without these plans, it would be difficult to control, organise, direct and coordinate the activities of the disaster management at the national and state levels.

It would also be difficult to measure the extent to which the mitigation and preparedness facets of disaster management had been incorporated into the development planning, as intended in the National Act.

<sup>11</sup> Ministries of Water Resources, Agriculture, Defence, Railways, Mines, Civil Aviation and Department of Atomic Energy

MHA stated (December 2012) that different components of National Plan such as National Response Plan, National Mitigation Plan and National Capacity Building Plan were being developed with other mitigation plans by concerned Ministries. It further added that preparation of National Plans covering aspects of response, mitigation preparedness and capacity building for a vast country like India was a complex and gigantic task involving multiple

governments, departments and agencies. Though, it was a one-time activity but involved series of ongoing activities, which needed to be synergized.

We are of the opinion that a framework should be devised at the earliest to provide various stakeholders the much needed impetus for disaster preparedness as a considerable time has already been elapsed and still the legal framework for disaster preparedness is in transition phase.

### 3.2 State Plans for Disaster Management

Section 23 of the DM Act provides that there should be a disaster management plan for every state. It also directs the departments of the State Governments to draw up their own plans in accordance with the state plan.

The plan preparation process essentially aimed at strengthening the communities, elected local bodies and state administration's preparedness and response. The state plans were to be prepared by the State Executive Committees (SECs) in conformity with the guidelines to be issued on related matters by SDMA. The state plans prepared by SECs were to be approved by the respective SDMAs.

As per the Act, NDMA was also to lay down guidelines to be followed by the State Authorities in drawing up the state plans. It was noted that NDMA had issued guidelines for preparation of State Disaster Management Plan in July 2007. However, there were no provisions to make the

National Guidelines binding on states in preparation of the state plans.

We noted that till May 2012 only 14 states<sup>12</sup> had shared their draft or final State Disaster Management Plans (SDMPs) with NDMA. NDMA could not provide the updated position of state plans available with them to audit. There were no uniform data on submission of various state plans to NDMA and action taken thereon. Thus, it would be evident that NDMA failed to coordinate the efforts of State Governments in finalizing the state plans for disaster management effectively.

MHA stated (December 2012) that through a Principal Secretaries and Relief Commissioners level workshop, and financial assistance through NDMA, efforts were made to encourage the states for preparing their plans. As a result of these proactive initiatives, 14 states/UTs

<sup>12</sup> Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Mizoram, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh

had shared their draft disaster management plans with NDMA.

We nevertheless noted that despite National Guidelines of July 2007 the State Disaster Management Plans could not be finalised.

### 3.2.1 Grants-in-aid for preparation of SDMPs

NDMA decided (February 2009) to introduce a new scheme to release grants-in-aid for preparation of Disaster Management Plans to all the states, UTs, Ministries and Departments. For this purpose, NDMA prepared two Standing Finance Committee (SFC) notes for release of ₹ 1.98 crore to 35 states/UTs and ₹ 1.96 crore to 16 Ministries/Departments.

However, subsequently, NDMA decided (June 2009) not to follow the SFC route. Accordingly, the proposal for release of grants-in-aid of ₹ 4.99 crore to 35 states/UTs and 16 Ministries and

Departments were approved by Vice Chairman, NDMA in June 2009. In terms of the sanction order, each beneficiary was to complete and publish the plan and the NEC was to get the National Plan ready within six months i.e. by June 2010.

NDMA sanctioned grants-in-aid of ₹ 3.52 crore to all the states and UTs in October 2009. Funds were released in January and February 2010.

We noted that the beneficiary states, UTs, Ministries and Departments could not complete and publish their plans. Thus, the purpose of the scheme was defeated despite an expenditure of ₹ 3.52 crore.

MHA stated (December 2012) that the scheme was not taken up with the Planning Commission for inclusion in the Eleventh Plan as this was initially proposed as scheme for financial assistance. However, the proposal for post-facto approval was under consideration.

## 3.3 National Disaster Management Guidelines

As per the DM Act, NDMA was to prepare guidelines on various aspects of disaster management to be followed by the different Ministries and Departments of the Government of India. NDMA formulated and issued 17 National Guidelines on various types of disasters and related issues (October 2012). The prime aim of these guidelines was to ensure integrated disaster management. The guidelines also aimed at institutionalizing the implementation of initiatives and activities covering all the stages of disaster management cycle.

NDMA had been circulating various National Guidelines since April 2007 but there was no information as to whether these were being adopted and used by Ministries, Departments and State Governments.

The guidelines also provided a chapter on action points with specific timelines. It was however, noticed that NDMA had no information on follow up of the deliverables mentioned in the action points and achievement thereof, thus, rendering their monitoring ineffective.

On this being pointed out, NDMA stated (July 2012) that once the deliverables and

timelines were mentioned in the guidelines, it was up to NEC, State Governments/Ministries and districts to account for it and not NDMA.

MHA also stated (December 2012) that the timelines indicated in the guidelines were indicative for the various stakeholders and they were expected to come out with their own plans and coordination mechanisms for the management of disasters pertaining to their domains. Adherence of the Ministries, Departments and State Governments to the guidelines was a continuous and evolving process.

In our opinion, NEC was the executive arm of NDMA and it was the responsibility of NDMA to ensure compliance on the guidelines issued by it.

**3.3.1** As per the summary records of discussions at the meeting of NDMA held

in January 2010, the Vice-Chairman, NDMA made a presentation on 'Present status and road ahead'. It was reported that the following guidelines were under finalisation:

- Community Based Disaster Management
- Micro Finance & Risk Insurance
- Post Disaster Reconstruction, and
- Protection of Cultural Heritage & Monuments

There was no time frame fixed for finalising these guidelines and even after a lapse of more than two years, the guidelines were yet to be finalised. In the absence of these guidelines impetus to institutionalise the implementation of initiatives and activities for disaster preparedness could not be extended to the stakeholders in these areas.

### **3.4 Demarcation of roles and responsibilities**

As per section 75 of the DM Act, the Central Government was to make rules for carrying out the provisions of the Act.

In order to formulate and notify various rules as envisaged in the DM Act 2005, Prime Ministry Office in February 2006, issued directions to carry out an exercise to evolve a working arrangement for the NDMA. The recommendation of this exercise was to be placed before a Group of Ministers (GoM). Thereafter, MHA was required to incorporate the guidelines as finalised by GoM. We noted that the rules and regulations for NDMA were yet to be framed and notified.

NDMA was constituted in September 2006 under the DM Act but business rules

pertaining to internal conduct of NDMA were yet to be framed. In February 2011, MHA directed NDMA to prepare the business rules followed by reminders. However, NDMA had not submitted these rules for approval as of August 2012. We also noted that the role of MHA in relation to NDMA lacked clarity.

In the absence of regular NEC meetings, MHA functioned as an executive arm of NDMA.

On the other hand, MHA also acted as an administrative Ministry, in so far as the approval of the Government was concerned for various mitigation projects of NDMA.

MHA stated (December 2012) that NDMA was in the process of framing business rules pertaining to its internal conduct.

This was indicative of ambiguity in demarcation of roles and responsibilities between NEC, NDMA and MHA. The lack of clarity and overlapping roles and responsibilities amongst these are detailed in Table 3.1.

MHA accepted the facts and stated (December 2012) that a Task Force had been constituted. The Government would take appropriate decisions on the recommendations of the Task Force, which would address some of the suggestive issues observed by Audit.



Table 3.1: Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities

Mandate/work area	Role assigned to (as per DM Act )	Work done by (In practice )	Area of concern
NEC was to assist NDMA in the discharge of its functions, ensure compliance of the directions issued by the Central Government and coordinate the response in the event of any disaster.	NEC	NEC only recommended three sub-committees to prepare national plan in its last meeting. But other roles of NEC were performed by MHA.	NEC had proved ineffective in coordination during response to any disaster since it had not even met since May 2008, whereas this period witnessed disasters of severe nature.
National Disaster Response Fund is to be placed at the disposal of NEC to be applied towards meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation	NEC	The second stage of processing the National Disaster Response Fund proposals of the state was performed by IMG of MHA and Ministry of Agriculture	IMG process existed prior to the inception of National Disaster Response Fund and NEC which were being continued by MHA. NEC was not activated as required under the Act.
General superintendence, direction and control of National Disaster Response Force	NDMA	MHA deals with the deployment of battalions and other administrative matters of the force.	Force works under dual command of NDMA and MHA despite having their own DG Hqrs. office.
Response, Relief and Rehabilitation	Not defined in the Act. <sup>13</sup>	Central Government (MHA, nodal Ministries and Departments)	NDMA was also found carrying out the response activity, such as Operation Centre at NDMA and other works relating to rehabilitation in the recent disasters at Leh (cloud burst) and Odisha (cyclone Aila).
Response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) related disaster	Not defined in the Act.	National Crisis Management Committee	CBRN required close involvement of security forces and intelligence agencies, were dealt with by NCMC. NDMA, however, formulated guidelines, facilitated training and preparedness activities in respect of CBRN emergencies.

<sup>13</sup> Only provided under section 6(1) and 6(2) (f), which reads, 'coordinate the enforcement and implementation of policies and plans for disaster management', are with NDMA

***Recommendations:***

- *NEC and MHA should ensure that a comprehensive National Plan for disaster management is developed at the earliest.*
- *NDMA should follow up implementation of its National Guidelines by the Ministries, Departments and State Governments.*
- *Roles and responsibilities of MHA, NEC and NDMA should be specified for clear demarcation of functions of these stakeholders.*