

Disaster Management*

-towards a national response system.

- J.C.Pant

1. In recent years India has been visited by very serious natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes, floods, drought, etc. causing widespread loss of life and property belonging to, particularly, the poorest sections of our society. Protection of human rights of the poorest who suffer most during disasters has not so far caught sufficient attention of the human rights' activists and this needs to be highlighted in order that they receive adequate attention of all concerned. Famines have been endemic to India and famine codes have evolved overtime in nearly all the states of the Indian Union but even these need to be scrutinized in order to see whether the provisions in these codes for relief to the poorest are adequate.

2. In ancient India, disaster management finds mention in Kautilya's Arthashastra as a primary duty of the State. Disaster management as a post-disaster activity has been well established in India especially since independence. The novelty of the new approach lies in taking well-planned and timely pro-active measures to prevent disasters, and to prepare people to cope with disasters and to motivate them to safeguard their own human rights in disaster situations. This approach needs to be propagated widely so that the voluntary movement in the country can adopt it, to enable it to play a truly complimentary role in support of governmental effort in disaster management.

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3. During the last one year the HPC (High Powered Committee set up by the Government of India in August 1999 for preparation of disaster management plans) has interacted with a wide cross-section of the governmental system at all levels. Similarly extensive consultations have been held with over three hundred representatives of about two hundred major voluntary agencies throughout the country, and a comprehensive plan of action by voluntary agencies has been hammered out. In fact, a decision has been taken to form a nation-wide network of NGOs for disaster management under the acronym **VASUDEVA** standing for **V**oluntary **A**gencies for **S**ustainable **U**niversal **D**evelopment and **E**mergency **V**oluntary **A**ction. This nation-wide network will strive to form a state-wide NGO network for each state of the Indian Union, and also strive to set up a federation of NGOs at the district level represented by a co-ordination committee evolved by the district federation by consensus. The main thrust of the plan of action of NGOs is to supplement the governmental effort in disaster management, as well as to prepare people to cope with disasters to the best of their abilities and capacities. In other words, a comprehensive peoples' program for disaster management is in the offing, which will throw up in due course a disaster management plan of the people, for the people & by the people, to raise the level of preparedness of people to cope with disasters. The **"Action Points adopted at NGO-Consultations" (Appendix-I)** provide an excellent programme of action for the governmental system and the voluntary agencies to work in close coordination. We are also trying to ensure that the governmental effort in disaster management fully incorporates and encourages the peoples' effort as well as ensures due attention to the human rights' of the poorest in a disaster situation. I am happy to mention that ex-servicemen are being involved in this entire exercise, and the Directorate of

Resettlement, Ministry of Defense is fully supporting our effort.

4. The approach of HPC is holistic, in line with the Yokohama Strategy evolved during the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) i.e. planning for prevention, reduction, mitigation, and preparedness and thereafter response planning, goes a long way to reduce the loss of life and property due to disasters. Effort of HPC is, not to develop a plan de novo, but to build on what obtains at different levels and streamline such bottlenecks as may be existing. Considering the very large number of disasters that occur in India in different parts of the country, it was felt that a generic categorization of disasters would help in preparing disaster management plans. This generic categorization of disasters is, in no way intended to disturb the handling of specific disasters by various departments and ministries at the centre or state government levels according to existing rules of business of government. In fact, in our view, all conceivable disasters would fall in one or another of these five categories. Accordingly, the 30 odd types of disasters which have been identified have been categorized into five sub-groups:

Sub-Group 1: Water and Climate Related Hazards.

(Floods and Drainage Management/Droughts/Cyclones/Tornadoes/Hurricanes/Hailstorm/Cloudburst/Snow Avalanches/Heat & Cold Waves/Sea Erosion/Thunder and lightning).

Sub-Group 2: Geologically related Hazards

(Earthquakes/Landslides/Mudflows/Sea Erosion/Dam Bursts & Dam Failures/ Mine Fires).

Sub-Group 3: Chemical, Industrial & Nuclear related Disasters

(Chemical & Industrial Disasters/Nuclear Disasters)

Sub-Group 4: Accident Related Disasters.

(Road Rail and other Transportation accidents including Waterways-Boat Capsizing/Mine Flooding/Major Building Collapse/Serial Bomb Blasts/Festival related Disasters/Electrical Disasters & Fires/ Forest Fires/Urban Fires/Mine Flooding/ Oil Spill/Village Fires).

Sub-Group 5: Biologically Related Disasters

(Biological Disasters/ Epidermis/ Cattle Epidemics/ Pest Attacks/ Food Poisoning)

Various departments and ministries dealing with individual disasters have been included in these sub-groups for the purpose of plan preparation after due deliberations amongst themselves. They have been specially instructed to evolve do's and don't's for all types of disasters both for rescue & relief workers, as well as for people in general, to minimize the suffering due to disasters. We were expecting these sub-groups to give us their plans by the end of November last year. There is a general realization that planting of appropriate species of trees, shrubs and grasses according to soil type, soil- moisture and climate is the most effective way of preventing disasters, as well as of coping with them whenever they strike. A paper to provide a framework for appropriate linkages between the national, state and district plans for managing disasters was read out at a conference of state relief commissioners in Pune in May 2000. This paper under the caption "**Disaster Management-a comprehensive approach: ROAD MAP for a plan preparation process (PPP)**" is annexed as **Appendix-II**.

5. Concept of disaster management:

A disaster is an event which threatens the whole of society, and its management implies that a mechanism is in place which will enable a **TOTAL & EFFECTIVE RESPONSE** to offset its harmful effects. This total & effective response mechanism must

subsume the coordinated response of the entire governmental system and the whole of civil society. By its very definition therefore, disaster management cannot be a quick-fix mechanism. It implies meticulous planning and coordination between various role-players, to prevent disasters and to mitigate their impact whenever they occur. The response system must incorporate the traditional coping mechanisms which have evolved over centuries of experience by trial and error. A human rights' perspective to disaster management is very important because it is the poorest and weakest sections of society which suffer most in terms of loss of life and property, whenever a disaster strikes. If such human rights' concerns can be taken care of effectively, then only can the impact of disasters be mitigated to the maximum.

6. The Eleventh Finance Commission (EFC):

The Eleventh Finance Commission has recommended setting up of a National Centre for Calamity Management (NCCM) under the ministry of agriculture, government of India, to manage disasters in the country on a sustained basis. This centre, according to the EFC would be assisted by an independent group of experts who would monitor the disaster scene in the country on a "Round the Year" basis. This group of experts has been designated as "Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee" by the HPC, which would be an in-house system of the proposed NCCM. The whole issue of disaster management in the recent past, has been mired by what can be described as partisan politics, which has come in the way of any meaningful long-term planning for prevention of disasters. A useful insight deduced by the HPC through its nation-wide consultations is that it appears that the intensity of partisan politics is directly proportional to lack of planning for prevention of disasters. There is, thus, an urgent need to lift disaster management above partisan

politics. In this context it is a welcome development that an all-party **National Committee on Disaster Management** under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister has been recently setup to address all issues relating to disaster management in the country.

7. Quick Response Mechanism-The Trigger Mechanism:

In the matter of response, a need has arisen to provide for "Quick Response" at the national, state and district levels to provide for quick rescue and immediate relief in disaster situations such as the Orissa super cyclone and the Bhuj earthquake. This would imply that even neighboring districts and states may need to rush to the aid of the affected districts and states in situations when the state and district headquarters may get immobilized due to the intensity of the disaster. At the national and state levels also a concept of a special disaster relief unit, or well-trained civil force is being mooted to reduce response time to the minimum. The HPC has evolved a concept of "**Trigger Mechanism**", which is another name for "Standard Operation Procedure (SOP)" current in the defense services. The proposed Trigger Mechanism is a device to minimize response time when disasters strike and comprises of the following:

(i) Civil Defense warden system is a good response mechanism; can it be extended to the whole country? Panchayat members could be wardens in the rural areas.

(ii) Communication links: VHF at each Tahsil/Taluka; V-Sat at each District headquarters; HAM (Help All Mankind) radio promotion programme needs to be taken up.

(iii) District Control Room/Shadow Control Room; State Control Room/Shadow Control Room; Central Control Room, control room in the convener/nodal

department of each sub-group, and control room in each department constituting the sub-groups set up by the H.P.C. would be necessary.

(iv) L1, L2, L3 levels of each type of disaster have to be predetermined, to lay out procedures to trigger off the Basic Initial Response Management Steps (BIRMS) without formal orders from any where. Sub-groups at national and state levels have been requested to address this exercise at the earliest. L1 denotes a disaster which can be handled effectively at the district level. Normally L2 level of the district will be the L1 level at the state hqs; and L3 level of the district will be the L2 level of the state hqs; L3 level of the state hqs would normally be the L1 level at the centre. L0 level has been designated as the preparatory level prior to L1. In disasters such as the Bhuj earthquake or the Orissa super cyclone L1, L2, L3 would be triggered off simultaneously.

(v) Police wireless network and Police Control Rooms need to be designated as alternate communication system.

(vi) Sub-groups set up by the HPC have been asked to lay out 'dos' and 'dents' for each type of disaster for people and the relief volunteers and personnel, to facilitate relief and rescue activities when disasters strike. These ought to be passed on to the State Resource Centres of the National Literacy Mission for communicating the same to the Zilla Saksharta Samitis (ZSS).

8. SAARC Initiatives and International Co-operation:

In disasters of very large proportions affecting extensive areas and populations, effective disaster response might involve one or more countries. At this juncture, it may be mentioned that almost 83% of floodwaters in Bihar originate in Nepal.

Management of disasters of such intensity involves sharing of crucial information amongst all role players, even in neighboring countries, for efficient response and mitigation, as the case might be. In this context, evolving disaster management strategies with the co-operation of neighboring countries is imperative. Recent flash floods in Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are attributable to what happened to the north of our northern borders. A large number of natural calamities occurring in North Bengal Division of West Bengal appear to originate in Nepal and Bhutan. The HPC felt that collaboration among SAARC and other neighboring countries with respect to flood management, cyclone and monsoon forecasting systems would go a long way in managing disasters holistically, especially in terms of pooling of resources and expertise. Trees, shrubs and grasses, in fact vegetation in general, is crucial to the whole process of conservation of rainwater. Without appropriate conservation measures, rainfall causes soil erosion and subsequently, floods and even flash floods. A common approach to the issue, amongst the SAARC and other neighboring countries, through their national forest policies is, therefore essential.

9. Legislative support at the state and national levels:

Realizing that since all the activities involved in disaster management planning fall in the State List of the Indian Constitution, it was felt that states would need to legislate to enact a State Disaster Management Act, in the first instance. A Committee to prepare a Model State Disaster Management Act was, therefore, constituted by the HPC. I am happy to say that this draft act has been prepared and a copy of the same has also been circulated to the State Chief Secretaries and Relief Commissioners of all states, and Director Generals of all state ATIs for their comments, suggestions and further follow-

up actions. Equity and adequacy aspects in administering relief and rescue operations have been emphasized in this draft legislation to safeguard the human rights of the poorest. A draft of a National Calamity Management Act has also been drawn up to conform to the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, and the same has been circulated to all the state governments and all the concerned ministries of the government of India.

10.A special reference to the disaster of drought is necessary here. Rains in the Indian sub-continent fail once in a while. If there is an appropriate greening program in place, then in the years of normal rainfall, sufficient moisture gets conserved in the soil to take care of years when rains may fail. Needless to say, there has to be a comprehensive greening program at the district level to prevent drought and to cope with it whenever it occurs. The problem arises when and where there are no proper arrangements for conservation of rainwater, and drought begins to lurk. Disasters like drought take a long time to develop, and the very first signs of distress need to be attended to. Can states adopt schemes like the employment guarantees scheme (EGS) of Maharashtra, where on the first signal of distress the district collector is able to intervene? This is not the same as GOI having schemes in the ministry of rural development to provide for rural employment. GOI funds reach the states only after they have utilized the previously released funds, and, in view of the resource crunch, district collectors are unable to provide relief on the first signal of distress. A state level EGS could take care of such situations, well in time, otherwise once the first signals of distress go unheeded, the disaster of drought assumes proportions which become impossible to handle, giving rise to unimaginable hardships to the

poorest of our people. This could be easily avoided by timely action at the district and state levels.

11.Updating the Plan and its Rehearsal:

A plan is only as good as when it is updated and rehearsed. Plans made in the past have been rendered obsolete and out of date, and the effort made to prepare them has become infructuous. It is being suggested that every year "last week of April" be observed as "updating the plan" week and every year "first week of May" be observed as "rehearsing the plan" week throughout the country at district, states and national level to ensure that the plans which are ready at different levels are implementable. The quality of rehearsal would need to be assessed objectively, one mark for a prescribed act done, zero mark for a prescribed act not done. The voluntary agencies would have a special role in this exercise, in that this would give them an excellent opportunity to understand the plans that have been prepared. This, in turn, would enable them to streamline their own complimentary role in disaster management. This kind of a drill every year will augment the country's state of preparedness and will instill confidence in people to face any situation in future, as well as ensure protection of human rights of the poorest. This exercise has been designated as "**L0-L1 Exercise**" at the district and state levels for improving their preparedness to cope with disasters, and is annexed as **Appendix-III**.

12.There is need to integrate the school, college and university systems with disaster preparedness and response mechanism as they are a major systemic casualty of a super disaster, and have a major stake in preventing them, and also in mitigating their impact. Involvement of students and youth in

disaster preparedness would also orient them for discharging their social responsibility towards the vulnerable sections of society in the long run. The voluntary agencies need to come forward in a big way to mobilize students to prepare people to cope with disasters, as well as for organizing rescue and relief in a crisis. In a disaster situation it is the poorest sections of society which suffer most, and it is these sections of our population which have little access to the fruits of development due to illiteracy. The nation-wide network of NGOs has taken upon itself the task of integrating the peoples' movement for literacy, being implemented through the National Literacy Mission, with their own movement **VASUDEVA** for preparing people to cope with disasters. The Zilla Saksharta Samitee i.e. the district level committee for promotion of literacy all over the country is being geared to prepare people to cope with disasters with particular reference to need for watchfulness in protecting the human rights of the poorest.

13.Development plans at national, state and district level need to apportion funds for prevention and mitigation of disasters, as cost-effectiveness of prevention and mitigation is estimated to reduce relief costs to up to one tenth. This will call for involving and motivating the peoples' representatives, NGOs etc. for undertaking this exercise as part of the routine of development planning at all levels. The Planning Commission has also been requested to keep this in mind while formulating development plans at all levels. Many development schemes such as road building, implemented indifferently are known to cause disasters. In the hills road construction carried out without imagination has triggered off many a landslides, while in the plains floods have been caused where they were unheard of prior to road construction. The attention of the Planning Commission has been invited to the need for

ensuring implementation of development schemes at all levels in a manner so as not to cause disasters. In fact NGOs have been requested to work with Panchayats to evolve model Panchayat-level sustainable-development and disaster management plans to become examples for other Panchayats. The basic premise that has emerged from these consultations is that a sustainable development plan, prepared and implemented by the people with government co-operation is the best guarantee to prevent many natural disasters and to minimize the suffering of the poorest in disaster situations.

14.A seminar was organized in NIRD, Hyderabad in December, 2000 on "Funding Disaster Prevention & Mitigation" in order to evolve norms for apportioning developments funds for this purpose. Regarding norms for apportioning development funds for prevention of disasters, I came across a figure of 20% suggested by some faculty members of the Academy of Administration, Nainital, which to my mind appeared to be on the high side. Considering that the norm for annual depreciation in fixed assets is 10%, I suggested that if funds to the tune of 10% out of plan funds are set aside for taking in hand implementation of measures for prevention of disasters at different levels, that should be a very sound beginning. Once funds to the tune of 10% are set aside for disaster prevention, then two-thirds of these could be allocated for disaster prevention in disaster prone areas, and the rest one-third could be utilized for disaster prevention in less vulnerable areas. This proposition was discussed at length in this workshop and the same was adopted unanimously. The recommendation of this workshop has been communicated to the Planning Commission for their consideration. Two simple one-liners were evolved in NIRD, Hyderabad, which are to be quoted regularly in their monthly news-letter "Gram Unnati".

विकास ऐसा हो जो आफत से बचाये ।

विकास ऐसा हो जो आफत न बन जाये ।।

15.Now, I may kindly be permitted to digress a little from the mandate given to the HPC. A silent disaster afflicting our country is the phenomenon of the ever swelling urban slums generated by a massive rural-urban migration of the rural poor, who have been driven away from the rural countryside due to their alienation from the village community lands. The lure and glitter of the far-away metropolis, and the fairy tales spun by commercial cinema painting an image of modern life with piped water supply, electricity, telephone and television were too alluring and hard to resist, and thus began the flight from the villages. This process of rural-urban migration has been accelerated after the advent of television and its extension to nearly all parts of the country. Thus, television, a unique media of mass education, instead of disseminating life-generating concerns of sustainable development, has today become a mere tool of mass commercial advertisements sponsored by multi-national companies and our own corporate sector, dishing out spurious values which seem to threaten the very moral fibre of our upcoming generations, giving rise to fears of a "moral disaster".

16.I am constrained to refer to this because this question was posed to the HPC during the NGO-consultations, and a lame excuse that the mandate given to the HPC does not cover "moral disasters" carried no conviction. How do we counter this

"moral disaster" in front of which every family in the country is a helpless and mute spectator. In my view, we would have to work in the direction of generating a peoples' movement which would attempt to trigger off a "reverse migration" from our living hells, the urban slums in order to de-congest them. This seems to be the only feasible, though difficult and at first sight, well nigh impossible solution, available to us now to save our cities which are cradles of urban arts and culture, so carefully crafted by our corporate sector. The corporate sector, thus has a special stake in saving our cities from a slow and certain death. But this cannot happen till we make our villages attractive enough to first stop this rural-urban migration. The sensible way to go about this is to develop markets for the produce of our cottage and village industries which would generate gainful employment for our rural poor inhabiting the urban slums, as well as the rural poor who are still eking out a living in the rural areas.

17.The corporate sector of India which has the wherewithal that can enable it to rise to the occasion, therefore, has a special role to play now

(i) to create markets for the produce of our cottage and village industries to generate gainful rural employment, by extending this facility through their own marketing networks, and

(ii) to apply a self-denying ordinance on the quality and themes of the commercial advertisements that are being dished out through the television. The themes could easily cover family level cleanliness and sanitation, social level sanitation to facilitate recycling of waste and converting bio-degradable garbage into manure, city level sanitation to improve the quality of urban life, communal and social harmony so essential for our progress, family level harmony by projecting proper mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law

relations, pollution control on vehicular and industrial emissions & effluents, keeping the rivers clean by proper disposal of municipal wastes in order to facilitate supply of clean drinking water, laying stress on supply of chemical-free-foodgrains by emphasizing biological control of pests and organic farming in agriculture etc. I am convinced that the corporate sector in India is capable of playing this role provided it realizes the dire consequences of ignoring this matter affecting the basic human rights of the poorest.

18. Networking of Knowledge and the Learning

Exercise:

Coming back to the main theme of disaster management, I would like to highlight the role of the elite and intellectual segments of our society. Every disaster is a unique event and every kind of data emerging out of it needs to be meticulously recorded for posterity. The scientific community, the technologists, the social scientists and other branches of knowledge need to be mobilized at short notice to record data and carry out necessary studies whenever a disaster strikes. This gives rise to a need for laying out a structure for initiating the learning exercise, at short notice, which can be used to collect data whenever a disaster strikes, in order to generate knowledge which may prevent future disasters as well as prepare people to face them in a better manner whenever they recur. This learning process has to be traced backwards to know about the causes of various kinds of disasters, which is only possible through a process of networking of such knowledge as is available throughout the world today. We have decided to broadly network knowledge in three groups:

- (i) Knowledge relating to natural disasters,

- (ii) Knowledge relating to non-natural disasters,
and
- (iii) Knowledge relating to biological disasters

This would also involve identifying centres of excellence in different fields of knowledge and technology which would need to collaborate to develop the required networks of knowledge. A small task force of eminent persons in the field of science and technology is working in this area and we hope to give concrete shape to this concept in the near future. This would help the country to prevent & reduce the occurrence of disasters and mitigate their impact whenever they strike. This exercise of harnessing science and technology in aid of disaster management promises to be an exciting venture which would hopefully usher in a comparatively safer world in the near future.

19. The whole process of preparation of disaster management plans initiated by the HPC is laying special emphasis on taking timely preventive measures by incorporating them into the very development planning system. This, in a manner of speaking is promising to generate a nation-building exercise which will involve the poorest of the poor in their own development. This will also need the willing co-operation of the elite of our society, working in close collaboration with peoples' organizations at all levels to plan for a safe and better future.

20. There is need today to save the concept of "Protection of Human Rights" from becoming a mere slogan by taking in hand concrete and practical welfare programs to be implemented by the very people whose human rights are threatened. This would require marshalling the services of honest and dedicated volunteers who are prepared to spare their time and energy for such programs without seeking any personal benefits. Such volunteers would have to have the patience to function as

facilitators willing to encourage the poorest of the poor to stand on their own feet, instead of converting the poorest of the poor into beggars of relief. There are many organizations today which are distributing relief as charity in the name of "Protection of Human Rights" who seem to be indifferent to the need for encouraging the poorest of the poor to stand on their own feet. In fact, it appears that these organizations prefer that the poorest remain poor so that they may continue to give charity. In my view there is a further need to motivate such charitable organizations to join hands so that the poorest of the poor are enabled to stand on their own feet. Then only are we truly helping the poor and conferring on them a freedom of choice so essential to generate self-esteem in them.

21. In this era of globalization the corporate sector has a special role to play in the context of protection of human rights of the poorest in a disaster situation. The concept of "World-a Market" has today overtaken the ancient Indian concept of "World-a Family", and the only way we can promote the latter concept is by protecting the human rights of the poorest in all situations, in disaster as well as in normal times. The burden of converting "World-a Market" to "World-a Family", it seems may well fall on India, and then alone would the human rights of the poorest and the lowliest be safeguarded automatically. This is going to be a major cultural shift in which the best minds in India would need to collaborate at all levels in society as well as in the governmental system at the centre, the states and the districts. The ancient Rishis of India had observed:

अयम् निजः परोवेत्ति गणनाय लघुचेतसाम् ।

उदार चरितानाम् तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ।।

This is mine, that is yours, is the calculation of small minds; for the broadminded, the whole world is a family.

22. The role of the Armed Forces:

The role of the Armed Forces and Para-military Forces in disaster situations has always been exemplary and so far, fortunately above partisan politics. The defense forces in India have very high traditions of service and sacrifice and are held in high esteem by all sections of society. Excessive dependence on them for such civil functions as disaster management takes away a great deal of their time and energy from their main task of defending the country. The approach to future planning should be to reduce society's dependence on the Armed Forces and Para-military Forces in disaster situations, by preparing people, through their voluntary community organizations (VCOs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions to cope with disasters, by taking appropriate preventive measures well in time.

23. I would like to suggest that the Universities in India have a very important role to play on the various issues raised by me and specially those mentioned earlier (paras 15, 16 and 17) relating to the silent disaster arising out of the phenomenon of the ever swelling urban slums generated by the rural-urban migration of the rural poor. Similarly, the major cultural shift referred to earlier (para 21, and 22) arising out of the phenomenon of globalization, and the need for preparing people to cope with disasters, also would require the genius of the University system in India, in due course. Mobilizing the University system in India for such a nation-building exercise is a challenging task which would call forth the very best from our youths and the elite sections of society. I am happy that I have had this opportunity of expressing my frank views on this subject today in

presence of such a distinguished gathering of intellectuals. I would welcome critical comments from the audience so that when we complete our deliberations today we can go forth with a clear vision of the tasks that lie ahead. A corresponding determination to attend to those tasks should be the least of the outcomes of this lecture.

APPENDIX-I

ACTION POINTS adopted at N.G.O Consultations---J.C. Pant.

“An ounce of practice is far better than tons of precepts”

1. (a) A core group of N.G.Os may emerge out of each consultation to form a core group at the national level. Each member of the regional core group is expected to strive to evolve a state level NGO network.
- (b) Each nodal N.G.O may strive to create a regional N.G.O network with the assistance of its core group to work out, with the consent of each participating N.G.O, what each would like to do in a disaster situation as well as in normal times, in terms of
 - (i) Specific area of activity
 - (ii) Specific function in a given area
 - (iii) Specific disaster in which they specialize.

This information may be sent to the nodal N.G.O in the format given at point no. 21.

2. The national level core group of N.G.Os emerging out of the N.G.O consultations held earlier, met in I.I.P.A-NCDM, New Delhi on 20th & 21st Oct. 2000, and resolved to implement these ACTION POINTS, and to initiate the process of setting up a nationwide network of N.G.O's with the acronym VASUDEVA.
3. (a) Proposed name of the nationwide network:

**Voluntary Agencies for Sustainable Universal Development and
Emergency Voluntary Action**

= V A S U D E V A with NCDM, New Delhi as convener and respective nodal N.G.Os as conveners for the regional core groups respectively, was accepted.

Five elements to sustain VASUDEVA: दान (donation), अनुदान (grant), योगदान (co-operation), प्रतिभादान (skill application), समयदान (offering services) were identified.

Resources would have to be located in advance, for focused application during a crisis, to avoid delay in relief activities. Relief delayed is relief denied, and delay in relief must be avoided.

- (b) NCDM has decided to start a quarterly newsletter under the title “VASUDEVA” to provide for the nationwide network a platform, in order to interact with each other and with NCDM, and to become an instrument to empower the vulnerable people and communities.
 - (c) The nationwide network VASUDEVA has undertaken to organize regional and national consultations every year on the lines similar to the consultations organized this year under the auspices of the HPC, to review their own state of preparedness, and to sustain peoples’ enthusiasm.
4. Code of Conduct for (a) local govt. agency (b) local voluntary agencies co-operating in relief and rescue (c) relief workers, in English and Hindi as adopted, is enclosed (Annexure-I).
 5. Efforts would be made by Voluntary agencies to evolve a district level federation of N.G.Os to work for building voluntary community organizations (VCO) to promote self-reliance, and for building people’s capacity to cope with disasters.
 6. Can participating N.G.Os at their own level, organize similar district level consultations and work for evolving a district level federation of N.G.Os?
 7. Zilla Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) can become a good rallying point for such N.G.O consultations.

8. ZSS may also evolve as a good meeting ground for N.G.Os & governmental organizations (G.Os). If Literacy programmes can focus on people's problems-people's problems may get solved, which will in turn promote literacy programmes.
9. Panchayat level planning for disaster prevention measures as well as for sustainable development, needs to be addressed by N.G.Os practicing PRA (Participatory Rapid Appraisal), and other N.O.Gs may also adopt this technique.
10. Involvement of N.G.Os in development planning needs to be promoted to take care of disaster prevention measures. This will enable voluntary community organizations promoted by N.G.Os, to steer the planning process for development at the grass-roots level, in order to reduce peoples' vulnerability to hazards.
- 11.(a) District level Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) needs to be instituted with provision for raising local resources in cash and kind. Matching contribution from the national CRF would be an added incentive.

(b) While financial discipline may be prescribed by the central government for the utilization of the central component of the district level CRF, the component of the district level CRF growing out of the peoples' contributions may be utilized by the district administration, on the advice of the representative co-ordination committee of the district level federation of NGOs.
12. All religious places may have a donation box for disaster relief, & collections from them may be passed on to the district CRF, to be used by the district administration in the villages & towns/wards where the place of worship donating is located, in proportion to their contribution. Members of VASUDEVA may take upon themselves the task of persuading all places of worship of all religions to adopt this practice.
13. In disaster prone villages, Panchayat level CRF may be initiated by the District Magistrate with suitable safeguards for proper monitoring and utilization.
- 14.(a) In weeks prior to seasonal calamities, tie up with the Railways and Transport Companies should be worked out for prompt dispatch of

relief materials & for proper arrangements at the destinations for their proper storage.

(b) Every year last week of April would be observed as “plan updating week” and first week of May would be observed as “ plan rehearsal week”. N.G.Os’ would have an important role to play in this exercise. This would involve setting up and practice of L0 & L1 levels of the trigger mechanism (Copy enclosed, Annexure-II). The vitality of VASUDEVA would be put to a real test during this exercise every year.

15. Local Cultural troupes need to be mobilized to educate people on how to cope with disasters, and how to reduce their own vulnerability.

16. Arrangements similar to Civil Defence need to be set up in disaster-prone districts, tahsils/talukas/blocks, through Home Guards trained for the purpose of relief & rescue.

17. Documenting local traditional knowledge & customs and communicating the same to the nodal N.G.O for record, needs to be addressed. NCDM, New Delhi would in turn obtain this documentation from the four nodal N.G.Os (D.M.I, Ahmedabad; Shantikunj, Haridwar; Vivekanand Kendra, Kanyakumari; and Ramkrishna Mission, Narendrapur, Calcutta.)

18. Promoting amateur radio clubs in schools and colleges to extend HAM radios in remote areas, needs to be taken up seriously.

19. Letter has gone to all state relief commissioners that similar state and district level N.G.O. consultations be held at the earliest; N.G.O.s may like to follow this up with their respective state relief commissioners.

20. Role of N.G.Os in Pre-disaster Period:-

a. Identifying the poorest & providing for them, and to scotch rumours likely to impede relief and rescue activities.

b. Identifying the storage points for:

(i) Medicines (ii) Food grains (iii) Clothes

- c. Identifying safe places for shelter-temporary (tents) or permanent buildings, for human as well as for cattle.
- d. Planning langars (supplying cooked meals)-who will do it and where?
- e. Training in relief distribution- who, where & what?
- f. Organizing village/ward defence societies against criminal elements.
- g. (i) Identifying N.S.S volunteers, Scouts & Guides for relief & rescue-detailing volunteers at specific places, and for specific times.
 (ii) First aid posts, hospitals (govt. and private), Red-cross society facilities, doctors, para-medics, etc. should be identified and alerted.
 (iii) Providing critical data relating to previous disasters in order to improve relief and rescue activities.
- h. If Inter-district movement of relief materials is planned- then adequate advance preparation, under the auspices of district magistrates of the concerned districts would be necessary to ensure prompt and safe delivery of the relief materials.
- i. The district level federation of N.G.Os may identify an industrial house at the district headquarters, with a large number of telephones to function as a temporary control room to facilitate the functioning of their volunteers to assist the district administration in relief and rescue activities.
- j. Preparing people to evacuate from disaster prone areas and helping them to move to safer places is most important, and N.G.Os may address this activity.
- k. Disasters cause tremendous emotional and psychological stress on the vulnerable population, and rehabilitating people emotionally is of great urgency; this needs to be addressed by the voluntary community organizations (VCOs) evolved by the N.G.O.s of the nationwide network.

1. Once a peoples' preparedness-mechanism to cope with disasters is in place at the district and lower levels, other types of episodes of social distress not covered by the mandate of the HPC, may also be suitably addressed at the local level.
- m. The nationwide network of N.G.O.s-VASUDEVA when established and fully functional, would be free to address social and moral disasters, as it may perceive them from time to time. The criteria to judge these would emerge out of observing whatever may disturb the balance, social or moral at a given time. May be, Mahatma Gandhi's advice to adopt the three R's i.e. Reduce (consumption), Reuse (materials), and Recycle (waste), as a way of life, needs to be practiced and promoted by members of VASUDEVA.
- n. Mr. G. Vasudeo's paper under the title "Vulnerability Factors in Disaster Management" presented in Vivekanand Kendra, Kanyakumari provides an excellent policy framework for a plan of action to be developed by VASUDEVA.

SOLEMN PLEDGE

We the members of the nationwide network-VASUDEVA take this solemn pledge, that in times of disaster in any part of our dear motherland, and in normal times, as a preparatory measure, practice and promote, one or all of the following obligations.

1. Donation-दान; 2. Grant- अनुदान; 3. Offering co-operation-योगदान;
4. Skill application-प्रतिभादान; and 5- Offering services- समयदान।

21.

Format for N.G.O networking

Name of N.G.O and address of its registered office, Telephone no., Fax, E-mail etc. Names of contact persons.	Area of activity	Specific Functions it would like to perform	
		Normal times	Disaster situations
1	2	3	4

21.VASUDEVA invites all voluntary agencies and groups in the country to participate in the nationwide network for disaster management. The nationwide network is intended to be an enabling mechanism to promote co-operation amongst voluntary agencies and groups, without in any way affecting their independence of action. Such N.G.O-networks as exist today can also join, and the nationwide network can become a network of networks. This will go a long way to prepare people to cope with disasters and reduce their vulnerability. Those wishing to join the nationwide network may kindly get in touch with the National Center for Disaster Management (NCDM), located in IIPA, Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002.

- Annexure-I Code of Conduct.
- Annexure-II Trigger Mechanism.
- Annexure-III Care of “Mother and Child”-Ante-natal Care.
- Annexure-IV Observing 3rd December every year as
“National Prayer Day”
for
“Alleviation of Human Misery

These Action Points were adopted in joint meeting of High Powered Committee (HPC) and the Core Group of N.G.O.s on 21st & 22nd October, 2000.

Annexure-I

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT-

To be adopted by:

- (a) The local government agency
- (b) Voluntary agencies helping in disaster management and
- (c) Relief workers

Code of conduct

- (i) We shall refrain from public criticism of each other.
- (ii) We shall extend full co-operation to others.
- (iii) We shall perform the task assigned to us (on our request) to the best of our ability and capacity.
- (iv) If we notice any irregularity, we shall pass on the specific information to the local organizational head for rectification.
- (v) If we receive specific information of any irregularity by our own people, we shall rectify the same immediately and inform the informer of action taken.
- (vi) Record shall be kept of such instances by the respective organizations for future debriefing.
- (vii) We will extend full co-operation to the local agency surveying and monitoring the relief and rescue activities, to ensure adequacy, fairness and transparency in these activities.

आपदा प्रबंधन की आचार संहिता—

क— स्थानीय सरकारी तन्त्र

ख— आपदा प्रबंधन में सहायक स्वैच्छिक संस्थाएँ

ग— राहत कार्यकर्ता

द्वारा अंगीकार किये जाने के लिये:

आचार संहिता

1. हम एक दूसरे की सार्वजनिक आलोचना नहीं करेंगे।
2. हम दूसरों को पूर्ण सहयोग देंगे।
3. हम अपने अनुरोध पर निर्धारित राहत कार्य को पूरी योग्यता व क्षमता से करेंगे।
4. अगर हमें किसी अनियमितता का पता चलता है तो हम उसे सम्बन्धित संस्था के स्थानीय मुखिया को सुधार के लिये सूचित करेंगे।
5. यदि हमें अपने लोगों की किसी भी अनियमितता की सूचना मिलती है तो हम तुरन्त उसका सुधार कर कृत कार्यवाही से, सूचना देने वाले को अवगत करेंगे।
6. भविष्य में समीक्षा के लिये हर संस्था द्वारा इस तरह की घटनाओं का विवरण रक्खा जायेगा।
7. राहत कार्य में औचित्य, आवश्यकता और पारदर्शिता को सुनिश्चित करने के लिये आयोजित सर्वेक्षण व समीक्षा करने वाली स्थानीय व्यवस्था को हम पूर्ण सहयोग देंगे।

Trigger mechanism

J.C Pant

1.This is another name for Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) which is current in the military, and is primarily meant to reduce response time to a minimum. The Civil Defence Organization is the closest example in Civil administration where, on hearing the air-raid siren the Chief Civil Defence Warden and his fellow wardens activate the entire civil defence system. It is for this reason that a suggestion has been made to introduce the civil defence warden system in areas vulnerable to disasters of different kinds.

2.In order to lay down SOPs for differing intensity of disasters the concept of L0,L1,L2, and L3 has been mooted.

(i) L0 or ordinary level is to denote the normal times when the disaster management system should be maintaining a close watch over the state of preparedness for each type of disaster. Even for this, some drill may be necessary. A drill has been suggested that every year, all disaster management plans that are ready at different levels, should be updated in the last week of April and rehearsed in the first week of May. This rehearsal should be evaluated at every level. This would be an example of L0 and the activities/drills associated with it. With the exception of disasters like earthquake and cyclones, as well as major accidents, in which most of the damage usually takes place at one go, a disaster may start at a low key (L1) and may develop overtime to a more serious level (L2), and later become a major disaster (L3).

(ii) L1- Level One- This is the starting point of a disaster situation, which when reported from any quarter (may be a civil defence warden), would set into motion, without formal orders from anywhere, some basic initial management response steps alerting all concerned according to a predetermined procedure/drill for each type of disaster. Basic action to mitigate the impact of the disaster would also be taken simultaneously, along with rescue and relief measures.

(iii) L2- Level Two- An L1 level disaster may develop into a L2 level, overtime necessitating total attention of the district administration. This would entail triggering off

some basic initial management response steps, predetermined for each type of disaster, which would be set into motion without formal orders from any quarters. The mitigation, relief and rescue activities would swing into action simultaneously.

(iv) L3- Level Three- An L2 category of disaster could develop overtime into an L3 category. When this perception takes place, some basic initial management response steps, predetermined for each type of disaster, would be set into motion without formal orders from any where. The corresponding mitigation, relief and rescue activities would swing into action simultaneously.

3.L0, L1, L2, L3 would need to be determined for each type of disaster by the corresponding managers at the district, state and the central level.

4.L1, L2, L3 would be different for the same type disaster in different districts and different states, according to their capacity to cope with them. The determination of L1, L2, L3 would, therefore, have to be done by the District Relief Managers, the State Relief Commissioners and the Central Relief Commissioner for each type of disaster for their respective levels.

5. Normally, L2 of the district would be L1 of the state, & L3 of the district would be L2, of the state; L3 of the state would be L1 for the centre. For disasters where the total damage takes place at one go, like earthquakes, cyclones and major accidents, may be, L1, L2 & L3 would be triggering into action simultaneously at district, state & central level enabling the promptest appropriate response from each level to take place at the earliest.

6. The entire exercise of putting in place a trigger mechanism, therefore, essentially comprises of determining L0, L1, L2, L3, for each type of disaster at the district, the state, and the centre. Along with this, the actions that need to follow as well as, the various authorities that need to be alerted and activated would also need to be predetermined.

ANTE-NATAL CARE

Annexure-III

Welcoming the new member of the Family

- 1) Towards the end of the first trimester, the entire family may assemble to welcome the new member with light music, and to pray for the safety of the mother and the child, as well as for its bright future.
- 2) The diet of the pregnant mother may be reviewed and nutritious food like milk, dalia (porridge), sprouted gram, moong, wheat etc. may be arranged.
- 3) The family atmosphere may be livened up with decoration, light music and laughter to make the pregnant mother and her child happy.
- 4) The local A.N.M may be invited to carry out a physical checkup and necessary medication may be obtained from her and trained Dai may be arranged, who may be suitably briefed by the A.N.M.
- 5) Tetanus toxoid injection may be given to the pregnant mother in the sixth and seventh months.
- 6) The A.N.M. may be contacted from time to time as required.
- 7) If any problem in safe delivery is anticipated, the pregnant women may be admitted in the primary health centre well before the due date.
- 8) After birth, the infant may be given the required immunization on time, and birth may be registered in the local body or the Panchayat.
- 9) The new born infant will be healthy only if the mother is healthy- the first pregnancy should not occur before a woman is of 20 years age.
- 10) The second child should be planned after an interval of over five years—many couples prefer only one child—Small family is a Happy family as well as a Healthy family.

पुंसवन संस्कार—मातृ सुरक्षा अभियान

गर्भस्थ शिशु का स्वागत

1. गर्भ धारण के प्रथम तीन माह के पूरे होने पर परिवार के सभी सदस्य सुविधा से एकत्रित होकर गर्भ में पल रहे शिशु का मांगलिक संगीत से स्वागत करें एवं उसके उज्ज्वल भविष्य की प्रार्थना करें तथा माँ और शिशु की सुरक्षा की भी प्रार्थना करें।
2. गर्भवती माँ की खुराक की समीक्षा की जाये तथा पौष्टिक आहार जैसे दलिया, गाय का दूध, अंकुरित चना, मूंग, आदि की व्यवस्था की जाये।
3. घर का वातावरण खुशनुमा बनाया जाये—मधुर संगीत, सुन्दर शृंगार, घर की सफाई, हल्की—फुल्की हंसी भरा वातावरण बने तो गर्भस्थ शिशु व माता का चित्त सदा प्रसन्न रहेगा।
4. सुविधा से (नर्स दीदी) ए.एन.एम. द्वारा जाँच करा ली जाये, आवश्यक ताकत की गोलियां प्राप्त कर ली जाये और सुयोग्य दाई की व्यवस्था कर दी जाये जिसे ए.एन.एम.(नर्स दीदी) द्वारा आवश्यक मार्ग—दर्शन दे दिया जाये।
5. छठे और सातवें माह में टैटनस की सुई गर्भवती माँ को अवश्य लगा दी जाये।
6. आवश्यकतानुसार ए.एन.एम.(नर्स दीदी) से समय—समय पर सम्पर्क कर लिया जाये और जांच करवा ली जाये।
7. यदि प्रसव में किसी कठिनाई की आशकां हो तो निर्धारित समय से कुछ समय पूर्व प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र में गर्भवती महिला को दाखिल कर दिया जाये।
8. शिशु के जन्म के बाद निर्धारित टीकाकरण समय से सम्पन्न कर दिया जाये, एवं स्थानीय निकाय अथवा पंचायत में जन्म का पंजीकरण करवा लिया जाये।
9. शिशु स्वस्थ तभी होगा जब माँ स्वस्थ होगी— 20 वर्ष की उम्र से पहले बच्चा नहीं होना चाहिये।
10. दूसरा बच्चा 5 वर्ष के अन्तराल के बाद होना ठीक रहता है—कई दम्पति केवल एक ही बच्चा पर्याप्त मानते हैं—छोटा परिवार—सुखी परिवार—स्वस्थ परिवार।

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जगदीश चन्द्र पन्त,

J.C. Pant, I.A.S (Retd.)

अध्यक्ष—Chairman,

3rd December-पीडा निवारण दिवस

Dear Comrade,

Dated: 21ST October, 2K.

Subject: Observing 3rd December every year as day of all Religions'-prayer for "Alleviation of Human Misery".

You are, perhaps, aware that on 3rd December, 1999, a nation-wide all religions'-prayer was organized for eradication of Polio and for the "Health of India's Children". We would like to thank you for your co-operation in this effort, and are happy to inform you that according to our feedback, over ONE LAKH PRAYER MEETINGS involving over a CRORE FAMILIES, WERE organized on that day. This overwhelming response has encouraged us to observe 3rd December every year as a day of all-religions'-prayer for "Alleviation of Human Misery".

You may be aware that 3rd December every year is also observed as the "International Day of the Disabled". The misery of disabled persons is deeply etched into their sub-conscious, and praying for their happiness can help them immensely. 3rd December also is the "Bhopal Gas Tragedy Day", a grim remainder of what the modern pattern of development can lead to, if allowed to go on unchecked. By appealing to followers of all religions of the world, to pray on one day a year, the 3rd December for "Alleviation of Human Misery", we would be taking a step forward to promote social harmony and co-operation amongst all religions. This is the need of the hour.

An ACTION POINT adopted at the N.G.O consultations relates to persuading places of worship of all religions to keep a donation box for

disaster relief and rescue. This would be a concrete measure to enable people to join in rescue & relief in any crisis. This ACTION POINT could be conveniently addressed while appealing to all religious groups to pray on 3rd December for “Alleviation of Human Misery”.

Thanking you & with personal regards.

To,

All members of the
National Core Group of N.G.Os.

Yours sincerely,
Sd.

(J.C.Pant)

APPENDIX-II

Disaster Management- a comprehensive approach- ROAD MAP for a plan Preparation Process (PPP)

- J.C. Pant

1. HPC was set up in August 1999 to prepare a Disaster Management Plan for the country for natural disasters, to comprise of national, state and district level plans. At the very outset a need was felt that, from the point of view of consequence management, the distinction of natural and non-natural was academic and the committee should address all types of disasters. The terms of reference of the HPC were accordingly modified in February 2000.
2. The approach of HPC is holistic, in line with the Yokohama Strategy evolved during the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) i.e. planning for prevention, mitigation, and preparedness and thereafter response planning, will go a long way to reduce the loss of life and property due to disasters. Effort of HPC is, not to develop a plan de novo, but to build on what obtains at different levels and streamline such bottlenecks as may be existing.
3. 30 odd types of disasters have been identified and the same have been grouped into five categories:
 - (i) Water and Climate related disasters,
 - (ii) Geologically related disasters,
 - (iii) Biologically related disasters,
 - (iv) Chemical, Industrial and Nuclear related disasters,
and
 - (v) Accident related disasters.

The grouping of disasters is at Annexure I.

For facility of plan preparation, five sub-groups comprising of concerned depts., have been formed and convener depts. have been indicated to co-ordinate the preparation of the plan for each sub-group.

4. **District Plan:**

H.P.C gave top priority to this. A source book has been evolved in consultation with the state Relief Commissioners, experts and the

LBSNAA, Mussoorie in which a format for model District Disaster Management Plan has been suggested. It is proposed that the district plan could be-

- (i) For each group of disasters,
 - (a) One volume of essential details with historical perspective and current data.
 - (b) Second set of volumes for each type of disaster falling in that group, laying out a prevention plan, a mitigation plan, a preparedness plan, and a response plan; needless to say that there has to be a comprehensive greening programme at the district level to prevent disasters and to cope with them whenever they occur.
- (ii) Districts would start this exercise of plan preparation with the most immediate and frequent disasters which ail the district. The district plan will include plans for the local bodies like municipalities, town areas etc. The mega corporations would be having separate plans on similar lines, for which the state urban development departments would need to take the desired initiative.
- (iii) Disasters like drought take a long time to develop, and the very first signs need to be attended to. Rains in the Indian sub-continent fail once in a while. If there is an appropriate greening programme in place, then in the years of normal rainfall, sufficient moisture gets conserved in the soil to take care of years when rains may fail. The problem arises when and where there are no proper arrangements for conservation of rainwater, and drought begins to lurk. Can states adopt schemes like the employment guarantees scheme (EGS) of Maharashtra, where on the first signal distress the district collector is able to intervene? This is not the same as GOI having schemes in the ministry of rural development to provide for rural employment. GOI funds reach the states only after they have utilized the previously released funds, and in view of the resource crunch, district collectors are unable to provide relief on the first signal of distress. A state level EGS could take care of such situations, well in time.

5. The State Plan:

The state plan would be prepared by the 5 sub-groups similar to the G.O.I exercise.

- (i) Each sub-group would have its own plan-
 - (a) One volume of essential details with historical perspective and current data.

- (b) Second set of volumes for each type of disaster falling in that group, laying out a state-wide or region-wise Prevention Plan and Prevention Strategy; a state-wide, or region-wise Mitigation Strategy; a state-wide, or region-wise Preparedness Plan; a state-wide, or region-wise Response Plan.
- (ii) The states need to set up the five sub-groups for the five categories of disasters in order to take in hand the process of preparation of the state plan. They would start this exercise with preparation of plans for the disasters that frequent the state normally, and then later on develop plans for all the conceivable disasters in due course of time.

6. **The National Plan:**

The National Plan will primarily be a Response Plan of the five sub-groups with

- (i) Prevention Plan of inter-state and sub-continental features.
- (ii) Prevention Strategies of inter-state and inter-national issues.
- (iii) Mitigation Plan of inter-state and sub-continental features.
- (iv) Mitigation Strategies of inter-state and international issues.
- (v) Preparedness Plan at the national level, and
- (vi) SAARC and international initiative in this regard.

There is a general realization that planting appropriate species of trees, shrubs and grasses according to soil type, soil moisture and climate is the most effective way of preventing disasters, as well as of coping with them whenever they strike.

7. **Updating the plan and its' Rehearsal:**

A plan is only as good as it is updated and rehearsed. It is suggested that every year "last week of April" be observed as "updating the plan" week and every year "first week of May" be observed as "rehearsing the plan" week throughout the country at district, state and national levels to ensure that the plan is implementable. The quality of rehearsal would need to be assessed objectively, one mark for a prescribed act done, zero mark for a prescribed act not done.

- 8. (i) There is need to integrate the school, college and university systems with disaster preparedness and response mechanism as they are a major systemic casualty of a super disaster, and have a major stake in preventing them, and also in mitigating their

impact. Involvement of students and youth would prepare them for discharging their responsibility towards the vulnerable sections of society in future.

(ii) Development plans at national, state and district levels need to apportion funds for prevention and mitigation of disasters, as cost-effectiveness of prevention and mitigation is estimated to reduce relief costs to up to one tenth. Role of NIRD, Hyderabad and SIRDs in this regard needs to be emphasized. NIRD may be requested to organize a workshop of SIRDs to evolve norms for apportioning development funds (plan funds) for prevention and mitigation of disasters at national, state and district levels.

(iii) This will call for involving and motivating the peoples' representatives, NGOs' etc. A national level consultation with NGOs has been planned at four locations. This should trigger off state-wide and district level NGO consultations in association with the peoples representatives, and Panchayat Raj bodies.

(iv) There is need for collaboration between Dept of Space (DOS), Dept of Science and Technology (DST) and Dept of Mines (DOM) at GOI level, and NRSA along with State Remote Sensing Application Centers (SRSAC), Survey of India, Geological Survey of India to prepare geo-morphological maps in the scale 1:50,000 to enable preparation of block-level-landuse plans, and block-level-drainage plans which would be useful to identify risk-prone areas in the development blocks for preparation of micro-watershed plans with the help of village level maps of the State Land Records Dept.

9. **Trigger Mechanism:**

The proposed trigger mechanism is a device to minimize response time when disaster strikes.

- (i) Civil Defence warden system is a good response mechanism; can it be extended to the whole country? Panchayat members could be wardens in the rural areas.
- (ii) Communication links: VHF at each Tahsil/Taluka; V-Sat at each District headquarters; HAM (Help All Mankind) radio promotion programme to be taken up.
- (iii) District Control Room/Shadow Control Room; State Control Room/Shadow Control Room; Central Control Room, control room in the convener/nodal dept. of each sub-group, control room in each dept. constituting the sub-groups set up by the H.P.C.
- (iv) L1, L2, L3 levels of each type of disaster to be predetermined, to lay out procedures to trigger off the Basic Initial Response Management Steps (BIRMS) without formal orders from any where. Sub-groups at

national and state levels to address this exercise at the earliest. Normally L2 level of the district will be the L1 level at the state hqs; and L3 level of the district will be the L2 level of the state hqs; L3 level of the state hqs would normally be the L1 level at the centre. L0 level would indicate the preparatory phase prior to L1 level.

- (v) Police wireless network and Police Control Rooms to be alternate communication system.
- (vi) Sub-groups to lay out 'dos' and 'dents' for each type of disaster for people and the relief volunteers and personnel, to facilitate relief and rescue activities when disasters strike. These ought to be passed on to the State Resource Centres of the National Literacy Mission for communicating the same to Zilla Saksharta Samitis (ZSS).

10. Making available consultants at the state and district levels; NCDM (IIPA) to oversee this role of state ATIs, along with preparing a panel of consultants at the national level.

- (i) State ATIs to play a role in preparing, firstly
 - (a) The district plans by training officials and non-officials for prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response to disasters; and later the state plans,
 - (b) Monitoring the preparation process of district and state plans.
- (ii) IIPA/NCDM to orient central ministries, depts. and PSUs, as well as state ATIs, in the trigger mechanism; state ATIs to do a similar exercise with state depts. and PSUs.
- (iii) State ATIs to play a role in drafting a state act for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response. Techno-legal regime vs Techno-socio-movement to the weighed and planned for each state to ensure construction of safe buildings.

11. **Networking of knowledge and the learning exercise.**

- (iv) Data from every disaster occurring should be meticulously recorded to serve as a guide for future-this learning exercise should be formalized. A national level consultation took place in this regard at Bhopal on 14th, 15th July.
- (v) Similar state and district level exercises need to be organized.

12. So, while the national plan would be ready soon, the state and district plans ought to evolve as suggested in tune with the best wisdom available in each state and its districts; NCDM would

be expected to assist and oversee the entire process till completion of this effort. Thereafter, the process of improving on the plans would continue in line with fresh experience from time to time.

13. One of the important activities which ought to be taken up on the widest possible scale during normal times, is PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS of appropriate species to prevent disasters and also to mitigate their impact.

LIST OF DISASTERS IDENTIFIED BY THE HIGH POWERED COMMITTEE-

-ANNEXURE I

I. Water and Climate related disasters

1. Floods and Drainage Management
2. Cyclones
3. Tornadoes and Hurricanes
4. Hailstorm
5. Cloud Burst
6. Heat Wave and Cold Wave
7. Snow Avalanches
8. Droughts
9. Sea Erosion
10. Thunder and Lightning

II. Geologically related disasters

10. Landslides and Mudflows
11. Earthquakes
12. Dam Failures/Dam Bursts
13. Mine Fires

III. Biologically related disasters

14. Biological Disasters and Epidemics
15. Pest Attacks
16. Cattle Epidemics
17. Food Poisoning

IV. Chemical, Industrial & Nuclear related disasters

18. Chemical and Industrial Disasters
19. Nuclear Disasters

V. Accident related disasters

1. Forest Fires
2. Urban Fires
3. Mine Flooding
4. Oil Spill
5. Major Building Collapse
6. Serial Bomb Blasts
7. Festival related disasters
8. Electrical disasters & Fires
9. Air, Road and Rail Accidents
10. Boat Capsizing
11. Village Fire

L0-L1 Exercise at District Level

L0 Exercise (Last Week of “April”)

1. Update the existing district Disaster Management Plan
 - (a) Telephone Numbers
 - (b) Personnel
 - (c) Vulnerability to fresh disasters
 - (d) Critical data relating to a few previous disasters to be taken note of, for planning rescue & relief.
2. Refer to Point No. 20- sub paras “a” to “k” in “Action Points adopted at N.G.O- Consultations”. Preparatory action relating to each be taken up and supervisors be nominated for the L1 Exercise.
3. Padyatras be planned from block headquarters to vulnerable areas through mixed teams comprising of NGO volunteers & Govt. officials, and such teams be formed.

L1 Exercise (First Week of “May”)

1. Since this exercise is planned over a week, different days could be fixed for different constituents of the district management system to test their response time and readiness.
2. Separate meetings could be arranged, of different set of functionaries relating to rescue and relief, to inform them in “debriefing sessions” of what was lacking in their response as noted by the respective supervisors.

3. (a) Each functionary responsible for a specific role should be assessed.
 - (b) Each department responsible for a specific task should also be assessed.
 - (c) These assessments need not be made public, but should be conveyed to the concerned persons and departments for further improvements.
4. Planned padyatras be organized from block headquarters to vulnerable areas, and actions relating to item No2. of L0 exercise be given final shape.
 5. Report of L0 exercise held at district level be sent to the state government by 1st of May; and the report of L1 exercise held at the district level be sent to the state government by 10th May.

L0-L1 Exercise at State Level

L0 Exercise (Last Week of “April”)

1. Quick review of disaster prevention measures as well as support systems to the districts, should be carried out by each department and ministry concerned.
 - (a) Inventory of rescue & relief equipment district wise and at state headquarters be prepared.
 - (b) Equipment not available in the state but crucial for rescue and relief be identified and formal request to Govt. of India, in the concerned ministries and

departments be made, to locate the same, and to issue instructions that the same may be made available when requested by the state.

(c) Communication systems, downwards and upwards be reviewed.

(d) Trained manpower needs for rescue and relief be assessed & communicated to the Relief Commissioner for placing an indent with the State Police and Home Guards, that such personnel be identified & kept in readiness to move at short notice.

2. Inter-district movement of foodgrains & fodder be planned in consultation with DMs concerned.
3. Storage points of medicines & hospital equipment be identified and 24-hours- chemists be listed for each district.
4. Review of implementation of building codes be carried out, after ascertaining that the building codes provide for preventive measures for different types of disasters.
5. Organizing Retro-Fitting clinics to make buildings safe, in vulnerable areas be planned.
6. Fire prevention measures in high-rise buildings in the state be reviewed.
7. Any other set of important activities which the state deems urgent in relation to disaster prevention, relief, rescue & rehabilitation, may be planned.

L1 Exercise (First Week of “May”)

1. The state communication networks be actually tested, and protocols for different scenarios be hammered out, keeping in view past experience.
2. Ministry & department-wise review of actions & measures planned in the L0-Exercise be carried out & appropriate modifications be made.
3. District-wise review of actions & measures planned in the L0-exercise at the district level, be carried out and appropriate standing instructions for all concerned be drafted.
4. Report of L0-L1 exercise in the state and its districts be compiled, or the process may be initiated, for submission to the Central Relief Commissioner by 15th May.

