

COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Students, you might have heard or seen when any home of the village catches fire in the extreme heat of summer, then village people join their forces together to control the ominous fire. The village population has been facing fire, Dacoit and animal attacks from the time immemorial. This togetherness gives birth to community. Community is a group of people which emerges from the emotional attachment because of which people share their happiness and face their sorrow together. The Indian culture is very ancient and its greatest base is community.

Students, you might have seen frequent meetings of “Gram Sabha” these days in your village. The most important topic of discussion is what combined effort should be made by them to solve the problems of the village and ensure the development of the village.

INDIA: TRADITIONALLY A SOCIETY OF COMMUNITY DISASTER MANAGEMENT

People face different happenings in their life such as birth, entering in a new home, marriage, death, incidents of fire, hail storms, etc. together in a society. This togetherness automatically gives birth to community based disaster management. Since the Indus Valley Civilisation or the Mahabharata times tradition of joint family system, our community system of living has gained in strength. Though in city areas the numbers of single unit families are increasing but there also when people from whole mohalla raise their voice together for electricity, water, roads and cleanliness then it reflects the community system of living. Students, you must have seen that the festivals such as during Holi, Id and Dashehra in your mohalla, the committees are



Fig.13.1 A Gram Sabha in a Rajasthan village busy in planning to face disaster.

constituted for peace. This is a part of community management.

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

There could be any form of disaster, but its destructive impact affects the life and property. The first jolt of disaster affects human beings and this human beings also give first jolt to disaster when they begin community effort to minimise disaster.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. *No disaster strikes with prior information. In most of the cases it is forecasted.*
2. *Disaster never makes any distinction among socially uneven families.*
3. *For disaster management, community support is compulsory.*
4. *Total preparedness is essential to negotiate disasters. In absence of preparedness, the major accidents can turn into tragedy.*

The correct assessment of the real damages caused by disaster can only be done by community. The community plays a pivotal role in the accurate distribution of whatever emergency facilities are made available to them for disaster management and also ensures that these facilities reach each family. The community also informs about the forecast of the disaster

the community encounters the disaster at first. In disaster, Fire can engulf houses, houses can fall, floods may occur but community never breaks. Community is a friend of happiness and sorrow and in a rural country like India, the biggest responsibility of disaster management is of community (Fig.13.1). The administrative management work and self help institution's management work can successfully be accomplished under the guidance of the community.

THE COMMUNITY FACTOR OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The disaster management is an important community work. There are three major components of disaster management and the success of all three components depends upon community participation. These three components are –

1. Forecast, warning and training.
2. Management activities at the time of disaster.
3. Management work after disaster.

In all three works, family, Gram Sabha, Self help organisations working nearby and nearest school can play an important role.

It is very essential both for the administration and community to forecast the disaster. It is possible that sometimes human disaster does not occur but preparation of management is essential e.g.in every summer season occurrence of fire is almost a certain disaster. Everybody knows about it. Similarly, in extreme summer season and in rainy season the increased number of deaths due to Snake and Scorpion bites is also a type of community disaster. The forecast and information about these disasters can help in saving the life and property at large scale. If the possibility of fire is seen then prior information can be given to fire brigade. The community, at first, begins to pull out people trapped in fire engulfed houses as soon as the fire breaks out. Similarly, at times, when the fire breaks out in cultivated lands by throwing Bidi and Cigarette buds, it causes heavy damage to the crops.

Before the arrival of the fire brigade the community attempts to minimise its impact. This should be accomplished in two phases –

- (1) It is essential to administer first aid to the persons who have received burn injury in a separate place. In case of fire, it is better to take them to Panchayat Bhavan or School buildings. Students, you can also help in such conditions your help may be like putting water and Sandal paste on the burnt wounds, it gives great relief to the burnt people. The application of ice on burnt wounds also gives relief. It is essential to call Ambulance through Telephone and Mobiles from the nearby hospitals to send injured and semi burnt patients to nearby hospitals (Fig.13.2). If somebody in the village is having Car or other automobile facilities then it should also be used. Students, you can't go to the hospitals but together you can help the families of the victims. If you spend few hours with the children of the victim's family, it gives emotional relief to them.



Fig. 13.2 - An Ambulance: Support At the time of disaster

It is essential for the other groups of the community to sprinkle water on the fire affected areas and in the adjacent areas also or they can remove crops from the Barn. The spread of the fire can be minimised by spreading dung and soil over the crops.

DO YOU KNOW?

For first Aid treatment of fire victim, putting water and applying Sandal wood paste or application of Burnol over the burn wounds gives great relief.

ACTIVITY

Prepare a list of families of your Village/Mohalla, where crop and house have been damaged and death of men and animal has taken place due to fire in the last one year.

Prepare a list of those families of your Village/Mohalla, where somebody has died of Snake bite.

Which type of disaster management can be arranged by you in your School – Prepare a report by taking interview of your Principal and teachers.

ACTIVITY OF COMMUNITY FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Students, Village in itself is a community but if it is not active then at the time of disaster also it can be a mere spectator. It is rightly said that all works can't be achieved alone. An individual can't face a disaster successfully all alone but when many people join hands together then number of good qualities begins to combine together. These good qualities themselves compel them for disaster management.

DO YOU KNOW?

The community should possess following good qualities for disaster management –

1. The members of the community must always think about the benevolence of the community.
2. When the community constitutes a team for a collective work then it should not have shirkers in it because only brave and laborious people can face disaster.
3. In this there should not be any differentiation on the basis of

cast and creed. When the disaster does not differentiate in its fury then everybody should develop this feeling that only our unity can minimise the impact of the disaster.

4. Every person of the community must remain alert, so that they can exchange information about disaster immediately. By exchanging such information, caste and communal riots have been averted number of times. Such acts also prevent the rumour mongers from being successful in their motive. Thus the community management triumphs over the human induced disasters.
5. The members of the community must have enthusiasm, bravery and capability of using force if necessary.
6. Every person has many personal works to do but at the time of community disaster the personal work must take back seat and everybody must come forward to face it.

Students, you must have read that at the time of India's independence there was a communal riot between Hindus and Muslims. It was communal management that once again developed brotherhood amongst both the communities. Mahatma Gandhi could stop the violence at Noakhali by saying “Hindu – Muslim, Sikh – Esai Hum Sab Hain Bhai Bhai”.

DO YOU KNOW?

Following are the primary activities under the Community Management–

1. As soon as the information of disaster is received then immediately, through medium of public centres, effort must be made to inform maximum people about the coming disaster and rumours should be refuted from the community places.
2. To increase brotherhood and self confidence amongst the minority religion and caste.
3. To inform administration about the disaster.

4. To inform nearest health centre.
5. To start relief work through Panchayat.
6. To invite self help organisations for relief work.
7. Coordination committee must be constituted to check any chaos in the relief work.
8. To guarantee at least the availability of clean water and fresh food for the affected people.
9. To arrange emergency relief camps.

TO ENSURE THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITY IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

In disaster management the participation of community can only be ensured when information regarding expected disaster is given to maximum people. For this, through following process administrative system Gram Panchayat, self help organisations and progressive persons themselves should come forward and ensure the participation of people:-

- 1) To announce among students of the nearest school the information of expected flood or storm so that they can caution their family members.
- 2) To inform in the temples, Mosques or Church about the expected natural or human induced disaster. The ideal time for this is the prayer time when maximum people remain present. If necessary, the expected disaster can be announced through the public address system available in these religious places.
- 3) To prepare a list of those families where old age persons, children, pregnant women, diseased and mentally disturbed persons are there. Special groups have to be constituted to take such persons to safer places.
- 4) To arrange emergency services, apart from food, like boat, life jackets, Doctors and engineers for the relief camps in Panchayat Bhavan and village school.
- 5) To arrange transport facility in case of fire, epidemic, caste and

communal tensions and hail storms, which can inform the concerned official in absence of Mobile and telephones.

CONSTITUTION OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT VILLAGE LEVEL

It has been decided at the national level to constitute disaster management committee at village level, so that at the time of disaster relief and rescue operation can be operated in a systematic manner. The warning of disaster can also be given to each family by village management committee in a more effective manner. This committee comprises the following nine members:

1. Principal of the School
2. Mukhiya of the village
3. Sarpanch of the village
4. Two dedicated persons of the village
5. One Doctor of primary health centre
6. Members of the National Service scheme (NSS)
7. Gram Sevak
8. Two women of self help group

ACTIVITIES OF VILLAGE DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:-

1. To warn and inform on the basis of forecast – This management committee will immediately apprise the villagers of the information received from the district headquarters.
2. To select relief camps and provide relief to the affected people – The committee will inform the district headquarters about this and in case of fire will inform the fire brigade.
3. Relief work – To make available food and water to the affected people.
4. To arrange First Aid.
5. To provide security to all – To give special attention to women and children.
6. To give attention to hygiene – If hygiene is maintained then spread of the diseases can be checked.

EXERCISE QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Which one of the following is not included amongst the three components of disaster management?
 - (a) Forecast, warning and training.
 - (b) Management activities during disaster.
 - (c) To remain satisfied after the occurrence of the disaster.
 - (d) To perform management work after the disaster.
2. Which disaster is almost certain in every summer season?
 - (a) Fire
 - (b) Air crash
 - (c) Rail accident
 - (d) Road accident
3. Which one of the following is not included among the primary activities of community management?
 - (a) To inform the nearest health centre.
 - (b) To guarantee the availability of clean water and food to the affected people.
 - (c) Not to inform the administration about the disaster.
 - (d) To arrange emergency relief camp.
4. Which is the important work of village disaster management committee?
 - (a) Not to arrange First Aid.
 - (b) To provide security to everyone.
 - (c) To select relief camp and work to provide relief.
 - (d) To maintain hygiene.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTION

1. What efforts should be made by the community before the arrival of the fire brigade?
2. Who are the members included in the constitution of the village level disaster management committee?

3. Which good qualities are essentially required in the community for the disaster management?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTION

1. Describe the central role of community in the disaster management.
2. Describe in detail the activities of village disaster management committee.
3. How can the participation of community be ensured in disaster management?



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