Institutionalization of Disaster Management in India: An Overview

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Abstract
The basic responsibility for undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the event of a disaster rests with the state governments. The central government supplements the efforts of the state governments by providing logistic and financial support in case of severe disasters. In order to provide adequate and timely support to state governments the central government developed an institutional framework with constitutional and legal base. It did not come into existence instantly but its evolution has been a gradual process which is still going on. In fact, the recommendations of different commissions and committees, existing acts and rules related to disasters and environment, national experience, international interactions on disaster and global initiative served as catalysts for institutionalisation framework for disaster management in the form of enactment of DMA-2005.

Keywords: Disaster Management Act 2005, Disaster Management Plan. Institutional framework.

Introduction

A disaster is an event or series of events, which gives rise to casualties and damage or loss to property, infrastructure, environment, essential services and means of livelihood on such a scale which is beyond the normal capacity of the affected community to cope with. In other words disaster may be described as a "catastrophic situation in which the normal pattern of life or ecosystem has been disrupted and extra-ordinary emergency interventions are required to save and preserve lives and or the environment". The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) considers disaster to be a result of the combination of many factors and according to it disaster may be defined as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources". According to Disaster Management Act 2005 (DMA-2005) of India, "Disaster means a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or manmade causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or damage to, or degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature of magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area."

To develop an efficient plan for disaster risk management, the various sources of potential disaster need to be classified. Primarily, disasters are triggered by natural hazards or human-induced, or result from a combination of both. In particular, human-induced factors can greatly aggravate the adverse impacts of a natural disaster. Even at a larger scale, globally, the UN Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change has shown that human-induced climate change has significantly increased both the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. The extensive industrialization, population explosion and unplanned urbanization increase both the probability of human-induced disaster, and the extent of potential damage to life and property from both natural and human-induced disasters. Consequently, disasters may be classified into the following two categories: natural disasters and human-induced disasters. This classification, however, is not a water tight one. In real life situation, many disasters are a combination of different types of disasters.

The UNISDR defines disaster risk management as the systematic process of using administrative decisions, organizations, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. It comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards. Further, as per this definition, disaster management focuses on creating and implementing preparedness and others plans to decrease the impact of disaster and build back better. Failure to create a plan could result in damage to life, assets and lost revenue. However, it may not completely avert or eliminate the threats.

The term disaster management as used in the DMA-2005 and National Policy on Disaster Management 2009 (NPDM 2009) is comprehensive and covers disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management, disaster preparedness and disaster response and post disaster recovery. As per DMA-2005 "Disaster Management is a continuous and integrated process of planning, organizing, coordination and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient" for the following: (1) Prevention of danger of threat of any disaster (2) Mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences (3) Capacity- building (4) Preparedness to deal with any disaster (5) Prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster (6) Assessing the severity of magnitude of effects of any disaster (7) evacuation, rescue and relief (8) Rehabilitation and reconstruction." Thus, as usual, disaster management continuum comprises six elements; the pre-disaster phase includes prevention, mitigation and preparedness, while the post- disaster phase includes response, recovery and rehabilitation. A legal and institutional framework binds all these elements together.

The basic responsibility for undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the event of a disaster rests with the state government. The central government supplements the efforts of the state government by providing logistic and financial support in case of severe disasters. In order to provide timely and adequate support to state government, the central government developed an institutional framework with constitutional and legal base. It is not developed instantly but its evolution is a gradual process which is still going on. The basic objective of this paper is to study the institutionalization of disaster management in India.

Review of Literature

Alexander (2006) investigates the global pattern of catastrophes and analyses the modern systems of emergency preparedness and processes of disaster relief, with particular attention to the problems of creating resilience and the practical dilemmas of prevention and response. He exhibits that the global problems of disasters can be solved with existing scientific and technical know-how, only if it is applied consistently and appropriately. Bergholt and Lujala (2012) evaluate the relationship among Climate-related natural disasters, economic growth, and armed-civil conflict on the basis of panel data covering the period 1980-2007 of 171 countries. The results show that climate-related natural disasters have a negative effect on growth and that the impact is considerable. The analysis of conflict onset shows that climate-related natural disasters do not increase the risk of armed conflict. It also reflects that an increase by one standard deviation in the number of people affected by sudden climatic disaster leads to a total aggregate income growth reduction of about 0.5 percentage points. Slettebak (2012) in his study focuses on how climate-related natural disasters such as storms, floods, and droughts have affected the risk of civil war in the past. The frequency of such disasters has risen sharply over the last few decades, and the increase is expected to continue due to both climate change and demographic changes. Bassam (2014) states that disaster restoration project contain significant stakeholders, issues and challenges. Furthermore, they can differ from conventional construction and the work of 'first responders' to disaster situation. Hence, disaster restoration field has its own unique identify and should be viewed differently to other related fields. Sharma et. al. (2015) argues for the importance of community involvement in mitigation of disasters. Their study is focused on the Ganges valley of Uttrakhand, which experienced one of the biggest natural disasters (the tragedy of Kedarnath - 2013). They identify a mixture of causes for it, and one of them is lack of various stakeholders' required participation in disaster management and

concludes that living in harmonization with the nature, a high degree of people participation in environment governance and community involvement and fair execution practices are mandatory to mitigate disaster risk. Bhattacharyya (2015) examines the administrative planning and political response to a post disaster reconstruction work with regard to the Aila Cyclone-2009 in West Bengal and suggests that the relevant stakeholders have prioritised short-term crisis management over long term disaster risk management during the post disaster reconstruction in West Bengal. Saharan (2015) exposes the corruption involved in disaster management particularly during the relief work. After disasters there are large flows of financial resources and relief materials from various national and international organizations. A lack of proper coordination among the different stakeholders creates more scope for various types of corruption. He suggests that robust control mechanisms and administrative arrangements are required to combat corruption at the early stage of the post disaster reconstruction.

Disaster Vulnerability of India

A comprehensive understanding and identification of the pattern of various hazards is crucial for assessment of the consequent effects of such disasters and essential to adopt preventive, preparedness, response and recovery measures to minimize losses during disasters and ensure quick recovery. An analysis of the vulnerability in a given geographic location, understanding of the socio-economic factors and the capability of the community to cope with disasters, will give an understanding to develop efficient disaster management and disaster managers to plan for risk reduction against future hazards.

India is one of the ten worst disaster prone countries of the world. The country is prone to disaster due to a number of factors; both natural and human induced. The basic reason for the high vulnerability of the country to natural disasters is its unique geographical and geological situation. As far as the vulnerability to disaster is concerned, the following distinctive regions of the country i.e. Himalaya region, the alluvial plains, the hilly part of the peninsula and the coastal zone have their own specific problems. While one hand the Himalaya region is prone to disasters like earthquakes and landslides, the plains are affected by floods almost every year. The desert part of the country is affected by droughts and famine while the coastal zone is susceptible to cyclones and tsunami. Along with the natural factors discussed, various human induced activities like increasing demographic pressure, deteriorating environmental conditions, deforestation, unscientific development, industrialisation, faulty agriculture practices, unplanned urbanisation and construction of large dams on river channels etc. are also responsible for accelerated impact and increase in frequency of disaster in the country (National Disaster Management Plan, Part- I Basic Plan and Framework, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India).

Evolution of Institutional Framework for Disaster Management

During the British period in India, disaster management efforts were started by formulation of "Famine Codes" on the recommendations of Famine Commissions. They also recommended the establishment of Agriculture departments in provinces with a view to improving agriculture production and taking preparedness measures for meeting situation of failure of rains. After independence, disaster management efforts were limited to fighting natural calamities like severe drought, famine and flood for this purpose relief manuals were prepared by the states. Consequently, a Scarcity Relief Division was set up in the Ministry of Agriculture to deal with the problems of food scarcity. Subsequently, it was assigned work relating to various natural calamities. At a later stage it was converted to Natural Disaster Management Division and the National Centre for Disaster Management was established in 1995 within the Indian Institute of Public Administration. This division and centre were expected to carry out all disaster management related activities (Report of the Task Force, A Review of the Disaster Management Act 2005, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India 2013).

The first Disaster Management Training Institution of the country was founded on April 29, 1957 at Nagpur as the Central Emergency Relief Training Institute (CERTI) to support the Emergency Relief Organisation of the Government of India. This institute organised advanced and specialist training for Revenue officials responsible for disaster relief operations against any

natural or manmade disaster. CERTI was renamed as National Civil Defence College on April 1, 1968 after the Civil Defence Act, 1968 was passed by the Parliament of India. Currently, it has been providing regular training to various stakeholders of disaster management and has been upgraded with modern facilities for enhancing its training capabilities (Annual Report 2016-17, Ministry of Home Affairs).

Thus, disaster management is a late entry in India and does not find any place in the lists of the seventh schedule of the Indian constitution. The Government of India for the first time constituted a High-Powered Committee (HPC) on Disaster Management in 1999. After independence it was perhaps the first serious attempt to systematically approach the issue of disaster management. It undertook a comprehensive study on various important aspects of disaster management in India, such as nature and type of disasters, vulnerability profile, and to bring in a new culture of disaster management, organisational framework, planning and finance. It appropriately described its objective as framing a new culture of disaster management. Besides, the Second Administrative Reform Commission submitted its third report "Crisis Management: From Despair to Hope" in September 2006. It also discussed the various important aspects of disaster management, including legal and institutional framework. Both the HPC and the Second Administrative Reform Commission have examined the necessity of a specific entity relating to disaster management in the constitution of India. Therefore, the process at national level was influenced by major disasters such as the Odisha super cyclone 1999, Gujarat earthquake 2001 and Asian tsunami 2004. Therefore, the recommendations of different commissions and committees, existing acts and rules related to disasters and environment, national experience, international interactions on disaster and global initiative, served as catalysts for moving towards creating a more efficient and institutionalisation framework for disaster management in the form of enactment of DMA-2005.

The overall coordination of disaster management vests in India with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Cabinet Committee on Security and the National Crisis Management Committee are the key committees involved in the top-level decision-making for disaster management. The National Disaster Management Authority is the lead agency responsible for the preparation disaster management plans and the execution of disaster management functions at the national level.

Disaster Management Act 2005

DMA-2005 is an important milestone in the evolution of a legal framework for disaster management in India. It was the first time that a comprehensive law on disaster management was enacted at national level. This act provides a broad framework for disaster management to be followed by Union and States and following four important institutional structures at the national level have been established for disaster management: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Executive Committee (NEC), National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). This Act lays down institutional mechanism for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of the disaster management plans, ensuring measures by various wings of the government for prevention and mitigation of the effects of disasters and prompt response to any disaster situation. Further, the entities, created prior to the DMA-2005, continue to exist alongside the institutions created by it.

(a) National Disaster Management Authority

Based on the recommendation of the HPC and provisions of DMA-2005, the union government constituted the NDMA in 2005. The NDMA is headed by the Prime Minister. It comprises a vice chairman and eight members. The NDMA is vested with the responsibility of laying down policies and guidelines on disaster management; approving the National Disaster Management Plan and plans prepared by the various Ministries or the Departments. It also lays down guidelines to be followed by the States while preparing their State Disaster Management Plans as well as capacity building initiatives. Since its inception, it has been issued 22 important guidelines on various dimensions of disaster management. NDMA coordinates the enforcement and implementation of the policy and plan for disaster management; recommend the provision

of funds for the purpose of mitigation; provide such support to other countries affected by major disasters as may be determined by the government.

(b) National Executive Committee

National Executive Committee acts as the coordinating and monitoring body for disaster management. It is headed by the Home Secretary as its Chairperson, ex-officio and the NEC's Members comprise the Union secretaries of all the Ministries or Departments directly or indirectly related to disaster management. NEC is required to assist the NDMA in discharge of its functions and implement its polices and plans, as well as ensure the compliance of directions issued by the central government for the purpose of disaster management in the country.

(c) National Institute of Disaster Management

NIDM was established under the DMA-2005. It is responsible for planning and promoting training and research in the area of disaster management, documentation and development of national level information base relating to disaster management policies, prevention mechanisms and mitigation measures. It also provides assistance to the state governments and state level policies, strategies, disaster management framework and any other assistance as may be required by the state governments or state training institutes for capacity building of stakeholders, government including its functionaries, civil society members and corporate sector etc.

(d) National Disaster Response Force

The Ministry of Home Affairs raised the NDRF in 2006 for the purpose of specialized response to disasters or disaster like situations. At present, it consists of 12 battalions; all the battalions have been equipped and trained to respond natural as well as man-made disasters and are located at 12 different locations in the country based on the vulnerability profile of country and to cut down the response time for their deployment at disaster site. These battalions are also trained and equipped for response during Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) emergencies. Since its inception NDRF has continued to win hearts of millions of countrymen, by demonstrating its expertise and compassion while handling disaster situations.

National Disaster Management Policy and Plan

The DMA-2005 and National Policy on Disaster Management- 2009 (NPDM-2009) marks the institutionalization and a paradigm shift in disaster management from the hitherto relief-centric approach to a more proactive, holistic and integrated approach of strengthening disaster preparedness, mitigation, and emergency response. They lay down institutional and coordination mechanism for effective Disaster Management at the national, state, district and local levels. The NPDM notes that while it is not possible to avoid natural hazards, adequate mitigation and disaster risk reduction measures can prevent the hazards becoming major disasters. Disaster risk arises when hazards interact with physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. Existing NPDM suggests a multi-pronged approach for disaster risk reduction and mitigation consisting of the following:

(1) Integrating risk reduction measures into all development projects.

(2) Initiating mitigation projects in identified high priority areas through joint efforts of the Central and State Governments.

(3) Encouraging and assisting State level mitigation projects.

(4) Paying attention to indigenous knowledge on disaster and coping mechanisms.

(5) Giving due weightage to the protection of heritage structures.

National Disaster Management Plan 2016

The India's first National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) was released on July 01, 2016 by Shri Narendra Modi, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The NDMP provides a framework and direction to the government agencies for all stages of disaster management cycle. It is in accordance with the provisions of the DMA-2005, NPDM-2009 and the established national practices. It is a "dynamic document" in the sense that it will be periodically improve keeping up with the emerging global best practices and knowledge base in disaster management. It provides for horizontal and vertical integration among all the agencies and

departments of the Government of India. It recognizes the need to minimize, if not eliminate, any ambiguity in the responsibility framework. It, therefore, specifies who is responsible for what at different stages of managing disasters. It is designed in such a way that it can be implemented as needed on a flexible and scalable manner in all phases of disaster management. At present NDMP is consistent with the approaches promoted globally by the United Nations, in particular the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). India will make all efforts to contribute to the realization of the global targets by improving the entire disaster management system in India by following the recommendations in the SFDRR and by adopting globally accepted best practices.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The basic responsibility of disaster management is of the state government while Central Government supplements the efforts of the state government by providing logistic and financial support in case of severe disasters. Further, in order to provide adequate and timely support to state government, Central Government developed an institutional framework with constitutional and legal base. Actually, it is not developed instantly, but its evolution is a gradual process which is still going on as laws, policies and institutions grow over time and influenced by the thoughts, ideas and events of the time. In fact, keeping in view the recommendations of different commissions and committees, existing acts and rules related to disasters and environment, national experience, international interactions on disaster and global initiative, served as catalysts for institutionalisation of disaster management in the form of enactment of DMA-2005. Four important entities created under this act are: NDMA, NEC, NIDM and NDRF. DMA-2005 lays down their structure, role, responsibilities and functions. Further, act is an important milestone in the evolution of the organized framework for disaster management in India. Indeed, Institutionalization framework allocates major responsibilities, lays down rules and guidelines and eradicates confusions and conflicts among different stakeholders, which helps to secure proper implementation of disaster management plan and defines their roles. Legal frameworks and intuitional arrangement for disaster management are interlinked. All these actions show that there is a paradigm shift from relief and rehabilitation to prevention and mitigation.

Certainly, India has established a well structured framework for efficient disaster management. But this framework would work efficiently if there is a proper coordination among different stakeholders. So the confusions and conflicts rising during the disaster management must be taken out and all stakeholders should be involved in making disaster management plan for more functional integration among them. It is also necessary to ensure that making all disaster management plans: states and national are not merely a formality but are proper implemented, updated on a regular basis, consistent with each other and other government plans and policies for socio-economic development of country.

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