

## A PRIMER ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

### *1. The main institutions and their respective roles in disaster management.*

India has a nationalized network of ministries involved in management of disasters as well as other types of crisis. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the coordinating ministry for disaster management. However, other central ministries operate with it for management of other disasters. These are called nodal ministries. Apart from these, there is the National Disaster Management Authority under the chairmanship of Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, who oversees the policy part of the same. NDMA is also involved in localized action and resource planning for various stages of disaster management. The National Disaster Response Force is a dedicated team from army to respond rapidly in the event of any disaster strikes. There are several other participating institutions like NSS, NCC, Civil Defence, etc who render their services as and when called for during disasters as well as post-disaster events. At the state level, there are state disaster management authorities like the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority and Orissa State Disaster Management Authority. Apart from these, there is district level authority set up to handle disasters in a more efficient manner. Capacity building is also an integral part of disaster management. Hence, National Institute of Disaster Management which is a national level institute of international repute which overseas several initiatives for awareness, training and capacity building both at national as well as local level.

The nodal ministries are:

<b>DISASTERS</b>	<b>MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS</b>
Earthquakes and Tsunami	MHA/Ministry of Earth Sciences/IMD
Floods	MHA/Ministry of Water Resources/CWC
Cyclones	MHA/Ministry of Earth Sciences/IMD
Drought	Ministry of Agriculture
Biological Disasters	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Chemical Disasters	Ministry of Environment & Forests
Nuclear Disasters	Ministry of Atomic Energy
Air Accidents	Ministry of Civil Aviation
Railway Accidents	Ministry of Railways

### *2. The mechanisms for compensating disaster victims for their losses.*

The major compensation for disaster victims comes from national treasurer via Prime Minister's Relief Fund and National Calamity Relief Fund. State Government also involve themselves in providing compensation for disaster victims through the Chief Minister's Calamity/Relief Fund. The size of the Calamity Relief Fund has been fixed by the Finance Commission after taking into account the expenditure on relief and rehabilitation over the past 10 years. The Government of India contributes 75% of the corpus of the Calamity Relief Fund in each State. 25% is contributed to by the State. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen the compensation part. But at the same time, it may be argued compensation is not the ideal way to manage disasters, it is the other way around. In addition to the above, there are several national as well as state statutes which underline compulsory compensation to the victims of disasters like the Factories Act, Environmental Relief Fund and the Public Liability Insurance Act.