

Disaster Education in India - A Status Report

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UNCRD Project

Reducing Vulnerability of School Children to Earthquakes in Asia-Pacific Region – Shimla, India

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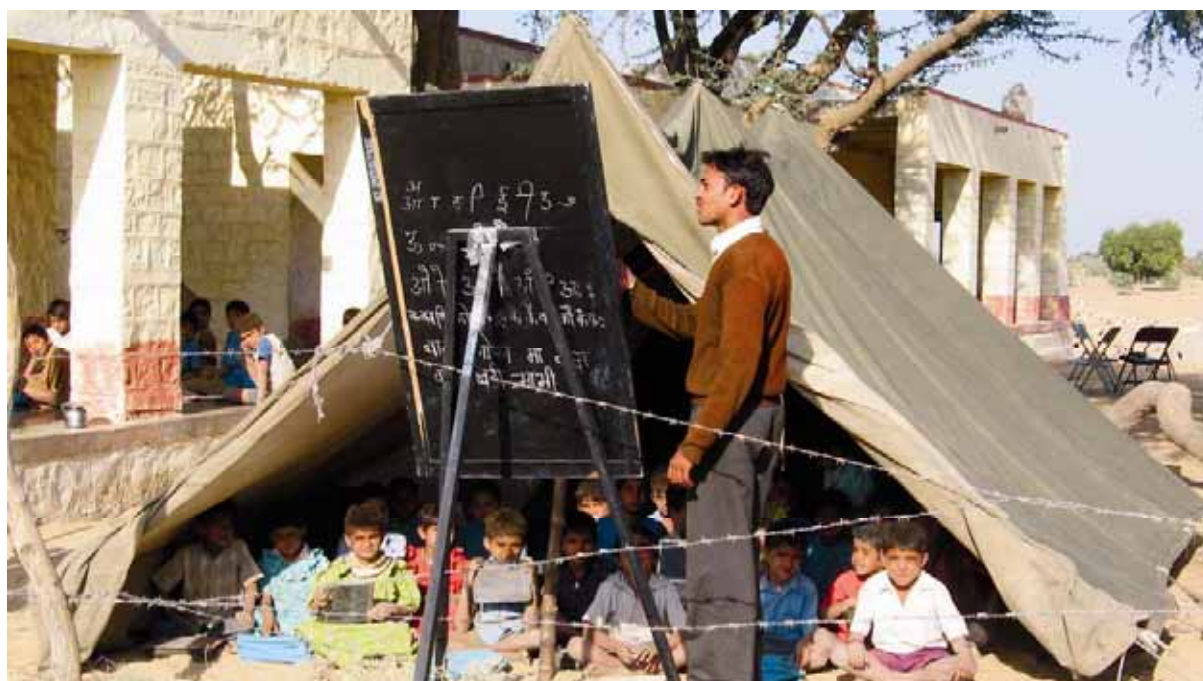
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mitigation plans are prepared in isolation without targeting the concerned target population. A combination of clear and accurate warning messages with high level of preparation with an effort of self reliance during the crisis time needs to be looked into. Education program with a wider range of people representing entire age groups needs to be strongly advocated. The best way out is to include the disaster management education in the school / college curriculum. Education and awareness programme should be designed in such a way that it is sustainable and continuous process as the target population continuously changes and grows.

Institutional and policy framework

The institutional and policy framework for carrying out response, relief and rehabilitation have been well established since independence but the mechanisms have been proved to be ineffective in covering the various cycles of disaster management. But the new approach however mandates priority to pre-disaster aspects of mitigation, prevention and preparedness and new institutional and policy mechanisms are being put in place to address the policy change.

The Government of India (GOI) over the past few years has brought about a paradigm shift in the approach of disaster management from the lessons learnt from disasters of the recent past. Though in any disaster situation a quick rescue and relief mission is inevitable but the challenges to deal with any such event should follow a multi sector approach of disaster management. Therefore disaster management occupies an important place in the country's policy framework.

The GOI ministry of human resource development in its tenth five year plan emphasized the need for

“Children are especially vulnerable to the threats posed by natural hazards. At the same time, they can be powerful agents of change, provided they are well armed with knowledge about how to prepare in advance, how to act on warnings and how to reduce at home and in their communities. It is essential, therefore, to make disaster-risk education a component of national school curricula, and to ensure that children understand how natural hazards interact with the environment”

Mr Kofi Annan's message on the
International Day for Disaster Reduction



integrating disaster management in existing education system in India. In addition, the government of India launched a set of nation wide disaster risk mitigation in the existing education system in India. This has been one of the most important initiatives that address the larger aspects of development in order to safeguard the developmental gains.

Why Disaster Management Education?

In India there are various different types of school system - the Central Board of Secondary Education, State Education Boards, the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), National Open School and International Schools. According to the latest government survey there are 1,124,033 schools in India in which about one-third of the population study. With nearly 85% of the land area prone to disaster it is high time the 34% of the country's future generation has been prepared to combat future disasters. GOI, Ministry of Human Resource Development has recommended the different school boards to incorporate Disaster Management in the school curriculum.

Status of formal education

Central Board of Secondary Education

In a first attempt by an educational institution in the country the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has integrated a short course on Disaster Management in the school curriculum. Around 7300 schools in the country follow CBSE curriculum and almost 900,000 children are enrolled with it. Apart from India the board has its schools in the gulf and some neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh and in the Far East African countries. In their endeavour the CBSE has integrated disaster management as a frontline curriculum for standard VIII, IX and X. It has also introduced disaster education components in class XI sociology and geography subjects. The curriculum on disaster management includes the following

topics: the nature and types of hazards, natural and man made disasters and need for their management, efforts made in various regions for disaster preparedness and mitigation, role of community and schools in disaster management, partnership with various government and non government agencies, use of modern and scientific technologies to combat disasters and survival skills. The main emphasis has been on various hazards and preventive and precautionary measures on various hazards. A brief outline of the course content is:



- Class VIII focuses on preparedness measures to be taken by students and teachers for various disasters.
- Class IX focuses on mitigation measures.
- Class X focuses on the role of government and other agencies in disaster management, role of science and technology in disaster management and initiating the concept of volunteerism among the children.
- Class XI (Sociology) focuses on gender and child rights in disaster management, role of community in disaster management.
- Class XI (Geography) focuses on the concept of various hazards.

The curriculum on disaster management in the schools intends to cross the boundaries of the curriculum, classroom and schools and make the learning local specific involving families and community at large. The board strongly believes that educating a child is educating a community. It intends to generate awareness in the form of painting, debate and essay competitions, skits and exhibitions.

State Education Boards

As recommended by the Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs, various State Governments are in the process of introducing disaster management in the school education. The status of disaster education in various states under the State Education Boards as compiled by the Ministry of Home Affairs is given below:



1. Tamil Nadu State: Course curriculum has been drafted and will be incorporated soon.
2. Orissa State: *“bipati biparjayao surakhya”* or *“Disaster Risk Safety”* was launched by Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) for students. The Orissa Board of Secondary Education has included a

chapter on Disaster Management in the class VIII geography syllabus.

3. Maharashtra State: Education Ministry has initiated the process of incorporating Disaster Management in school curriculum.
4. Bihar State: Disaster Management has been carried forward through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The Government of Bihar has incorporated Disaster Management in course curriculum from class V onwards in Social Science and the text book is being developed.
5. Gujarat State: Text books on disaster management for classes VII, VIII and IX have been drafted.
6. West Bengal State: The Kolkata Municipal Corporation is in the process to introduce disaster management course in the schools run by the civic body.
7. Jharkhand State: The state government of Jharkhand had included a text book on disaster management in the class IX syllabus as part of the social sciences subject.

Non-formal education

In India disaster management training has been included in the defence training of student cadets under various schemes such as NCC (National Cadet Corps), NSS (National Service Scheme), Scouts and Guides, National Yuva Kendras (NYKs), Civil Defence, Sainik Board etc.

1. Tamil Nadu State: Project Officers of National Service Scheme were identified as Master Trainers from Cuddalore District and were sensitized on Disaster Management. The Master Trainers in-turn planned sensitization training program for all the NSS Program officers in the district and they in-turn organized the sensitization program for the NSS volunteers in their respective schools in Cuddalore District. A Group of NSS, NCC, Scout & Guides Project Officers from vulnerable districts in Tamil Nadu were trained at Anna Institute of Management Chennai about Disaster Management during the month of February 2006.
2. Gujarat State: Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) has successfully completed



a two year project, Gujarat School Safety Initiative-I (GSSI-I) to promote culture of disaster safety in selected 150 schools in association with SEEDS in the districts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Jamnagar. Training of 500 NCC Girl cadets on first aid, search and rescue, and Ham radio was organized in Jasani hospital, Ahmedabad.



3. Maharashtra State: An essay competition was organized in Dhule district of Maharashtra to create awareness among students. Nearly 180 students participated in the competition.
4. Uttaranchal State: NSS volunteers in secondary and senior secondary school levels are being trained on first aid, search and rescue and preparing contingency plan.
5. Assam State: In Nagaon district, 1800 NCC cadets were sensitized on DRM activities in association with the Commandant of 8th Assam Battalion.
6. Kerala State: Nearly 170 volunteers – 120 from National Service Scheme and 50 from Nehru Yuvak Kendra Sangham (NYKS) were sensitized in two separate programs in Kozhikode on Disaster Management, including first aid and search and rescue concepts, vulnerability profile of the country, the national initiative and the need for the preparedness.
7. Tripura State: Training of 250 NSS officers and volunteers in the city of Agartala has been initiated.
8. Himachal Pradesh State: Under the SESIS (School Earthquake Safety Initiative Shimla) programme, students from 20 schools were given awareness on earthquake risk and were trained in first aid, fire safety, search and rescue etc., under a project implemented by SEEDS with the support of European Commission & Christian Aid.

Training of Teachers

To ensure curriculum transaction the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has taken up extensive training programmes for the teachers in a phased manner across the country. Initially, two master trainings consisting of principals and senior teachers across the country were organized. Then the master trainers were used to conduct further trainings to teachers. The board has till date conducted more than 26 such trainings covering 2000 teachers throughout the country. In each of the training, focus has been laid on the causes, preparedness and mitigation measures for various hazards. The trained teachers will be the potential resource persons for the schools in their area to train the children as well as to take the message to the community and the society at large.

1. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is developing resource book for training teachers on the subject of disaster management.
2. Karnataka State: The State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has organized a series of seminars on “the role of teachers in natural disaster management”. A two-day training programme for the Education Officers and School Principals was held at Mangalore.

3. Delhi State: 500 principals and teachers were sensitized on Disaster Management.
4. West Bengal State: Teachers from Kolkata Municipal Corporation had successfully undergone disaster management training. Over 100 teachers belonging to 242 corporation schools have received the training.
5. Maharashtra State: In Dhule District, a training of trainers' workshop for school teachers was organized with focus on school safety. The ToT had participation of nearly 96 teachers who found the workshop innovative and a good learning experience in first aid fire safety precautions, preparing school safety plans and for undertaking risk reduction measures at the school level. In addition, a training programme for teachers from all government schools in the district was conducted at Pune. Nearly 105 teachers participated in the programme conducted under the aegis of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. In addition to this, University of Pune has trained 60 teachers in Disaster Management Education.
6. North East Regional Institution of Education: Workshop cum training on environment education and Disaster Management has been conducted for elementary teacher-educators of the North-East States at Kaliabor, Assam.
7. Gujarat State: SEEDS, in collaboration with the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) has trained about 700 teachers in 4 Master Trainings and 25 district level trainings on various topics of disaster management under the Gujarat School Safety Initiative-II (GSSI-II) programme. Under the "Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project (UEVRP)", the United Nations Development Programme conducted a two day workshop in Rajkot to train and orient school teachers on disaster risk management, school disaster management plan and developing their capacity to teach disaster management in schools. 170 teachers from 100 municipal schools in the city participated.
8. Kerala State: Workshop for teachers and orientation program for school principals has been conducted under UEVRP (Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Project).
9. Himachal Pradesh State: 47 teachers and principals from schools in Shimla District participated in a training of the trainers under School Earthquake Safety Initiative Shimla, a European Commission – Christian Aid – SEEDS initiative.





Conclusion

The role of schools in the community is very important and it would be befitting to call schools as cradles of the society. Children are a dynamic and powerful force of change and are supporters in creating awareness in the community. They can contribute in a unique manner with energy and vision to find local solutions. School children should be encouraged to take up tasks which make them realise their importance as necessary stakeholders in the change process.

School safety has been given a major focus by the United Nations International Strategy on Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) when the 2006-2007 World Disaster Reduction Campaign was devoted to the theme "Disaster Reduction Begins at School". This theme was chosen by UN/ISDR because (a) it is in line with the Priority 3 of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: "Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels, and (b) schools are the best venues for forging durable collective values; therefore they are suitable for building a culture of prevention and disaster resilience.

An International Conference on School Safety held on 18-20 January 2007 in Ahmedabad recognised that every child has both the right to education and the right to safe and sustainable living, and set the goal of achieving "zero mortality of children in schools from preventable disasters by the year 2015".

The Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on School Education and Disaster Risk Reduction held on 8-10 October 2007 in Bangkok came out with a 'Bangkok Action Agenda' addressing all stakeholders, on the following priority areas for action: (i) Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into School Education; (ii) Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction Education for Community Resilience; (iii) Making Schools Safer; and (iv) Empowering Children for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Second Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held on 7-8 November 2007 in New Delhi resolved to urge the national governments to integrate disaster risk reduction in school education and make the schools safer for the children as per the Bangkok Action Agenda 2007.

The efforts of various agencies in providing disaster education to the school children will help to achieve the goal of ensuring safety of schools as envisaged by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

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