

LECTURE SERIES- 1

The subject of disaster management is all encompassing and requires multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvements, and, inviting guest speakers form an important part of enriching our outlook and outreach in terms of both vision and mission in the area of Disaster Management. Such talks provide opportunity to get exposure to real-world life experiences from the perspective of renowned and eminent personalities.

Keeping this in view, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) initiated 'Lecture Series' so as to have an academic oriented guest talk from eminent National and International Speakers from the field of disaster management. Such series shall be held once every month and the first one was held on **07 July 2018** at **NDMC Convention Centre, Sansad Marg, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001**.

The first Speaker for the Lecture Series was Shri. R . K. Bhandari, Chairman, Forum on Disaster Mitigation, Indian National Academy of Engineering, New Delhi who shared his experience on “**Two Great Landslides of India and Lessons in Disaster Management**”. There were around 40 participants who attended the series from various areas of disaster management ranging from field practitioners, independent consultants, researchers, private sector, government department etc.

There was a time when earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and floods were infrequent visitors or at their worst, unwelcome natural hazards. Today, these very natural hazards invariably strike as disasters in retaliation of the mindless human violence against Nature. History is replete with examples that whenever we assaulted our mountains, landslides appeared, slope erosion increased, and the ensuing battered landscape paved the way for bigger landslide disasters. Whenever we blocked rivers and diverted waterways to the point of abuse, retaliation was seen in the fury of floods, and floods in turn triggered landslides, causing deluge and devastation. The end result in all the above cases has been self-inflicted injury due to disasters which were chiefly manmade and rarely natural.

There have been countless horrendous tales of devastating landslides. The lecture picked two of the most spectacular events in India's landslide history associated with (a) the Great Malpa tragedy of 18 August 1998 and its repeat on 14 August 2017, and (b) the Great Alaknanda tragedy of 20 July 1970. On the fateful dawn of 18th August 1998, we mourned the death of the whole village of Malpa on the Right Bank of river Kali, in the Kumaon Himalaya, which killed 207 people. The repeat of the landslide tragedy at the same spot, 19 years later, is the proof enough that we have yet to learn the lessons taught by the tragedy

The Alaknanda tragedy of 20 July 1970 was much bigger in scale. It resulted in multiple landslides because of the bursting of a landslide dam at the junction of rivers Alaknanda and Patal Ganga. The night of July 20 became a nightmare for the people living along the river as they found themselves face to face with death. Upon bursting of the landslide dam, huge boulders flew up in the sky and clashed with one another. The scenario was similar to the deafening noise and sparks seen on the slopes of Malpa when the huge boulders collided hitting one another. The lecture covered the above two landslide tragedies and the lessons learned in graphic detail.

