

## Special Message

I am very happy that the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) is launching its quarterly Newsletter.

The richness of our country in terms of its resources, cultures and societies has been affected by different disasters time and again. Effective disaster management requires a holistic approach encompassing pre-disaster preparedness initiatives, disaster response and post-disaster rehabilitation measures. These measures will be successful only with dedicated participation from all sections of the society, starting from the individual to the national and even global levels. This will only come through an aware and informed community along with a coordinated management mechanism, infrastructure support and knowledge management.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has prepared a framework for disaster management and has initiated various actions for mitigation, preparedness, response and rehabilitation. Keeping in view the need for creating a cadre of trained professionals for comprehensive management of disasters, the National Centre for Disaster Management was upgraded and redesignated as the National Institute of Disaster Management. This newsletter is one of the many initiatives taken by NIDM towards fulfilling its mandate.

I congratulate NIDM for bringing out this Newsletter as an attempt to reaching out as a part of our mission to build capacities for a disaster resilient nation.

My good wishes to NIDM on this initiative.

R.K Singh

Joint Secretary, (Disaster Management)

NIDM Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

## From the Editor's Desk...

I take this opportunity to offer my warm greetings to all readers and subscribers on the occasion of the launch of the quarterly newsletter of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).

I am glad to report that NCDM has now been upgraded to a full-fledged Institute, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) with a mandate of building capacity through training, information dissemination, policy advocacy and strategic thinking. NIDM is presently associated with the Ministry of Home Affairs in charting the course of disaster management in the country over the next few decades. We also hope to continue our efforts in research and documentation of global best practices in the area of disaster management.

The spate of recent disasters including floods in Assam and Bihar and the fire tragedy at Kumbakonam, which has claimed so many innocent lives has once again highlighted India's vulnerability to disasters and the need for a holistic framework to tackle them. Through this Newsletter, we look forward to regular interactions with our readers through their valuable inputs, which will enable us to continue our efforts in promoting a resilient country in the face of all disasters.

M. Madhavan Nambiar

Executive Director, NIDM

Editor

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## About us...

Disaster recurrence has increased both in severity and magnitude; therefore their management has to be considered on a comprehensive scale. Hence the traditional post-disaster response and relief approach has been replaced by an all-encompassing approach of mitigation and preparedness. NIDM will be an eminent center of knowledge, research and training in disaster and emergency management in India and Asia.

NIDM is the nodal centre for human resource development in the area of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. It will be a self-sustaining institute with a multi disciplinary and multi-hazard approach to training and research in disaster management. It will assist the National and State Governments in building their capacities and also in planning for disaster preparedness and mitigation.

The NIDM would also house an Alternate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) that can take over the functions of the National EOC in cases of emergency. The alternate EOC will also be used for simulation and hands on training purposes.

### As a Role Player

The NIDM will primarily provide assistance to the Government of India on the following five broad functions:

- Providing policy support to the Government for mainstreaming disaster mitigation and preparedness into developmental planning.
- Working as a National Resource Center in the area of disaster risk reduction.
- Building the capacity of all the stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction according to an appropriate Human Resource Plan.
- Forging, promoting & sustaining international & regional partnerships for launching joint projects & programmes.
- Collaborating with institutions working in the areas of environmental science and technology, agriculture and natural resource management, applied behavioural and social sciences, health education, and safety engineering to develop a wider pool of expertise in disaster management.

## Objectives of NIDM

- To network with various other role players at regional/international level for synergising disaster reduction efforts.
- To liaison with various government/non-government agencies, public/private sector organizations for collating pertinent data for wider dissemination among various stakeholders.
- To mainstream human resource development and capacity building, within the disaster management system of the country, through training and education.
- To document each disaster event in depth by carrying out retrospective studies, action research, empirical studies during various phases of disaster management, and drawing lessons for providing feedback to the policy makers.

...We are far from helpless in the face of natural hazards. Early warning and risk reduction measures have been important factors in helping to reduce significantly the number of people who lose their lives to disasters. New planning and forecasting tools are helping to mitigate the devastation regularly wrought by floods. We can and must build a world of resilient communities and nations. I hope this publication reaches the widest possible readership and rouses the international community to do its utmost to better equip people everywhere for life in our hazard filled planet.

*Kofi A Annan, Secretary General United Nations, July 2002. (Excerpted from Foreword to Living with Risk, ISDR publication)*





## Initiatives so far...

As the nodal organization for human resource development in disaster management in India, NIDM has taken initiatives to mainstream capacity building through training and education within the disaster management system of the country. NIDM has made attempts to network and collaborate with various institutions to develop a vision for disaster management in the country over the next twenty years. The major initiatives of NIDM are:

### Human Resource Development Plan

NIDM is currently involved in preparation of the Human Resource Development Plan for the country. This Plan will give directions to the nation to build and enhance its capacity for coping with disasters.

Human Resource Development is one of the most important components for building up a sound disaster management system. Preparation of a National Human Resource Development Plan with identified sectors and plan of action is necessary to build a cadre of trained professionals for effective intervention on the one hand and an informed and prepared community on the other.

Through the National Human Resource Development Plan, an effort is being made to identify the various methods of capacity building, the universe and within it; the critical sectors of emergency management, which require immediate intervention and the target groups for each capacity building method. The HRD Plan will encapsulate the methodology for preparation of a trained group of professionals to deal with disasters effectively.

### Disaster Management Code/Manual

The institutional management mechanism for disaster management at the state level is based on Relief Codes/ Scarcity Codes/ Relief Manuals etc., which focus on the relief aspect of disaster management. Most of these documents have not been updated as per the requirement of the times. The Ministry of Home Affairs has suggested the states to amend the existing Relief Codes/Manuals into comprehensive Disaster Management Codes/Manuals, incorporating the aspects of preparedness, mitigation and planning measures at all levels. The guidelines for the preparation of the Disaster Management Code are currently being prepared by NIDM. These guidelines encompass all aspects of disaster management and all stakeholders and are an attempt to create an institutional mechanism integrating the same.



### Training Modules

In addition to preparing the National Human Resource Development Plan, NIDM is also taking the lead in preparation of training modules for various levels of government functionaries. The critical sectors of revenue, police, health, agriculture, construction (masons) and communication have been taken up at the first stage and modules for each level of these sectors are being developed. A Writers' Workshop comprising of faculty from NIDM and experts from various organizations including UNDP was organized in NIDM from 12-17 May 2004 to formulate the basic module designs. The modules are being finalized in NIDM.

### Directory of Resource Persons / NGO's

NIDM is currently preparing a Directory of Resource Persons who have specialized in various aspects of disaster management. The directory aims at providing the end-user with information on resource persons working in this field, who can be contacted as experts in specific fields.





## Recent Disasters: Our Concern

### Frequent Landslides : Restless Mountains or Human Induced Events?

Three major landslides hit the state of Uttaranchal within a span of one month; the first two events hitting within three days of each other. The first event, which took a toll of 5 policemen from Kolkata, occurred on June 9, 2004 in the Sunderdhunga Glacier in Bageshwar district. The second event occurred on Sunday, June 12, 2004 at Baltaura, 13 Km from Joshimath, on the Joshimath - Badrinath Road, killing 6 pilgrims and injuring 6 others. These landslides were reportedly caused by the road construction activities in the adjoining areas and more such landslide events are imminent, warned officials and experts. The third event occurred at Lambagad near Joshimath on 6th July killing 17 and injuring 28 people in addition to leaving over 2500 pilgrims stranded due to closure of the road. This landslide was reportedly caused by a cloudburst in the area. A fourth landslide, again caused by heavy rain, occurred on 28th July 2004 near Yamunotri temple killing 6 people.

What needs to be examined is the underlying causes triggering these landslides, endangering the lives of the inhabitants and visitors alike. Excessive construction, overpopulation and deforestation are often cited as the primary causes for landslides in the Himalayas. But there is no policy to check such indiscriminate proliferation of "development."



### Editorial Board

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**Sujata Satapathy**, Senior Research Officer - Member  
**Amit Verma**, Research Associate - Member

### Floods

India witnesses huge death and devastation every year due to severe flood situation in many states. Floods in Assam and Bihar have claimed around 800 lives leaving a larger number homeless and destitute. Flash floods in Ghaggar, Tangari and Markanda rivers have submerged large areas in Punjab following heavy rains since 2nd August. The Ghaggar breached its bounds at more than ten places in Patiala district itself.

Once again all these events emphasize on the relevance of holistic disaster management efforts.

### School Tragedy at Kumbakonam

The fire at the Shri Krishna High School in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, on July 16, 2004 has not only killed 93 children but also reflects on the progressive deterioration of school education as well as our lack of preparedness and mitigation measures to deal with such kind of disasters. While strict enforcement of the building rules for schools could have prevented such an incident taking place, training of teachers and other personnel, and aggressive awareness programmes for children in the school would have saved many more little futures of India.

### Upcoming Events

- o **Inauguration of NIDM: August 11, 2004 by Shri Shivraj Patil**  
Hon'ble Home Minister, Govt. of India
- o **Module Writer's Workshop II**, at NIDM, 19-21 Aug. 2004
- o **Training workshop on formulating district disaster management plan: Aug. 23-25, 2004 at NIDM**
- o **Workshop on Disaster Management with FICCI: 30 Sept and 01 Oct. 2004 at FICCI Auditorium, Delhi**
- o **World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Kobe, Japan: January 2005**

### Your views...

Whatever your views on disaster management and related issues are, share your thoughts with all of us through this Newsletter. You can also send anecdotes, success stories, opinions or any other issue that you feel deeply about.

We are waiting for your response.

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