EXAMINING PRINCIPLES OF DISASTER REPORTING: TOT
A TRAINING COURSE FOR ENTRY LEVEL JOURNALISTS

Sub-deliverable of Deliverable 14

Preparing Long Term Training and Capacity Building Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in India, under NCRMP

10th September, 2014

Submitted to

Submitted by
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BACKGROUND

Journalists play a critical role in informing the public during disaster preparedness, response and recovery. However, with the race for TRPs, it is usually only the dramatic components of disasters that are projected to pump up ratings. Reporting has also generally been confined to during and just after disaster events (response and early recovery). There is little, if any, coverage, of risk reduction aspects during non-disaster times. Part of the ability to improve disaster reporting rests with instilling these qualities and insights early.

However, currently disaster reporting is not a key feature in journalism courses and the priority given to these stories by young journalists is negligible. At the same time, with no accredited standards, journalism and mass communication courses vary widely in their quality, content and methods. This means that the very fundamentals of ‘good reporting’ in general which are key to good disaster reporting in particular are often skimmed over.

Training Needs

Keeping these problems in mind, the core journalistic norms need to be reiterated and looked at from a disaster context. Basics of disaster-related terminology and concepts need to be taught to help journalists understand the situation and report more accurately.

Targeting the young is important precisely because the seeds of a story are often found on the ground. So change can occur only when there is the will to run these stories at the top level and an ability to recognise and dig out these stories at the ‘on ground’ level.

Benefits

A series of such trainings will help develop a culture of more sensitive, accurate and holistic disaster reporting. In the long run, this will help develop more resilient communities as the public becomes better informed.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Trainee profile

The module is targeted at entry-level journalists. This includes last-year journalism and mass communications students; as well as entry-level journalists (first 2-3 years on the job). This will cut across various types of media – print, electronic (radio and TV), online and photo-journalists. Making it a part of the formal learning curriculum will help mainstream these ideas over the long-term. At the same time, reaching out to those young journalists who may or may not have had access to formal journalism will allow for these concepts to germinate in the workplace.

Overall numbers of trainees

The potential universe of trainees is exhaustive. Over 550 bachelors, masters, PG diploma, diploma, professional and vocational courses in journalism and mass communications are run across the country. If we take an average of 20 students per course, over 11,000 ‘journalists’ pass out every year. Apart from this, a large number of entry level journalists (especially at regional, district and local levels) have no formal training in journalism. Estimating this number holistically is very difficult.

As a starting point, some of the most popular and well-established courses could be tapped. These include:

- Asian College of Journalism, Chennai

BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

- AJ Kidwai Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Milia, Delhi
- Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan units in various cities
- Bombay College of Journalism, Bombay
- IGNOU University
- Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media, Bangalore
- Indian Institute of Mass Communication, JNU, New Delhi
- Film and Television Institute of India, Pune
- Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad
- Manorama School of Communication, Kottayam
- Sri Aurobindo Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi
- S.Naidu School of Art & Comm, Univ of Hyderabad, Hyderabad
- Symbiosis Institute of Mass Communication, Pune
- Times School of Journalism, New Delhi
- Xavier Institute of Communication, St. Xaviers College, Mumbai

Tie-ups would need to be established with the institutes by NIDM to run this training programme for final year students.

Practicing young journalists will be tapped through training programmes run in different leading national, regional and district media houses.

Constraints

- Exact numbers of overall trainees will be difficult to arrive at and will have to be dealt with in parts as the reach of the training module expands.
- The level of knowledge, intent and journalistic principles will vary widely among the target group, especially in the work setting. This heterogeneity will mean that various learning modes and methods will have to be adopted in order to try and reach the different stakeholders.
- Since there is no mandatory ‘ethical code of conduct’ or licensing for journalists, enforcing these norms will prove to be a challenge.
- Commercial compulsions, TRPs, circulation and clicks, and the need for ‘exclusives’ will continue to be a major hurdle.

Addressing the constraints

The module aims to address the constraints to the extent possible by:

- Identifying the first level of trainees for this course. Expansion and tie-ups with other universities upon evaluation of the first batch. Overall numbers for the next five years have been identified to set a benchmark.
- Adapting to varying levels of knowledge and intent by using various learning methods including quizzes, group work, plenary discussion and simulations.
- Putting the participants into different roles during the simulation to try and get them to see each other’s point of view and understand limitations. The training delivery will try and see how to turn conflicts that that arise into conversation stimulators.
**Background to the Course**

- Basing the module on principles that are easy to remember and may help journalists create stories that ‘differentiate’ themselves.
- Seeking to give practical insights on new story ideas that may spark interest among some of the press.

### Number of Trainees per Course

The intensive workshop and discussion base of the course will work best with smaller numbers. Therefore, each training batch should have no more than 18-20 trainees.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Performance Objective</th>
<th>Training Objectives</th>
<th>Enabling Objectives*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In their jobs, the resource persons will:</td>
<td>After the training course, the trainees will be able to:</td>
<td>During the training, the resource persons will learn to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate how to apply the fundamentals of disaster reporting to future work in disaster scenarios.</td>
<td>• Assess critical issues of vulnerability, development and environment that impact disasters</td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<td>• Prepare trainees to create programming/articles that focus on broader developmental and environmental issues that affect disaster risk reduction; even during non-disaster times.</td>
<td>• Write/create accurate, balanced, dignified and holistic disaster-related reports.</td>
<td>• Define basic disaster-related terminology.</td>
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<td>• Be able to adapt and collaborate</td>
<td>• Explain disaster concepts.</td>
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<td>• Select and adapt training material to suit the trainee group</td>
<td>• Link different stages of the disaster cycle with possible story ideas</td>
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<td>• Analyse risk reduction factors; including how climate change components and developmental aspects impact natural hazards</td>
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<td>• Ensure fact-checking and appropriate terminology.</td>
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<td>• Recognise the importance of rarely reported, positive stories.</td>
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<td>• Examine different facets and sides to each story.</td>
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<td>• Select a cross-section of people to feature in disaster reporting that represent the most vulnerable, unheard voices.</td>
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<td>• Analyse when and how to remain neutral; or to get involved.</td>
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<td>• Maintain the dignity of disaster survivors when conducting interviews or telling a story.</td>
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<td>• Collaborate across media to strengthen consistency of messaging.</td>
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<td>• Build collaboration with government and NGOs.</td>
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<td>• Apply principles and standards of safety.</td>
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<td><strong>Content Delivery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content Delivery</strong></td>
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<td>• Apply behavioural tips for training including body language and posture.</td>
<td>• Apply behavioural tips for training including body language and posture.</td>
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<td>• Understand the dynamics of different trainee groups</td>
<td>• Understand the dynamics of different trainee groups</td>
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<td>• Adapt training material according to the level, geographical location and mix of trainees.</td>
<td>• Adapt training material according to the level, geographical location and mix of trainees.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Deal with conflict or contingency situations</td>
<td>• Deal with conflict or contingency situations</td>
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<td>• Gather feedback</td>
<td>• Gather feedback</td>
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<td>• Appraise the course</td>
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Number of total trainees

Entry-level journalists

Of 550 courses, take 400 courses (of certain standard) x average 20 students = 8,000

Entry-level journalists who have passed out over the last 3 years = 24,000

Untrained entry-level journalists (or those with other degrees) = additional 25% each year = 2,000

Sub-total: 34,000

Eventually, these 24,000 will get integrated into either the trained students or the untrained journalists – so the eventual scale of training each year after the 5th year = 10,000

First year – 2,000
2nd year – 4,000
3rd year – 8,000
4th year – 10,000
5th year – 10,000

10,000/20 = 500 batches per year.

Running 10 courses per year, this means 50 resources persons are required.

Entry behaviour

Still in a learning mode, last-year journalism/mass communications students and young journalists working on the ground will still be fairly open to new ideas. They will be interested in any insights that will help boost career potential. However, the embedded ideas of learning by rote will need to be broken; as will some of the fixed notions about disaster reporting.

Resource persons and numbers

The resource persons will be senior journalism / mass communication professors from leading institutes. They will not only run the module for their own classes, but will run the modules for young journalists in leading media houses at national, regional and district level.
BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – INTRODUCTION

Overall aim: To develop the ability of resource persons to train journalists on the importance and nuances of disaster and related reporting.

Suggestions for using area-based resources

The training materials in the modules have been designed to apply to a wide variety of audiences and so are general in their references. Scope has been left wide to tailor all examples and reports to suit the local contexts. This can be done by using specific examples of reports from the region and/or latest situations. However, care needs to be taken not to compromise local sensitivities by avoiding naming actual individuals, organisations or political and religious authorities.

Always allow yourself sufficient time to localise and adapt information to a suitable training format.

Introduction to the course

Have a round of introductions. Ensure that each person states their name, background of interaction with media and expectations from the course. This is important in order to get a sense of the overall group.

Explain that this is a workshop to explore disaster reporting principles and how you can apply them to your work, not to teach black and white facts. Therefore, active participation is essential!

Ice-breaker

Play a game of Chinese whispers. Seat the participants in a semi-circle. Pick a one-line story (something on the lines of ‘Thousands are trapped under the rubble after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the state yesterday.’) Starting from one end of the semi-circle, have each person whisper the message into the next person’s ear. The last person in the circle must repeat the message out loud. Discuss how it has changed along the way.

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<th>Learning Unit</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
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<td>Training techniques</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding disasters</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
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<td>½ day</td>
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<td>Safety</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td>Day 3</td>
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<td>Dignity</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Consistency and collaboration</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Environment and development</td>
<td>1 day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Changing mediums</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recap</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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PART 1 – TRAINING TECHNIQUES
NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – Training techniques

Aim: To understand the characteristics of effective facilitators and build appropriate skills.

Exercise 1: Understanding effective facilitation characteristics (1 hour)

Form participants into small groups. Ask them to think about workshops or training events that they have participated in and the facilitators that they thought were the most effective. What made these facilitators effective? What did they do or what were they good at that made you learn more from them or that made you think they were “good” facilitators?

Ask each group to write on their flipcharts the characteristics of these “good” facilitators.

Give everyone a few minutes to review the flipcharts. Categorize the responses. Spend about 15 minutes reviewing and summarizing the groups’ charts. Then pick a key characteristic from every core category and act it out. Demonstrate both positive and negative examples.

Exercise 2: Active listening skills (1 hour)

Have three participants volunteer and ask them to leave the room. Explain to the group that you will tell the first person a story. That person will then tell it to the second person who will tell it to the third. Bring in the volunteers one by one. First tells to the second and second to the third. The third repeats the story to everyone else. The rest of the group should listen to each retelling for parts that are missed out, parts that may be put in and things that change in the story. No one is allowed to take notes – this is a listening activity.

When the three people have told the story ask the group what the differences were between the first story and the final story.

- Were any of the stories accurate?
- What changed in the retelling?
- Was anything left out in the story?
- Were the parts that were left out important to the story?
- Was anything added to the story?
- Why do you think that this happened?
- Did events or characters change in the story?
- What does this tell us about the way that we listen?
- Is it enough to get 80 percent of the story correct?
- Does this lead to misunderstandings and confusion?
- Explain to the group that people do not decide to reinterpret information, it is a normal reaction and the brain will automatically try to make sense of information.

The story should be based on a disaster event. A sample story is as follows:

Aarti Priyadarshini lives in a small village in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. Her home is 7.5 kilometres from the nearest roadhead. On May 16th, 2014, she was cooking potatoes on her stove when the rains began to fall. The flash flood tore apart her house leaving only broken pieces where her six-room house once stood. Aarti’s 3-year old son Ved was almost washed away in the barrage. Her screams were drowned by the sound of the pouring rain. The ensuing landslides cut off her village altogether. Her husband, an Indo-Tibetan border guard, was away on duty. Unable to leave her child alone, she waits while the men from neighbouring families trek long kilometres to Maneri and Harsil in search of food rations and relief supplies.

When she arrived in New Didsari village five years earlier, Aarti had though it was lucky to live next to the Ganga. Now she curses her bad luck as she looks at the plot that used to be their agricultural land.
FACTORS THAT AFFECT TRAINING

What is a facilitator’s role?
A facilitator does not lecture alone. Their role is to skilfully guide to help achieve understanding and consensus. A facilitator is actually an active unbiased member of the learning process.

Venue
- Avoid sitting behind a desk and ensure there is no barrier between you and the participants.
- Keep the freedom to move freely around the room.
- Don’t stand directly in the path of the sun. If you are unable to be seen, the participants will lose interest.
- Use classic semi-circle or hollow square arrangements help ensure that all the participants can see each other and that they can all see you.

Training Equipment
- Ensure that all participants have a clear view of any audio-visual aids that you are using.
- When writing on a whiteboard/blackboard/flip chart, make sure your writing is clear, large enough to be read and straight.
- Don’t write everything in capitals. It takes more time to put thoughts down and brainstorming can become tedious.
- Know what and where you are going to write before you put anything down.
- All board work should summarise what you are saying or have said. Drawings and graphic representations can be used to great effect. Keep your drawings simple.
- Tape down any electrical equipment and so not stand in front of the projector.
- Avoid powerpoints when possible and use more interactive methods.
- Make sure that only handouts that are needed during the session are handed out beforehand. Others should be handouts that need to be used during a session are handed out before the activity, but if handouts are a summary, they should be handed out at the end.

Timings
- The average adult attention span is about forty-five minutes. When sessions are longer than this, plan for some change around this time.
- Keep breaks of at least twenty to thirty minutes (where possible). Participants need this time to mentally ‘regroup’ and to discuss issues that have arisen during the presentations.

Psychological environment
- Creating a conducive learning environment is dependent almost entirely on the facilitator.
- Make sure women in the group are participating and taking leading roles.
- Where there is co-facilitation, remember that preparation and planning should be done as a team. Your treatment of each other should be respectful and cooperative; reflecting the attitude you would like from the participants.
- Be fair and honest in dealings with all learners. Do not let your inherent prejudices affect how you work with them. So ask yourself:
  - Are you dismissive of some of the learners? Why?
  - Are they bad learners or do they belong to a group that you don’t know or understand very well?
  - Do you really ask women to contribute as much as men?
  - Are you listening to what is not being said, the motivations and needs?
  - Always clarify any vague questions or comments, rephrasing them and saying ‘Is this what you are asking?’
TRAINING TECHNIQUES

- Recognise when the speaker is uncomfortable
- Understand what is being said as well as what is not being said.
- Make a conscious effort to recognise which participants are quiet or shy and encourage them to contribute.
- Speak clearly, so that each person can hear you. This does not mean shouting but speaking (articulating) clearly and loudly enough so that you can be heard at the back of the room.
- Never assume that everything you say will be taken as equally important. Create your own ‘headlines’. Structure the communication so that important points in what you are saying are recognised.
- Allow questions whenever they occur (where possible). Or at least pause for questions at the end of every main point so that people do not forget or lose interest in asking it.
- The skills of listening, observation, clear verbal communication, and empathising or seeing others’ viewpoints are not just to help you become a better facilitator. These are also skills that you will be teaching the learners. It is very important then, that you are a good role model for being an effective facilitator.

Behaviour

- Be warm, friendly and enthusiastic. If you genuinely enjoy the workshop, the participants will too.
- Never project yourself up as the master. The participants are adult learners and deserve the respect of their age and experience.
- Use participant’s names not just to ask questions but to acknowledge points they’ve made (name tags can help facilitate this).
- Where you need clarification or more explanation ask for it gently and with a smile. Remember, you are not an examiner.
- Listen also when participants talk to each other; many people feel too shy to speak from their heart to a facilitator/trainer, but they will to their colleagues.

Voice tone and language

- Speak clearly, at a reasonable pace. Be loud enough for all participants to hear. Use expression (a monotone voice will turn participants off).
- Simplify language where needed. Make sure it gels with your audience and their level. The most important part is getting the concepts across to them.
- Allow adequate time for responses and do not rush people unless extremely necessary. Many people may be translating the information from another language before formulating a response.

Body language

- Make frequent eye contact, but do not stare.
- Make sure you look around often and use your peripheral vision to ensure that all participants are noticed.
- Stand next to people when you are moving around, rather than in front of them. This can be seen as aggressive.
- Simple gestures such as leaning forward and nodding make people feel like they’re being heard.

Posture

- Stand straight; slumping makes you look tired, as if you would rather not be there.
- It is considered rude in most cultures to point with a finger or stand with your hands on your hips. Often, folding (crossing) your arms is also unacceptable.
- Move for a reason: to make a point, to talk to a particular group, to check if people need your help.
PART 2 – LEARNING UNITS
NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – Running the course

Aim: To teach resource persons the principles of disaster reporting and equip them to train entry-level journalists.

Timeframe: ½ a day (3-4 hours) for each learning unit

For each of these learning units, run through the entire simulation, quiz, discussion and critique exercise, including the review of core information. You may use the blackboard/whiteboard to write key points.

To run the simulation, divide the participants into 4 groups. Assign one hazard to each group which they will follow through the course. This is important so that all participants get a sense of all hazards since they may need to train using different ones.

Depending on the number of participants, have one person in each group be the facilitator. Rotate the facilitator role across units so that each person takes a turn to play that role.

Devote 45 minutes- 1 hour at the end of each learning unit to discuss the challenges and successes of facilitation.

- What challenges were there with each type of simulation?
- Which topics elicited strong emotions and major differences of opinion?
- When localising for a particular area, will there be issues that arise around one particular hazard that need to be included?
- How do you keep space for different viewpoints? In other words, how does the trainer maintain neutrality?
- How do you ensure you are correcting understanding of fundamental concepts and usage of terminology as you go along?

Key topics to touch upon for each learning unit

Understanding disasters
- Basics of each hazard – what it is and how it is measured.
- Concept of a disaster vs. hazard and phases of the disaster management cycle
- The role media can play across the disaster cycle

Accuracy
- Background information on the community
- Facts and figures
- Word choice
- Staying in context

Safety
- Precautionary measures and equipment
- Dealing with stress
- Ensuring safety of the community

Balance
- Balance of areas
- Balance of voices
- Balance of positive and negative stories
- Balance of activist vs. neutral reporting
Dignity
- Interviewing
- Visuals
- Overall reporting

Consistency and Collaboration
- Who needs to collaborate
- Consistency of reports
- Common goals

Follow up
- Delivery of and use of aid
- Long-term recovery
- Lessons and good practices

Environment and Development
- Climate change and small-scale disasters
- Silent disasters
- Development issues
- Linking stories to mainstream issues

Changing Mediums
- How to adapt stories to different mediums
- Keeping consistency
- Verification issues

FAQ: Why A-F and S?
Both the toolkit on disaster reporting and the training modules are centred around principles of
disaster reporting. Keeping in mind the findings from the ground studies and the need for quick
recall, these have been termed the ‘A-F and S of disaster reporting.’ This includes understanding
disasters, accuracy, balance, consistency and collaboration, dignity, environment and development
(going beyond the disaster), follow-up and safety.
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Running the course

**Overall aim:** To sensitize upcoming journalists on the importance and nuances of disaster and disaster risk reduction reporting; and in the process, helping the public be better prepared and more resilient.

**Timeframe and schedule:** The entire course will be run over five days.

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<th>Learning Unit</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and ice-breaker</td>
<td>½ hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding disasters</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency and collaboration</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and development</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and development</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing mediums</td>
<td>1/4th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>½ hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Running the pre-test**

The pre-test quiz is intended to evaluate the level of understanding of the participants prior to the course. It will give a baseline to measure the projected change in perception and knowledge that can be seen through the post-test.

It is recommended that the pre-test be given along with the registration kit and even before the round of introductions.

Unlike with the quizzes in the following chapters, the pre-test should not be discussed and analysed.

**Introduce the course**

The participants should be given an overall introduction to the course where the overall aim, suggested schedule and participant introductions are done.

**Ice-breaker**

A short ice-breaker exercise will help the participants get comfortable with one another. A game like the one suggested below often helps to do this.

Play a game of Chinese whispers. Seat the participants in a semi-circle. Pick a one-line story (something on the lines of ‘Thousands are trapped under the rubble after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the state yesterday.’) Starting from one end of the semi-circle, have each person whisper the message into the next person’s ear. The last person in the circle must repeat the message out loud. Discuss how it has changed along the way.
LEARNING UNITS

Key topics to touch upon for each learning unit

**Understanding disasters**
- Basics of each hazard – what it is and how it is measured.
- Concept of a disaster vs. hazard and phases of the disaster management cycle
- The role media can play across the disaster cycle

**Accuracy**
- Background information on the community
- Facts and figures
- Word choice
- Staying in context

**Safety**
- Precautionary measures and equipment
- Dealing with stress
- Ensuring safety of the community

**Balance**
- Balance of areas
- Balance of voices
- Balance of positive and negative stories
- Balance of activist vs. neutral reporting

**Dignity**
- Interviewing
- Visuals
- Overall reporting

**Consistency and Collaboration**
- Who needs to collaborate
- Consistency of reports
- Common goals

**Follow up**
- Delivery of and use of aid
- Long-term recovery
- Lessons and good practices

**Environment and Development**
- Climate change and small-scale disasters
- Silent disasters
- Development issues
- Linking stories to mainstream issues

**Changing Mediums**
- How to adapt stories to different mediums
- Keeping consistency
- Verification issues

**Running the individual exercise (quiz) for each Learning Unit**
In every learning unit, a quiz is provided based on the key principles to be taught in that section. This should be handed out after the simulation exercise is complete. Allow 10-15 minutes for participants to individually complete the quiz. Use the discussion of the answers as the portion of the learning unit where key concepts can be explained and clarified. This will draw upon their own experience and learning from the simulation and use one of the key questions from the quiz as the starting point for the discussion. This starting question may differ based on the participants and the following points should be considered:
- What has the simulation discussion revealed as the strong and weak points of understanding of the group
- Which topics from the LU have been touched upon very little
- Which hazard is being followed for the simulation? If it is earthquake, then flood specific questions may be good to discuss in the quiz portion to give the participants a broader outlook.

**FAQ: How do you decide which simulation to pick?**

This training module offers a choice of four different simulations based on earthquake, flood, cyclone or drought. Each of the learning units will be facilitated based on these simulations which run across the learning units as one continuous story. The resource person must decide which simulation is best suited to their target audience. The same

Some tips to keep in mind include:

- What is the most common hazard to the area where the training is taking place?
- What is the background of your students?
- Has there been a recent disaster of national scale that would warrant talking about that hazard, even if it is not native to the area?
- Is there a hazard in the region that poses great risk, yet is rarely talked about since it hasn’t happened for a long time, because it is not known or because another hazard takes precedence?

**FAQ: Why A-F and S?**

Both the toolkit on disaster reporting and the training modules are centred around principles of disaster reporting. Keeping in mind the findings from the ground studies and the need for quick recall, these have been termed the ‘A-F and S of disaster reporting.’ This includes understanding disasters, accuracy, balance, consistency and collaboration, dignity, environment and development (going beyond the disaster), follow-up and safety.
QUIZ 1: PRE-TEST AND ANSWERS

1. Follow-up stories are required for only one month after a disaster.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. Follow-up stories need to continue for the long-term; over many months or years.

2. It is important to pinpoint blame right away.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. The over-politicisation of a disaster in the early stages takes time and attention away from the main issues and affected communities. This is a period where people need to look forward and focus on what needs to be done.

3. Journalists never need counselling after being in a disaster situation.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. Often, the immensity of death and destruction is difficult for people to process and deal with. It is important to have back-end systems that help them cope.

4. The vulnerabilities that arise from mainstream areas such as poverty, education, women and child welfare and construction all have an impact on disasters.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: True. A disaster is linked to many factors besides the actual hazard. Disaster risk reduction can be mainstreamed into all these areas.

5. A flood is a natural disaster.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. There is no such thing as a ‘natural disaster’. The repeated use of this term makes it seem like there is nothing we can do to prevent these and that we have no responsibility for it.

6. Survivors are often a little dazed so it is alright to prompt them a little with the answers.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. Don’t push for sound bites. Allow the survivors to tell their story. Leading questions change the perspective.

7. It doesn’t matter where the footage/photo was taken as long as it relates to the story.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. The footage/photo must be of the place/person who is being covered. If using canned footage or other photos, these must be clearly identified as such.

8. The media plays a role only in early warning.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: False. The media has an important role to play across the disaster cycle.

9. Vulnerability is a set of conditions which increases the susceptibility of the community to the impact of hazards.
   
   [ ] True  [ ] False

   Answer: True. Vulnerabilities can take physical, social, economic, technical and environmental factors.
LEARNING UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Understanding disasters

Objectives: Define basic disaster-related terminology; explain disaster concepts; and analyse the role media can play in disasters.

Structure of the learning unit
Divide the participants into four groups. These will be the groups will be used throughout the course so be sure to ensure a mix of skill sets, interests and personalities. Begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 – 1.5 hours). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Go around and have each group present their headlines and story ideas. Have plenary discussion and critique of each group’s story. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenario
Your editor has just returned from an international conference where there was much talk on ‘disaster reporting’. Now he wants to dig a little deeper and better understand the concept. Your team has been assigned to do background research on disasters. You are assigned the hazard of drought/earthquake/flood/cyclone to study (Assign one hazard to each group). You are also expected to analyse the role that media can play in disasters.

Tasks:
- Explain the key terms that relate to the hazard?
- Explain how the hazard is measured?
- Define how a hazard turns into a disaster.
- Explain the phases of the disaster cycle.
- List five ways the media can play a role

Group discussion and examples
Following the simulation, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

Terminology: The disaster field has specific vocabulary of its own and each hazard has specific measurement tools. Familiarity with these is necessary in order to be able to effectively understand the situation and communicate to the larger public.

Concepts: Disaster concepts including the phases of the disaster cycle, resilience and vulnerability form a foundation for DRR reporting.

Policies and systems: Several policies and systems already technically exist at the national and state levels. However, these are rarely implemented or function in full form.

Critical role of the media: The media plays a critical role across each stage of the disaster cycle: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. This includes the dissemination of early warning and larger public awareness.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local and appropriate to the context. An illustrative example is given below:

Misunderstanding cyclone scales can spell disaster

The need to accurately and convincingly communicate cyclone scales can be seen from the example of cyclone Bhola. In 1970, wind speeds of up to 185 km per hour swept through Bengal and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Cyclone Bhola is considered to be one of the world’s most deadly cyclones with death tolls estimated at 500,000. Reports reveal that despite the cyclone’s formation over the Bay of Bengal for four days, millions along the coastline were unaware of it. The huge death toll is also blamed on the recent restricting of the cyclone scale from a 10 point to a 5-point scale. When the cyclone was given the top 5 warning, people assumed it was just a mid-sized one that they dealt with often. This confusion and misinterpretation had a massive impact.
Possible discussion points:

- How do you ensure scales are understood?
- How do you define a disaster?
- What can media do to reach out to remote communities during the early warning phases?

Quiz answers

1. Vulnerability is a set of conditions which increases the susceptibility of the community to the impact of hazards
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: True. Vulnerabilities can take physical, social, economic, technical and environmental factors.

2. Landslides are made worse by forest cover.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: False. Forest cover can actually hold the earth together helping prevent landsides.

3. Cyclone intensity is measured on the Richter Scale
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: False. The Richter Scale measures the magnitude of an earthquake. Cyclone intensity in India is measured by category (based on its wind velocity).

4. Hazard refers to a natural or manmade event that causes sudden disruption of normal life and the economy.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: False. A hazard refers to a natural or manmade event that has the potential to cause sudden disruption.

5. Building collapse is one of the greatest causes of death during earthquakes.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: True. It is often said that earthquakes don’t kill people, buildings do.

6. The abnormal sale of family jewellery at inadequate prices can also be a warning sign of a drought.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: True. In a slow-onset emergency, the first signs are often economic.

7. A Tsunami consists of a series of waves and the first is not necessarily the most destructive.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: True. A tsunami is literally a series of huge waves. These are triggered when a large body of water is rapidly displaced. Landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions can all generate a tsunami.

8. The media plays a role only in early warning.
   
   [ ] True   [ ] False

   Answer: False. The media has an important role to play across the disaster cycle.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Simulation

Simulation scenario
Your editor has just returned from an international conference where there was much talk on ‘disaster reporting’. Now he wants to dig a little deeper and better understand the concept. Your team has been assigned to do background research on disasters. You are assigned the hazard of drought/earthquake/flood/cyclone to study (Assign one hazard to each group). You are also expected to analyse the role that media can play in disasters.

Tasks:
- Explain the key terms that relate to the hazard?
- Explain how the hazard is measured?
- Define how a hazard turns into a disaster.
- Explain the phases of the disaster cycle.
- List five ways the media can play a role

Reference: You may refer to the handout on ‘Understanding disasters’.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Background material

DISASTER TERMINOLOGY

General disaster-related terms

**Adaptation:** The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic effects to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Assessment:** A study or investigation in a target area to collect information on current conditions, to determine the extent of damage for the purpose of recommending an appropriate response or action.

**Building code:** A set of ordinances or regulations and associated standards intended to control aspects of the design, construction, materials, alteration and occupancy of structures that are necessary to ensure human safety and welfare, including resistance to collapse and damage.

**Climate Change**

(a) The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as: “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcing or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use”.

(b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”.

**Disaster risk:** The potential disaster losses, in terms of lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period.

**Disaster risk management:** The systematic process of using administrative directives, organisations and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

**Disaster risk reduction:** The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

**Food Security:** Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. This includes the requirements of adequate supply, stable supply and access to the supply (including adequate consumption, adequate income in relation to food prices and access to employment).

**Mitigation** has different meanings for practitioners in the climate change and disaster-management communities, often leading to confusion. For disaster management, mitigation focuses on structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.

**Preparedness** activities contribute to the pre-planned, timely and effective response of individuals and communities to reduce the impact of a natural hazard and deal with the consequences of a potential disaster.

**Prevention** integrates all the activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impact of hazards and the means to minimise related environmental, technological and biological disasters.
Recovery consists of decisions and actions taken after a disaster to restore or improve the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community.

**Tsunami**

An ocean wave produced by an event at sea, such as an earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption. These waves may reach enormous size and have been known to travel across entire oceans. Their effects can range from unnoticeable to devastating. Once generated a tsunami can travel at speeds greater than 800 kilometres an hour.

A tsunami is not a single wave but a series of waves (also known as a wave train). The first wave is not necessarily the most destructive.

**Inundation** is the maximum horizontal distance inland that a tsunami penetrates.

One of the warning signs of a tsunami is the retreating of the sea from the land. It seems like a spectacle to watch, but the sea instantly returns with a great energy. In fact, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the earthquake that generated the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami released the energy of 23,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs.

**Earthquake**

The shaking, rolling or sudden shock of the earth's surface. Earthquakes happen along fault lines in the earth's crust.

**Aftershocks**: Follow-up earthquakes that occur after the first earthquake and are usually smaller than the first one.

**MEASURING EARTHQUAKES**

**Modified Mercalli Scale**: The Modified Mercalli Scale measure the intensity of an earthquake (its effect on the Earth’s surface). It is based on observation of effects, rather than mathematics.

**Richter Scale**: The Richter magnitude scale (often shortened to Richter scale) was developed to assign a single number to quantify the energy released during an earthquake. It was created by Charles F. Richter in 1935.

The scale is a base-10 logarithmic scale. The magnitude is defined as the logarithm of the ratio of the amplitude of waves measured by a seismograph to arbitrary small amplitude. An earthquake that measures 5.0 on the Richter scale has a shaking amplitude 10 times larger than one that measures 4.0, and corresponds to a 31.6 times larger release of energy.

**Mw Scale**: The Moment Magnitude (Mw) scale is a newer scale to measure the size of an earthquake vis-a-vis the energy released. This was developed in 1979 to overcome the shortcomings of the historic Richter Scale. The Moment Magnitude Scale is also a logarithmic scale, with each number denoting a 30 or more powerful magnitude than the previous number. Most Western countries now follow the Mw scale, including USGS warnings.
The following table gives intensities that are typically observed at locations near the epicentre of earthquakes of different magnitudes; and the typical observations of the MM Scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magnitude (Richter scale)</th>
<th>Intensity (Modified Mercalli scale)</th>
<th>Typical Observations of MM scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 - 3.0</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I. Not felt except by a very few under especially favourable conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3.0 - 3.9                | II - III                            | II. Felt only by a few persons at rest, especially on upper floors of buildings.  
III. Felt quite noticeably by persons indoors, especially on upper floors of buildings. Many people do not recognise it as an earthquake. Standing motor cars may rock slightly. Vibrations similar to the passing of a truck. |
| 4.0 - 4.9                | IV - V                              | IV. Felt indoors by many, outdoors by few during the day. At night, some awakened. Dishes, windows, doors disturbed; walls make cracking sound. Sensation like heavy truck striking building. Standing motor cars rocked noticeably.  
V. Felt by nearly everyone; many awakened. Some dishes, windows broken. Unstable objects overturned. Pendulum clocks may stop. |
| 5.0 - 5.9                | VI - VII                            | VI. Felt by all, many frightened. Some heavy furniture moved; a few instances of fallen plaster. Damage slight.  
VII. Damage negligible in buildings of good design and construction; slight to moderate in well-built ordinary structures; considerable damage in poorly built or badly designed structures; some chimneys broken. |
| 6.0 - 6.9                | VII - IX                            | VIII. Damage slight in specially designed structures; considerable damage in ordinary substantial buildings with partial collapse. Damage great in poorly built structures. Fall of chimneys, factory stacks, columns, monuments, walls. Heavy furniture overturned.  
IX. Damage considerable in specially designed structures; well-designed frame structures thrown out of plumb. Damage great in substantial buildings, with partial collapse. Buildings shifted off foundations. |
| 7.0 and higher           | VIII or higher                      | X. Some well-built wooden structures destroyed; most masonry and frame structures destroyed with foundations. Rails bent.  
XI. Few, if any (masonry) structures remain standing. Bridges destroyed. Rails bent greatly.  
XII. Damage total. Lines of sight and level are distorted. Objects thrown into the air. |

Cyclone
A dangerous wind storm with high wind speeds, circular patterns, swathe of a few hundred kilometres and sustained duration of a few days. Also known as a typhoon in the western Pacific Ocean and China Sea and hurricane in the Atlantic.

Eye
A name used for the centre of a cyclone, it is the point where the storm rotates in a counterclockwise direction. In the eye of a storm, the winds do not blow.

Formation of Cyclones
The right place and the right sea temperature are needed for a cyclone to form. The place is usually within +/-5 degree to 15 degree Latitude from the equator over the ocean. The surface temperature of the ocean/sea needs to be 27 degrees or above. A low air pressure system (depression) with convection currents starts to gather clouds.

Warning systems
Pre-cyclone Watch: Issued when a depression forms over the Bay of Bengal irrespective of its distance from the coast and is likely to affect Indian coast in future. The pre-cyclone watch is issued by the name of Director General of Meteorology and is issued at least 72 hours in advance of the commencement of adverse weather. It is issued at least once a day.

Cyclone alert: Issued at least 48 hours before the commencement of the bad weather when the cyclone is located beyond 500 Km from the coast. It is issued every three hours.

Cyclone warning: Issued at least 24 hours before the commencement of the bad weather when the cyclone is located within 500 Km from the coast. Information about time/place of landfall is indicated in the bulletin. Confidence in estimation increases as the cyclone comes closer to the coast

Post landfall outlook: This is issued 12 hours before the cyclone landfall, when the cyclone is located within 200 Km from the coast. More accurate & specific information about time/place of landfall and associated bad weather indicated in the bulletin. In addition, the interior distraction is likely to be affected due to the cyclone are warned in this bulletin.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Wind Speed (Kmph)</th>
<th>Storm Surge (metre)</th>
<th>Potential Damage</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Deep Depression     |                   |                     | *Minor damage*  
  Minor damage to loose/ unsecured structures  
  Some breaches in Kutcha road due to flooding  
  Minor damage to Banana trees and coastal agriculture due to salt spray. Damage to ripe paddy crops  
  Very rough seas. Sea waves about 4-6 m high. Minor damage to kutcha embankments | Fishermen advised not to venture into sea |
| Cyclonic storm      | 62 - 87 kmph      |                     | *Minor to Moderate damage*  
  Damage to thatched huts  
  Minor damage to power and communication lines due to collapse of tree branches. Major damage to Kutcha and minor damage to Pucca roads. Some damage to paddy crops, Banana, Papaya trees and orchards.  
  High to very high sea waves about 6-9 m high. Sea water inundation in low lying areas after erosion of Kutcha embankments | Fishermen advised not to venture into sea |
| Severe cyclonic storm| 88 - 117 kmph | Up to 1.5 metres | *Moderate damage*  
  Major damage to thatched houses / huts.  
  Roof tops may blow off. Unattached metal sheets may fly. Minor damage to power and communication lines.  
  Major damage to Kutcha and some damage to Pucca roads. Flooding of escape routes. Breaking of tree branches, uprooting of large avenue trees.  
  Moderate damage to Banana and Papaya trees.  
  Phenomenal seas with wave heights of 9-14 m. Movement in motor boats unsafe. Major damage to coastal crops.  
  Storm surge damage to salt pans / embankments. Inundation up to 5 kms in some areas. | Fishermen advised not to venture into sea  
  Coastal hut dwellers advised to move to safer places. Other people in the affected areas are to remain indoors. |
| Very severe cyclonic storm | 118 - 167 kmph | Up to 2 metres | *Large*  
  Total destruction of thatched houses/ extensive damage to kutcha houses. Some damage to pucca houses. Potential threat from flying objects.  
  Bending/ uprooting of power and communication poles.  
  Major damage to kutcha and pucca roads. Flooding of escape routes.  
  Minor disruption of railways, overhead power lines and signalling systems.  
  Widespread damage to standing crops, plantations and orchards. Uprooting of trees. | Fishermen not to venture into sea.  
  Evacuation from coastal areas needs to be mobilised. People advised to remain indoors. Judicious regulation of rail and road traffic needed. |
**UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cyclone Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Wind Speed</strong></th>
<th><strong>Wave Height</strong></th>
<th><strong>Damage</strong></th>
<th><strong>Actions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very severe cyclonic storm</td>
<td>168-221 kmph</td>
<td>2 – 5 metres</td>
<td>Extensive damage to all types of kutch houses and some damage to pucca structures. Potential threat from flying objects. Extensive uprooting of power and communication poles. Disruption of rail / road link at several places. Extensive damage to standing crops, plantations and orchards. Blowing down of Palm and Coconut trees. Uprooting of large bushy trees. Phenomenal seas with wave heights of more than 14m. Movement in motor boats and small ships not advisable. Inundation may extend up to 10-15 kms over specific areas.</td>
<td>Fishermen are not to venture into the sea. Evacuation from coastal areas is essential. Diversion / suspension of rail traffic may be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super cyclonic storm</td>
<td>Over 222 kmph</td>
<td>Over 5 metres</td>
<td>Catastrophic damage Extensive damage to non-concrete residential and industrial building. Structural damage to concrete structure. Air full of large projectiles. Power and communication poles uprooted and total disruption of supply. Extensive damage to kutcha roads and some damage to poorly repaired pucca roads. Large scale submerging of coastal roads due to flooding and sea water inundation. Flooding of escape routes. Major damage to bridges, signals and railway tracks Total destruction of standing crops / orchards. Uprooting of large trees and stripping of tree barks. Phenomenal wave heights of more than 14 metres. All shipping activity unsafe. Extensive damage to port installations. Inundation up to 40 kms in specific areas and extensive beach erosion.</td>
<td>Fishermen are not to venture into the sea. Large scale evacuations are needed. Rail and road traffic needs to be totally stopped in vulnerable areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Indian Meteorological Department, [http://www.imd.gov.in/section/nhac/dynamic/faq/FAQP.htm#q51](http://www.imd.gov.in/section/nhac/dynamic/faq/FAQP.htm#q51)
Flood
Flash floods result from intense storms or cloudbursts that drop large amounts of rain within a short time in a specific region or its upstream catchment area. They can also result from the sudden release of water from dams. Flash floods usually occur with little to no warning and can reach full peak in just a few minutes.

Coastal floods usually occur along coastal areas. When there are hurricanes and tropical storms that produce heavy rains or giant tidal waves created by volcanoes or earthquakes, ocean water can be driven onto coastal areas.

River floods are the most common type of flooding. When the actual amount of water in a river is larger than the channel can hold, it overflows its banks. This may be caused by a breach in a dam, snow melt or heavy monsoon rain.

Urban flooding is caused due to uneven distribution of rain fall coupled with mindless urbanization which encroaches upon and fills up natural drainage channels and urban lakes to use the high-value urban land for buildings.¹

Most flood related deaths are due to flash floods, building collapse and electrocution. Just six inches of moving flood water can knock a person down.

Landslide
A geological phenomenon which includes a wide range of ground movement such as rock falls, failure of slopes and shallow debris flows.

Landslides are usually caused by rain, snow thaws or other forces increasing the top material weight. They can also be triggered by earthquakes or crashing waves. Underground landslides called submarine landslides cause tidal waves and damage to coastal areas.

In fragile hillsides and ecologically sensitive areas, even unmindful road development can be a trigger for landslides. Hillsides are dislodged during the process and trigger slides that keep growing with time. Deforestation further loosens the soil, leading to increased erosion and greater chances of landslides during rains or earthquakes.

Drought
An extended period of deficient rainfall relative to the average for a region.

There are generally three types of conditions that are referred to as drought:

Meteorological drought is brought about when there is a prolonged period with less than average rainfall.

Agricultural drought occurs when there is insufficient soil moisture for an average crop.

Hydrological drought is brought about when the water reserves available in sources such as aquifers, lakes and reservoirs falls below the statistical average.

Desertification is the process whereby productive land, in arid and semi arid regions, becomes economically unproductive. The steady and gradual expansion of the land to aridity means lack of water for normal life and activities such as agriculture.

Aridity results when, in any given region, the intake of water from rains or rivers is exceeded by the loss of water through evapo-transpiration.

Identifying drought
The Indian Meteorological Department defines ‘drought’ as a situation occurring in any area where the annual rainfall is less than 75% of the normal rainfall. Besides evident shrinkage of water resources, crop failure and health problems, other symptoms are possible warning signs:

Droughts themselves do not cause desertification. They are common in arid and semi-arid areas and can be recovered from when rain returns if they are well-managed.

It is a myth that people die of thirst during a drought. Deaths are caused by acute malnutrition since crops fail and livestock die.

**Famine** is the lack of food over large geographical areas sufficiently long and severe to cause widespread disease and death from starvation. There is widespread food shortage leading to significant rise in regional death rates. Drought is one of the causes that lead to famine. However, famines are presently uncommon in India, though they were common before independence.

**DISASTER CONCEPTS**

**Vulnerability profile of India**
- Almost 58.6 per cent of the landmass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity.
- Over 40 million hectares (12 percent of the land) are prone to floods and river erosion.
- Of the 7,516 km long coastline, close to 5,700 km is prone to cyclones and tsunamis.
- 68 per cent of the cultivable area is vulnerable to drought.
- All hilly areas are at risk from landslides and avalanches.

The disaster management cycle

A **disaster** happens when a “**hazard**” (earthquake, flood, drought, landslide etc) coincides with a ‘**vulnerable**’ situation (cities or villages in earthquake/flood prone zones, impoverished people and others). This is often written as:

\[
\text{Disaster}^3 = \text{Hazard}^4 + \text{Vulnerability}^5.
\]

Without both these conditions, a disaster would not occur. For example, a hurricane at sea affects nobody and volcanic activity in Hawaii is a tourist spectacle. Therefore development actions need to be targeted at reducing vulnerability (social, physical, economic) amongst those who are the most vulnerable.

Mitigation and preparedness measures are actions which are taken before a disaster occurs to reduce vulnerability. It is like preventive health care. Whilst most efforts are directed towards post disaster relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation (where the need is all too visible), mitigation and preparedness are often the ignored stage of the cycle of disaster management (the ‘invisible’ side to disaster). There is often little interest or political will to take measures to prepare for a disaster that hasn’t happened yet. Yet failures to address this can result in enormous losses of life and livelihoods.

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3 Disaster is defined as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a society causing widespread human, material, or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected society to cope using its own resources.”

4 Hazard is “a phenomenon that poses a threat to people, structures or economic assets and which may cause a disaster. It could be either manmade or naturally occurring in our environment.”

5 Vulnerability is defined as “the extent to which a community, structure, service, or geographic area is likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impact of a particular hazard, on account of its nature, construction and proximity to hazardous terrain or a disaster prone area”
**Disaster preparedness**: This works on the assumption that disasters will happen and that measures can be implemented to reduce risk. Preparedness therefore concerns immediate measures to reduce risk just before, during and after a disaster. It is defined as “measures which enable governments, organisations, communities and individuals to respond rapidly and effectively to disaster situations.” Preparedness measures may include:

- Risk assessment (to pinpoint to which measures to implement); including secondary and tertiary hazards
- Early warning systems and community-based preparedness methods
- Safeguarding life through appropriate shelters
- Resources and emergency kits in anticipation of need
- Maintaining emergency rosters and evacuation plans
- Emergency information and communication systems
- Capacity and resources; including institutional arrangements and organisations for disaster management
- Coordination mechanisms; including a responsibility matrix
- Training to ensure adequate emergency response capacity (particularly amongst the local populace) and maintenance of preparedness levels
- Public education and preparedness campaigns
- Standard operating procedures and checklists
- Financial resources

**Disaster mitigation** involves implementing long-term risk reduction measures. These approaches can be categorised as development projects. These include:

- Policies such as land regulation, low income housing schemes, environmental regulations and national food/grain security policies.
- Training of policy makers, NGO staff and communities
- Identification of vulnerable groups
- Information systems for monitoring, documentation and dissemination
- Integrating local disaster management technical and planning principles into educational disciplines such as construction, architecture, urban planning, agriculture and others.

**Disaster response**: Disaster response work includes any actions taken in the midst of or immediately following an emergency, including efforts to save lives and to prevent further property damage. Ideally, disaster response involves putting already established disaster preparedness plans into motion. Typically, this phase of the disaster management life cycle draws the most attention.

- Short term provision of emergency services during a slow onset emergency (e.g. conflict, drought) or immediately after a sudden-onset disaster (e.g. earthquake, industrial accident).
- High risk of mortality.
- Affected population are often the first responders.
- Immediate relief focuses on saving lives e.g. search and rescue, critical medical care, food, drinking water.
- Ongoing response focuses on reducing vulnerability and meeting basic needs e.g. family tracing, food, nutrition, health care, sanitation, water, shelter.

**Disaster recovery**: Disaster recovery happens after damages have been assessed and involves actions to return the affected community to its pre-disaster state or better – and ideally to make it less vulnerable to future risk. Risk identification includes understanding the nature of hazards as well as understanding the nature of vulnerabilities. Subsequent efforts may range from physical upgrades to education, training, and public awareness campaigns

- Longer-term support in restoring ‘normal life’.
UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

- Local ownership and participation of affected populations is critical to recovery.
- Important in linking humanitarian activity with longer term development plans.
- Rehabilitation focuses on public and social services, livelihoods, education and making changes needed due to the disaster impact e.g. protection measures.
- Reconstruction seeks to re-establish and improve infrastructure, housing and pre-disaster services and social conditions.

Community-based disaster management
A community themselves are the first responders to any disaster situation. A community in the context of disaster management can be defined as a group of people that may share one or more things in common, like living in the same environment, similar disaster risk exposure or being affected by the same disaster. They best understand the requirements and assets for coping with a disaster situation. Thereby, community based disaster management allows for a community to strengthen their skills and build on their coping capacity to become an effective first responder. It aims to help the community take a lead position in the disaster management process. The important need for community based involvement is because they are involved in the sustainability of their community and surroundings. There are also the best judge of the opportunities and vulnerabilities of the area. Community Based Disaster Management is a process in which communities at risk are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks in order to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities. This process allows for the needs of the community to be catered to as the initiative and the method for disaster management is being done efficiently by the community itself. This process is effective not only because a community is resilient enough to respond to a disaster situation, but it can also take the lead in preparedness and mitigation measures. Also, CBDM also allows the community to implement and monitor such measures. Thereby, CBDM empowers the community to address the root causes of vulnerabilities by transforming social, economic and political structures.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The administrative response
In the federal set-up of India, the responsibility to formulate the Governments response to a natural calamity is essentially that of the concerned State government. However, Government of India, with its resources, physical and financial, does provide the needed help and assistance to buttress relief efforts in the wake of major disasters. The dimensions of the response at the level of Government of India are determined in accordance with the existing policy of financing the relief expenditure and keeping in view the factors like: The gravity of a natural calamity; the scale of the relief operation necessary; and the requirements of Central assistance for augmenting the financial resources at the disposal of the State Government.

The States have Relief Commissioners who are in charge of the relief measures in the wake of disasters in their respective states. In the absence of the Relief Commissioner, the Chief Secretary or an Officer nominated by him is in overall charge of the Relief operations in the concerned State. The State Headquarters has, in addition, a number of Secretaries head the various Departments handling specific subjects under the overall supervision and co-ordination of the chief Secretary. At the level of the State Government, disasters are usually the responsibility of the Revenue Department or the Relief Department. While important policy decisions are taken at the State Headquarters by the Cabinet of the State headed by the Chief Minister, day-to-day decisions involving policy matters are taken or exercised by the Secretary in the Department.

States are further divided into districts, each headed by a District Collector (also known as District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner). It is the District Collector who is the focal point at the district level for directing, supervising and monitoring relief measures for disaster and for preparation of district level plans.
Policy framework
Disaster Management Act, 2005
The Disaster Management Act, 2005, laid down institutional, legal, financial and coordination mechanisms at all levels (National, state and district). These institutions are expected to work in close harmony. It has emphasised on taking a paradigm shift from a relief-centred approach to a more proactive one with greater emphasis on preparedness, prevention and mitigation.

The Act established a National Disaster Management Authority to lay down policies on disaster management; a State Disaster Management Authorities that lay down the State disaster management policy; a District Disaster Management Authorities that approve and lays down guidelines to be followed by departments at the district level; and gives DDMAs an important role to play at the local and grass root level in order to encourage Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction.

National Policy on Disaster Management
The National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM) was approved by Government of India on October 22, 2009. The policy envisages a safe and disaster-resilient India. The policy covers all aspects of disaster management including institutional and legal arrangements, financial arrangements, disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, techno-legal regime, response, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery, capacity development, knowledge management, research and development. It focuses on the areas where action is needed and the institutional mechanism through which the action can be channelled. It also looks at differently-abled persons, women, children and other disadvantaged groups in terms of formulating relief and rehabilitation measures.

Climate Change Action Plan
The National Action Plan on Climate Change was released in June 2008. It identifies eight core national missions running through 2017. The plan identifies “measures that promote our development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively.” The eight missions include:

- National Solar Mission
- National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
- National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
- National Mission for Sustaining The Himalayan Ecosystem
- National Water Mission
- National Mission for Green India
- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
- National Mission for Strategic Knowledge On Climate Change
MEDIA’S ROLE
The movement of information is extremely important in a disaster situation, which is why the role of media and communications is very crucial in such situations. There needs to be a constant flow of information to cover the information needs of various stakeholders. To begin with, the information needs of the people affected by disasters should be met. Such information actually helps the condition of the victims which is of supreme importance. Such information is usually of facilities on the ground that could help them make their condition better. Further media coverage of disasters is a direct dissemination of information to the government, donors and the people at large. This coverage actually shapes opinions of the people on the ground situation. In fact such coverage also influences donor policy and various government policies for the affected region. Thereby, it is essential that the coverage of disaster situations in done efficiently and accurately.

- The information needs of the people affected by disasters should be met. This could include information on aid distribution, safety measures, and relief.
- Media coverage of a disaster can certainly influence donor policy and government policy on their decision making criteria for the area.
- Journalists should also keep in mind that the proliferation on New Media is increasingly being used even at the site of a disaster situation for flow of information.

What key role can Media play at each stage?

**Preparation**: Early warning; educating the public on various disaster components; reporting on initiatives and plans to address vulnerabilities.

**Response**: Immediate impact on affected areas; playing a role in projecting core needs of communities and in informing affected people of where they can access aid; and tracking ongoing initiatives.

**Recovery**: Accountability in usage of aid; lessons to be learnt; success stories; sustainable construction practices and material usage in recovery; alternate livelihood options.

**Mitigation**: Reporting on and influencing larger policy and development agendas; connections to climate change. Mainstreaming DRR discussion into topics such as water, construction, food security, health, livelihood and women and child welfare.

**Further reading**:

Further reading on scales of disasters, disaster terminology, disaster cycles and media roles can be found at:

National Institute for Disaster Management – [www.nidm.gov.in](http://www.nidm.gov.in)

National Disaster Management Authority – [www.ndma.gov.in](http://www.ndma.gov.in)

Indian Meteorological Department – [www.imd.gov.in](http://www.imd.gov.in)

QUIZ 2

1. Vulnerability is a set of conditions which increases the susceptibility of the community to the impact of hazards.
   - True
   - False

2. Landslides are made worse by forest cover.
   - True
   - False

3. Cyclone intensity is measured on the Richter Scale.
   - True
   - False

4. Hazard refers to a natural or manmade event that causes sudden disruption of normal life and the economy.
   - True
   - False

5. Building collapse is one of the greatest causes of death during earthquakes.
   - True
   - False

6. The abnormal sale of family jewellery at inadequate prices can also be a warning sign of a drought.
   - True
   - False

7. A Tsunami consists of a series of waves and the first is not necessarily the most destructive.
   - True
   - False

8. The media plays a role only in early warning.
   - True
   - False
LEARNING UNIT 2: ACCURACY
RESOURCES PERSON NOTE - Accuracy

Objective: Ensure fact-checking and appropriate terminology and stay in context.

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 hour). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Go around and have each group present their headlines and story ideas. Have plenary discussion and critique of each group’s story. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenarios
The four simulation scenarios below cover the hazards of cyclone, earthquake, flood and drought. The one appropriate to the context, location and priorities of the target audience can be selected.

Scenario – Cyclone
The very severe cyclonic storm that was approaching Surakshit Pradesh has made landfall between G and H with severe winds of speed over 200 kmph and accompanying storm surge of up to 5 meters, which in certain places have travelled up to 30 km inland. It is reported that L, H E and G districts are severely affected, while I, C and F are affected. The coastal areas are worst hit, with reports of widespread deaths and blowing away of houses. Transportation and communication links to most coastal areas are disrupted.

Scenario – Earthquake
A major earthquake has struck district A in Surakshit Pradesh. This hill station is popular with tourists. Initial reports say it has a magnitude of 7.5 on the Richter scale. There is also chaos across the three districts surrounding the epicentre (B, C and F). Rumours are spiralling that the death toll could be over 20,000. Homes and buildings across the area including the two major hospitals have been devastated. Landslides are continuing, cutting off access to some areas. The cold weather is causing additional problems.

*Where needed, the earthquake simulation can be relocated to the coastline where instead of landslides; there will be a tsunami threat.

Scenario– Flood
Three rivers flow through I district; two of which are connected to a large dam. The extreme monsoon rain has caused the rivers to overflow their banks. At the same time, the dam has also been breached. Large-scale flooding has occurred across the district and the bordering districts are also affected. Lakhs of people are stranded in cut-off villages. Families here survive mainly on subsistence farming, rearing of livestock and daily labour jobs. No numbers have yet been shared with the media on how many people are affected or lost their lives.

Scenario- Drought
There have been increasing reports of farmer suicides in the state. Rumours put the deaths at over 100. Taking cognisance, the government has declared M, K and J districts as drought-affected. A quick search reveals that these areas also have large minority populations. Yet no other details from the government are forthcoming.
Group discussion and examples
Following the simulation, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

- Background information on affected communities needs to go beyond boilerplate descriptions and include nuances.
- Facts and figures change dramatically in the first month after a disaster. This must be conveyed clearly. What do you do when there is no validated information or statistics available? Where rumours are swirling; each one with totally contradictory numbers? In such cases, how and what do you broadcast/publish? What kinds of caveats should be included?
- The choice of one word can affect the entire tone and message of a story.

Where there is time and the energy of the participants is conducive, you can facilitate the ‘word association’ game to drive home this point. Pick a few of the common words used in disaster reporting – survivor vs. victim, looter vs. scavenger, development vs. construction – or any others from the participant’s headlines or your experience. Have the group associate emotions and feelings with the word.

- Staying in context (both with visuals and with the overall story) when you have not yet visited the area.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local and appropriate to the context. One illustrative example is given below:

One word can change the story
During Hurricane Katrina there were media reports which referred to the African-American community as ‘looters’ in their distressed attempt to take food and supplies. However, the white community doing the same was not viewed in the same light. This kind of discrimination in reporting was also a case in point of insensitivity. It sparked tensions and led to law-and-order problems where there really weren’t any.

Possible discussion points:

- How do you keep from stereotyping one community?
- There are many words such as ‘looting’ which may be technically accurate in a situation. However, the perceptions attached to them give them a different connotation. How do you take calls in these situations? What are other words you can think of that may fall into this category?
Quiz answers
1. The background information of a community does not influence a disaster story.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: False. Background information on a community provides context that changes the entire story.

2. Numbers should be reported even if they are not verified.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: There is no clear cut answer to this. When unverified numbers are being reported, there must be clear riders about where the numbers have come from and what kind of variations are possible.

3. Visuals should be as dramatic as possible.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: False. Visuals must depict the reality overall. Remember, the people watching these reports will take these visuals to be the reality. Picking only the most extreme case and showcasing it as the overall reality changes the entire story.

4. It doesn’t matter where the footage/photo was taken as long as it relates to the story.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: False. The footage/photo must be of the place/person that is being covered. If using canned footage or other photos, these must be clearly identified as such.

5. The word ‘hazard’ can be used interchangeably with ‘disaster’.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: False. A hazard is not a disaster. Hazard + vulnerability = disaster.

6. A flood is a natural disaster.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: False. There is no such thing as a ‘natural disaster’. The repeated use of this term makes it seem like there is nothing we can do to prevent these and that we have no responsibility for it.

7. The choice of a word can change the perception of the audience.
   
   ![True/False]

   Answer: True. The use of a single word such as ‘victim’ as opposed to ‘survivor’ or the word ‘looter’ paints a picture in the audience’s mind.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Simulation

Scenario – Drought

There have been increasing reports of farmer suicides in the state. Rumours put the deaths at over 100. Taking cognisance, the government has declared M, K and J districts as drought-affected. A quick search reveals that these areas also have large minority populations. Yet no other details from the government are forthcoming.

You are assigned to write/produce the breaking story.

OR

Scenario – Flood

Three rivers flow through I district; two of which are connected to a large dam. The extreme monsoon rain has caused the rivers to overflow their banks. At the same time, the dam has also been breached. Large-scale flooding has occurred across the district and the bordering districts are also affected. Lakhs of people are stranded in cut-off villages. Families here survive mainly on subsistence farming, rearing of livestock and daily labour jobs. No numbers have yet been shared with the media on how many people are affected or lost their lives.

You are assigned to write/produce the breaking story.

OR

Scenario – Earthquake

A major earthquake has struck A district in Surakshit Pradesh. This hill station is popular with tourists. Initial reports say it has a magnitude of 7.5 on the Richter scale. There is also chaos across the three districts surrounding the epicentre (B, C and F). Rumours are spiralling that the initial death toll could be over 20,000. Homes and buildings across the area including the two major hospitals have been devastated. Landslides are continuing, cutting off access to some areas. The cold weather is causing additional problems.

You are assigned to write/produce the breaking story.

OR

Scenario – Cyclone

The very severe cyclonic storm that was approaching Surakshit Pradesh has made landfall between G and H with severe winds of speed over 200 kmph and accompanying storm surge of up to 5 meters, which in certain places have travelled up to 30 km inland. It is reported that L, H E and G districts are severely affected, while I, C and F are affected. The coastal areas are worst hit, with reports of widespread deaths and blowing away of houses. Transportation and communication links to most coastal areas are disrupted.

You are assigned to write/produce the breaking story.

Tasks

- Put together a headline for the story
- Identify at least three key pieces of information that the story must cover.
- Think about the visual. What will you show? Where will it be sourced from? How will it be captioned? *(Where possible, search for a representative image that demonstrates the flavour and tone of what you would choose and explain using that as a base.)*

Reference: Refer to the ‘Surakshit Pradesh: State Profile’. If any background data/information is not available, you may make appropriate assumptions with justification.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - SURAKSHIT PRADESH: STATE PROFILE

Background

Surakshit Pradesh is a multi-hazard prone state in India. With nine rivers crisscrossing the State, it has a long history of devastating floods; often a yearly occurrence. The district also lies in a highly active seismic zone V. Despite the massive rainfall, parts of the district have also intermittently faced drought. Its coastal areas are the ones that have seen some amount of development in recent decades, and as such, these areas are more populous. Being on the coast these very areas are cyclone and storm surge prone. The inland areas are sparsely populated, and primarily inhabited by tribal communities. These are declared backward areas and are plagued with poverty and drought. The north-west of the state has mountains that provide highly sought-after vacation spots that attract people from across the country.

It has three major urban centres, of which the largest is the State capital that is located right on the banks of the widest river. This city is powered by a hydro-electric power plant, also the largest source of employment in that area.

However, only 20% of the population lives in the towns. The rest of the State is dependant mostly upon small-scale agriculture, fishing, livestock rearing and local handicrafts as sources of income.

It has a large marginalised community. Scheduled Castes make up about 14% of the population and Scheduled Tribes 1%. There are several other groups fighting for inclusion in the OBC list and this often becomes a source of conflict.

Surakshit Pradesh at a glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child population (0-6)</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population below poverty line</td>
<td>21 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of child laborers</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender ratio</td>
<td>950 (F) / 1000 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
<td>54/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality rate</td>
<td>740/ 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population , access to safe water</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation coverage</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita income</td>
<td>Rs 3066/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Household Income</td>
<td>Rs 17,208/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area</td>
<td>155,707 Sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded forest area</td>
<td>59555 Sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual vegetation cover</td>
<td>47m205 Sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated area</td>
<td>59 Lakh ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rain fall</td>
<td>150 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded forest area</td>
<td>59555 Sq. km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The percentage of poor is very high.
• A large number of households live in temporary houses erected along the riverbanks and coastline.
• The state has low household income as well as low per capita income.
• The number of electrified villages is among the lowest in the country.

Health
Infant Mortality Rate = 103/1000
Death Rate = 10.8/1000
Birth Rate = 27.8/1000

Agriculture and forests
Main Rivers are Kamla, Kareh, Balan, Bhutahi Balan, Gehuan, Supen, Trishula, Jeevachh, Koshi and Adhwar Group.
Geographical Area = 15571 000 ha
Forest Area = 5722 000 ha
Net Shown Area = 6210 000 ha
Tree Crops & groves (not included in NSA = 715 000 ha
Permanent Pasture = 514 000 ha
Land to Non-Agri uses = 858 000 ha
Uncultivable Land = 553 000 ha
Gross Cropped Area = 9668 000 ha

Fishery: Production of Fish:
Fresh Water source = 121941 M. T.
Brackish Water Source = 12903 M. T.
Marine Source = 123199 M. T.
Total Production = 258043 M. T.

Rainfall
The rainfall varies between 900mm and 1300 mm; with an average rainfall of 1,273.2 mm. The high flood level is 54.017 m.

Recent occurrence of Natural Calamities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Calamity</th>
<th>Years of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
There hasn’t been a major earthquake in recent history, though the threat of the ‘next big one’ happening in the region is always a concern.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Accuracy

Background information on the area and community

Background information on geographic areas and affected communities (especially more remote areas) must go beyond boilerplate descriptions and include nuances. Things to consider include:

- Vulnerability profile and past disasters
- Major livelihoods and way of life
- Economic background
- Social mix of the community
- Types of buildings (construction type and materials)

Facts and figures

Facts and figures change rapidly in the weeks after a disaster event. Often, there are conflicting rumours of the facts and figures. This need to be looked at carefully to ensure that misinformation is not being spread. For in the age of social media, rumours can spread like wildfire. There is a danger of these wrong messages then affecting perceptions of the disaster and ultimately aid.

Things to consider include:
- When there are many different facts and figures, ensure that you clarify which source you are using.
- Where there is misinformation, what can be done to clarify it?

Word choice

There are many words that are commonly used or used interchangeably. This changes the perspective of the audience and can often result in sending across the wrong message.

Some key examples include:

Hazard vs. disaster: A hazard is a flood, drought, cyclone, landslide, earthquake or tsunami. A hazard turns into a disaster due to (mostly manmade) vulnerabilities. Overtime, the continuous interchanged use of these terms results in a perception that there is nothing we can do.

Natural disaster: There is no such thing as a ‘natural disaster’. There are natural hazards, but they turn into disasters due to human action. Again, implication over time becomes that this is ‘natural’; that there is nothing we can do to prevent it.

Climate change vs. changing climate: Climate change is a scientific term that refers to actual degree change in the average temperature of the planet. Changing climate can refer to any unusual weather activity that has occurred in the area.

Victim vs. survivor: Depending on the context, the use of one of these words over the other can change the tone of the reporting.

Looter: The word looter is very strong. In a desperate situation, painting people in this light may result in a skewed perception for the audience.

Riot: Often when food or relief distribution is being done, it becomes difficult to control the massive crowd trying to access this aid. However, the use of the word ‘riot’ suggested a law-and-order problem that may blow it out of proportion. The word should be used with caution.

Backward vs. poor or marginalised: Backward has a socially imposed implication which is often derogatory. Poor is a purely economic description and marginalised can be used to refer to groups that live on the fringes of that community and are generally left out.

Illiterate vs. ignorant: Illiterate refers only to not being able to read and write. Ignorant or uneducated has a much broader social perception. The use of these words interchangeably or together subconsciously makes the assumption that all illiterate people are ignorant.
ACCURACY

Charity vs. aid: Charity has an implication of something being handed out. Aid still conjures an image of helping the community help themselves. At a time when communities need to be empowered, these subtle differences can make a difference.

Development vs. infrastructure construction: These words are used interchangeably so often that it is now almost taken for granted that all new construction is development. Is it really though?

Change vs. progress: Again, change and progress are used interchangeably in a way that signifies that all change is progress. Is it really?

Staying in context
Areas that are hard to reach are sometimes portrayed through canned footage or represented by other areas. One story is generalised to represent the entire affected area without widespread study. This kind of reporting can again influence the way the disaster is viewed and the aid that is given to the area. Keep all visuals, footage and stories in context by identifying specific villages and people that are being reported on and by clearly labelling all representative footage.
ACCURACY

QUIZ 3

1. The background information of a community does not influence the disaster story.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

2. Numbers should be reported even if they are not verified.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

3. Visuals should be as dramatic as possible.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

4. It doesn’t matter where the footage/photo was taken as long as it relates to the story.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

5. The word ‘hazard’ can be used interchangeably with ‘disaster’.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

6. A flood is a natural disaster.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

7. The choice of a word can change the perception of the audience.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False
LEARNING UNIT 3: SAFETY
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE - Safety

Objective: Understand principles and guidelines of safety

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 hour). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Have plenary discussion of the suggested actions. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenarios
Your team is assigned to go to the field. You have very little time to plan and prepare. There is a big bag filled with various items in your office. You can only pick seven items to take with you.

1. Rope
2. Shaving mirror
3. Empty water bottle
4. Match sticks
5. Candles
6. Whistle
7. Radio
8. Batteries
9. Blanket
10. Biscuits and dry rations
11. Torch
12. Chlorine tablets
13. Notebook and pen
14. Cell phone + SIMS
15. GPS
16. Camera
17. Laptop with datacard
18. Umbrella + raingear
19. Warm jacket
20. Mosquito repellent
21. Water bottles
22. Sleeping bag
23. Medicines
24. Bandages

Write the items on a big chart. Have each participant think of their 7 items. Go around the room and have them read their lists. Keep tabulating the votes against each item. At the end, discuss which items had the most votes and which got none. Have people picked the right items for the disaster they are going into?

Points to consider:

- In the hills, you can usually find drinkable water. With a little effort, you can identify a stream close to the source that is unpolluted. In many places, this is even labelled in some way by the local community.
- In a cyclone and flood situation, water is a major concern because it will be contaminated. Carrying empty water bottles and chlorine tablets may be more useful than only full ones. Filled water bottles will soon run out and there is a limit to the amount of weight you can carry.
- Seemingly innocuous items have their own uses. When lost or trapped in a heavily wooded area, there is a chance that even helicopters will not be able to spot you. People have used mirrors to reflect the sunlight and attract attention.
- What is the time of year and the prevailing weather conditions?

Three lines of thinking will go into picking what you will take:

- What items will aid you to do your work (the whole reason you are going)?
- What will help keep you healthy and safe (especially considering the many unknowns)?
- What do you need to help you help others (in case you can)?

Part 2
Two day after your team reaches Surakshit Pradesh, you have done a couple of initial stories and are trying to figure out where your next location should be. The central town is packed with people trying to reach the main distribution centre. You have been travelling non-stop and are constantly
SAFETY

seeing scenes of death and destruction. You are worried about your colleague. He is not very communicative, and has stopped eating altogether. After a particularly heart-wrenching scene of a young child lying dead, he has started to mumble to himself all the time. Your concern is met only with a stony ‘I’m fine’.

What do you do?

Tasks:

- Identify two immediate actions
- What (if anything) do you report to your bosses?
- How do you ensure that he stays fit throughout the reporting time?

Group discussion and examples

Following the simulation, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

- **Precautionary measures**: Media teams which go into disaster situations unprepared only amplify the problems. Often resources and help intended for the locals get diverted to helping the journalists. Teams on the ground must be trained and have appropriate equipment.
- **Dealing with stress**: Even those with disaster reporting experience can sometimes be overwhelmed by the situation. Having measures in place to help deal with this is essential.
- **Safety of the community**: When dealing with sensitive topics, always ensure that people’s safety is not compromised.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local where possible and appropriate to the context. One illustrative example is given below:

Ensuring psychological support for journalists

In countries across this world, there are often norms and safety regulations for war correspondents. However, similar norms have rarely been applied for disaster situations. This is slowly changing. Both the BBC and Reuters now offer Trauma Risk Management (TRiM). First developed for the military, TRiM is a peer support system, which teaches non-medical people how to spot the signs of distress in others. This is a system where the colleagues on field or within the system are trained to see whether their peers are experiencing flashbacks, drinking heavily or not sleeping. These reactions are normal at first, but, if not addressed, can develop into post-traumatic stress disorder.

Possible discussion points:

- How do you keep yourself safe in an unpredictable situation?
- What do you do when you are a stringer or freelancer and have no backing?
Quiz Answers
1. A journalist working in a drought prone zone still needs to be trained on flood safety measures.

   [ ] True  [ ] False

Answer: True. It is critical to understand safety measures of all hazards. Many are inter-connected and a narrow focus will not suffice.

2. The best way to ensure your safety is to align with the local leadership.

   [ ] True  [ ] False

Answer: False. Politically affiliating yourself can alienate you from many in the community.

3. Your report can affect the safety of the community.

   [ ] True  [ ] False

Answer: True. Many times, even unknowingly, a report triggers issues or sparks problems. This could be for a particular individual or for a certain group within the community. Particularly in conflict zones or in very volatile areas where divisions are common, double-checking what you say is important.

4. Journalists never need counselling after being in a disaster situation.

   [ ] True  [ ] False

Answer: False. Often, the immensity of death and destruction is difficult for people to process and deal with. It is important to have back-end systems that help them cope.

5. All possible risks are locally known so they are easy to assess.

   [ ] True  [ ] False

Answer: False. Particularly in the aftermath of a disaster, but also generally, there are many issues that can crop up at any time. It is essential to expect the unexpected and be prepared to deal with it. This includes back-up equipment and resources.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - Simulation

Simulation scenarios
Your team is assigned to go to the field. You have very little time to plan and prepare. There is a big bag filled with various items in your office. You can only pick seven items to take with you.

1. Rope
2. Shaving mirror
3. Empty water bottle
4. Match sticks
5. Candles
6. Whistle
7. Radio
8. Batteries
9. Blanket
10. Biscuits and dry rations
11. Torch
12. Chlorine tablets
13. Notebook and pen
14. Cell phone + SIMS
15. GPS
16. Camera
17. Laptop with datacard
18. Umbrella + rain gear
19. Warm jacket
20. Mosquito repellent
21. Water bottles
22. Sleeping bag
23. Medicines
24. Bandages

**Task:** Pick your seven items.

**Part 2**
Two day after your team reaches Surakshit Pradesh, you have done a couple of initial stories and are trying to figure out where your next location should be. The central town is packed with people trying to reach the main distribution centre. You have been travelling non-stop and are constantly seeing scenes of death and destruction. You are worried about your colleague. He is not very communicative, and has stopped eating altogether. After a particularly heart-wrenching scene of a young child lying dead, he has started to mumble to himself all the time. Your concern is met only with a stony ‘I’m fine’.

What do you do?

**Tasks:**
- Identify two immediate actions
- What (if anything) do you report to your bosses?
- How do you ensure that he stays fit throughout the reporting time?
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Safety

Keeping yourself safe
Trying to keep yourself safe is one of the most challenging aspects to covering a disaster.

Safety guidelines
No story is good enough to risk death or serious injury.

- Plan your escape routes in advance if you are entering a narrow or closed area.
- Never walk under or over a landslide. Always walk around it.
- Be alert and prepared for unexpected situations.
- Weigh up the risk and decide if the story is worth it.
- Learn first aid, especially how to stop bleeding.
- Never carry a weapon or travel with a journalist carrying a weapon.
- Always identify yourself clearly if challenged. Never describe yourself as anything other than a reporter.
- Wear a bracelet or tag indicating your blood group in case you are wounded.
- Learn and respect local customs. Something you say or do may be interpreted as hostile.
- Insurance – If working in a danger zone, check that your employer has you adequately insured.
- Wear shoes that you can run in when covering potentially dangerous situations.

Psychological harm: Dealing with trauma and stress
Be frightened, it’s normal, but don’t panic.

Many people go into disaster zones unprepared for the level of devastation that they will see. It is vital to prepare yourself mentally. Make sure that there are systems of counselling available for those who need it. Have strict policies about checking in with the office at regular intervals while in a disaster zone.

Adequate preparation
Always have the safety basics with you:

- Fully stocked first aid kit
- Battery operated torches
- Solar charger
- Drinking water and food supplies
- Warm clothes
- Preparations to sleep outside in extreme situations (tent, sleeping bag)

Safety of the community
When dealing with sensitive topics, always ensure that people’s safety is not compromised. Any reporting you do must consider potential impact on individuals, a group within the community or the area as a whole. Often, these may be sparked by internal divisions or social pressures that you don’t know. So while ensuring dignity, also ensure safety.

At other times, the community may be put at risk in trying to accompany or rescue you when you are doing a dangerous report. Weigh the consequences to others before taking this call.

In conflict zones, humanitarian organisations apply the concept of ‘do no harm’; a vow to not leave the community in a worse state than they found them in. Media organisations may consider following a similar approach.
SAFETY

QUIZ 4

1. A journalist working in a drought prone zone still needs to be trained on flood safety measures.
   - True [ ] False [ ]

2. The best way to ensure your safety is to align with the local leadership.
   - True [ ] False [ ]

3. Your report can affect the safety of the community.
   - True [ ] False [ ]

4. Journalists never need counselling after being in a disaster situation.
   - True [ ] False [ ]

5. All possible risks are locally known so they are easy to assess.
   - True [ ] False [ ]
LEARNING UNIT 4: BALANCE
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE - Balance

Objective: Find often hidden, positive stories; select a cross-section of people to feature in disaster reporting that represent the most vulnerable, unheard voices; examine different facets and sides to each story; and analyse when and how to remain neutral or to get involved.

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 hour). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Have plenary discussion and critique of the suggested actions. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenarios
Flood or cyclone:
It is now known that over 80,000 people have been affected (and numbers are expected to keep rising). Of these, less than a third have been accommodated in relief camps; while the rest continue to live on the streets or in makeshift shelters built of scrap floating in the water. Water and sanitation have become a serious concern.

Piles of relief supplies have been airdropped by the state government and aid from the national government is on its way. However, aid distribution and admittance in the camps is still reaching only a small portion of the affected and being done specifically according to government lists.

With your deadline to file a story being very tight, you have to choose between chasing one of four stories that you have identified.

- The leader of Surakshit Pradesh’s opposition party has flown into the central town. He is going to be touring some of the affected areas and is expected to hold a press conference that evening. With elections coming up next year, fireworks are expected to fly here.
- Thousands of children are facing acute diarrhea from the contaminated water. In a nearby village with no doctor, a group of young women are drawing on the knowledge of a NGO workshop conducted years before to create homemade oral rehydration solution from relief supplies.
- A local contact has told you about cut-off village off the main road where no aid has reached so far. This village has seen mass migration of men for work in recent years and there are several elderly people and persons with disabilities who live there.
- To the north of your location, there are reports of a group who are cutting jewellery off of dead bodies.

OR
Earthquake:
The official death toll has reached 4000, though NGO sources and various other media are reporting much higher figures. There is no information on the number of villages affected. Aftershocks are still continuing and landslides are frequent. Many areas remain cut-off.

Piles of relief supplies have been airdropped by the state government and aid from the national government is on its way. However, aid distribution and admittance in the camps is still reaching only a small portion of the affected and being done specifically according to government lists. There is severe shortage of food and clothing. Temperatures at night have begun to drop and there are worries about death due to cold in the coming days.

With your deadline to file a story being very tight, you have to choose between chasing one of four stories that you have identified.
The leader of Surakshit Pradesh’s opposition party has flown into the central town. He is going to be touring some of the affected areas and is expected to hold a press conference that evening. With elections coming up next year, fireworks are expected to fly here.

A group of young men and women are diligently building up new houses using rubble from the earthquake for the most needy in their village. These are people with no land deeds who know they will never officially make it to the government lists for rehabilitation.

A local contact has told you about cut-off village off the main road where no aid has reached so far. This village has seen mass migration of men for work in recent years and there are several elderly people and persons with disabilities who live there.

To the north of your location, there are reports of a group who are cutting jewellery off of dead bodies.

OR

Drought

There is a feeling of hopelessness in the air in the central village. The markets are jammed with people attempting to pawn/sell whatever possessions they have left. Many villages are already facing acute famine. The government has set up relief centres and food distribution camps in a few places, but these are inadequate for the magnitude of the problem. Malnutrition is rampant among the surviving.

With your deadline to file a story being very tight, you have to choose between chasing one of four stories that you have identified.

- The leader of Surakshit Pradesh’s opposition party has flown into the central town. He is going to be touring some of the affected areas and is expected to hold a press conference that evening. With elections coming up next year, fireworks are expected to fly here.
- In the middle of the drought-hit area there is a story of one village which is managing to survive. It is said that they practice several local water conservation and rain water harvesting techniques, working together as a community.
- A local contact has told you about cut-off village off the main road where no aid reached so far. As crops fail again and again, this village has seen mass migration of men for work in recent years. There are several elderly people and persons with disabilities who live there who are unable to make it to the relief centres.
- To the north of your location, there are reports of a group who are cutting jewellery off of dead bodies.

Tasks:

- Pick one of the stories to pitch to your editor. Explain why you picked that story.
- List three possible angles? Which one will you choose to explore?
- Who will you talk to in order to cover the story? List 5 people that you will interview.

Group discussion and examples

Following the simulation, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

- Types of voices: The voices that are being reported changes the entire story. Actively bringing out the voices of those who are most vulnerable can change the discourse and types of issues being addressed.
- Positive stories: Coverage of local innovations and positive actions is encouraging and builds hope. It also serves as good examples that can be replicated elsewhere and as validation of efforts.
- Mix of areas and regions: Often, reporting of a disaster gets confined to the supposedly worst-affected area. The other regions and surrounding places get left out.
**Activist vs. neutral reporting:** Particularly in post-disaster situations, the media tends to take on a more activist role. There is a rush to assign blame, to politicise and to miss the other angles. This sometimes takes away the focus from the actual event and affected communities. Reporters also need to careful of their own tone and pitch. A harried, really loud report sends a very different message. Reporters must also strike a balance between telling the story and getting involved in physically helping the community.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local where possible and appropriate to the context. A couple of illustrative examples are given below:

**Empowering local action through the inspiring story of the man who moved a mountain:** In the small village of Gehlor in the middle of Gaya district, Bihar, one man proved that with determination and commitment he could solve a local problem alone. The nearest small town, Wazirganj, was only a few kilometres away. Yet, the lack of a road meant that the villagers had to endure a dangerous 70-km trek over the rocky mountain. School, markets and other facilities that fell on this route were all cut off. One day, his wife slipped and fell and he was unable to get her to a hospital. The year was 1960. Dashrath Manjhi decided he would do something himself. Selling off his cows, he used the money to purchase a chisel, shovel, hammer and rope. The entire village, including his wife and family, thought he had lost his mind. When has a man ever managed to move a mountain, they asked? Dashrath chipped away alone at the mountain day and night, even shifting his hut closer to the road he was carving.

It took 22 years, but Dashrath was successful in his mission. He managed to carve a road through the mountain that reduced the distance to just 7 kms. Slowly, the road widened to allow bicycles, motor bikes and even cars to pass. Unfortunately, the wife who had inspired this mission wasn’t with him to view this accomplishment.

His story in itself became a communication tool about the power of one man to create local solutions. With support, how many local problems could be solved by the community themselves? However, it only became an inspiration because it was spread far and wide. It’s not only children from the village who hear this tale of the man who moved a mountain. Spread through TV, print articles and online, Dashrath has become a national ambassador of local action. Unearthing and widely promoting such stories can be an important communication vehicle to spark and encourage more community-based solutions.

Possible discussion points:

- What is the best way to pitch a positive story?

**Where is the line between being a reporter and getting involved?**

Over the years, reporters have been criticised from both sides. They have been denounced for getting involved when they should be reporting and have been scathed for not helping enough when people are in trouble. This happened a lot with reporters in the Haiti earthquake, where an unprecedented number of reporters went hands on. One of the most high-profile cases was with a CNN reporter, also a neurosurgeon, who spent a night in a field hospital. The medical team had evacuated amid security concerns and he spent the night stabilising the critically ill with the help of his crew. While his efforts were generally appreciated, there were concerns about the amount of airtime devoted to covering this story and his efforts. Many felt it became like promotional material for the channel.

There is an online simulation role play based on the Haiti earthquake which bring some of these questions to life - [http://insidedisaster.com/haiti/experience](http://insidedisaster.com/haiti/experience)
A Pulitzer Prize winning photo or a cry for help?

In 1994, Photojournalist Kevin Cartwright was covering the brutal famine in Sudan. The image he took of a malnourished child collapsing on her way to the food centre and watched by a plump vulture was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Yet Kevin came under sharp criticism for taking the photograph, rather than helping the girl. He was even called ‘another vulture’. However, there are those who say the photograph doesn’t tell the whole story: that the child’s parents weren’t too far away; that while the vulture wasn’t as close as the angle suggests and that Kevin did move the child once he had taken the shot.

Possible discussion points
- How do you draw a line between where to help and where to get involved?
- When you are involved, is it ethical to film and promote that involvement?
- Are there certain subjects who should just not be photographed/covered?

Quiz Answers
1. Sometimes the weightage of a story choice needs to consider factors beyond popularity.
   - True
   - False
Answer: True. The media has a very core role to play both in informing the public and in influencing practices and policy. This means that in emergency situations, your mandate should widen.

2. The voices of groups such as livelihood groups and people with disabilities can help reveal hidden issues.
   - True
   - False
Answer: True. There are certain groups within the community, including core livelihood groups such as famers, fishermen, livestock rearers or masons, whose voices bring a new perspective. People with disabilities are always left out and it is important to include their views for better planning.

3. Positive stories can spur hope and provide validation for efforts.
   - True
   - False
Answer: True. Positive stories show the other side to a disaster and help spur hope.

4. Reports should concentrate only on the area with the maximum damage.
   - True
   - False
Answer: False. The surrounding areas are often equally impacted. The lack of attention leads to lack of aid which then has serious consequences for long-term recovery.
5. Tone and pitch influence the balance of a story.
   Answer: True. The energy of a story (whether rushed, harried, overexcited or calm) comes through to the audience and impacts neutrality.

6. It is important to pinpoint blame right away.
   Answer: False. The over-politicisation of a disaster in the early stages takes time and attention away from the main issues and affected communities. This is a period where people need to look forward and focus on what needs to be done.

7. A reporter must never get physically involved in helping the community.
   Answer: There is no clear answer to this. There are certain situations where your conscience will compel you to help. What is important is for all media organisations to have guidelines of what lines must not be crossed.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Simulation

Simulation scenarios

Flood or cyclone:

It is now known that over 80,000 people have been affected (and numbers are expected to keep rising). Of these, less than a third have been accommodated in relief camps; while the rest continue to live on the streets or in makeshift shelters built of scrap floating in the water. Water and sanitation have become a serious concern.

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Earthquake:

The official death toll has reached 4000, though NGO sources and various other media are reporting much higher figures. There is no information on the number of villages affected. Aftershocks are still continuing and landslides are frequent. Many areas remain cut-off.

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- A local contact has told you about cut-off village off the main road where no aid has reached so far. This village has seen mass migration of men for work in recent years and there are several elderly people and persons with disabilities who live there.
BALANCE

- To the north of your location, there are reports of a group who are cutting jewellery off of dead bodies.

OR

Drought

There is a feeling of hopelessness in the air in the central village. The markets are jammed with people attempting to pawn/sell whatever possessions they have left. Many villages are already facing acute famine. The government has set up relief centres and food distribution camps in a few places, but these are inadequate for the magnitude of the problem. Malnutrition is rampant among the surviving.

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- To the north of your location, there are reports of a group who are cutting jewellery off of dead bodies.

Tasks:

- Pick one of the stories to pitch to your editor. Explain why you picked that story.
- List three possible angles? Which one will you choose to explore?
- Who will you talk to in order to cover the story? List 5 people that you will interview.
Factors influencing story choice
When there is a disaster almost literally every day of the year, it is no surprise that the vast majority go unreported. Story choice is currently determined on a number of criteria that include:

- How dramatic are the numbers if dead, injured or homeless?
- How dramatic are the visuals?
- Can it be covered remotely or does a journalist need to be sent to the scene?
- Will my audience be interested in the story?
- What other news is there today?
- What is my connection to the victims?

Yet, for media to fulfil a role in disaster prevention and stronger recovery; there needs to be consideration of several other factors.

- What will not covering the story mean for the affected community? (Coverage often impacts aid)
- Even if the ‘numbers’ are not large in a traditional sense, how badly affected are the community?
- What impact does the story have on a larger context (developmental, environmental, social or political)?

Balance of voices
Stories need to take into account different perspectives that in themselves will bring out new issues. These emerge primarily through engagement with different stakeholders. The groups defined below are not only some of the most critically affected in the aftermath of a disaster; but also play a key role in promoting individual and collective action that will help reduce risk. At the same time, it must be ensured that the most socially and economically marginalised from across these target groups and the community as a whole are addressed.

i. Local Panchayati Raj /Urban Legislative Body leaders
As the last level of elected representatives, this group serves as a key link to the government and has the legal power to enforce decisions in the community. They can influence policy decisions. Through budget allocations and running of schemes, they can effectively form links between government policies and local risk reduction. Their voices offer a local political perspective.

ii. Local champions
A community’s teachers, doctors, self-help groups and other educated professionals serve as the unspoken, unelected advisors to the community. They are looked up to and trusted; and are often emulated even more than elected leaders. These local champions serve as the link between general people and the panchayat. Through their various vocations, they offer new perspectives on how disasters and risk reduction link to various other facets of life.

iii. Children
Children both enrolled in and out of school, are often more receptive and open to information than adults. Internationally, the campaign on ‘children at the heart of DRR’ puts them in the driving seat. As the next generation, they will be the ones to carry on sustainable risk reduction practices. In the aftermath of a disaster, children’s voice can help unearth critical issues including those related to education and safety.
iv. **Women**  
The heart of their families, women generally spend the greatest amount of time at home and are one of the most vulnerable groups. In many villages, migration by the men to the cities for work means that the women are left alone; making it even more critical to build their awareness and action.

v. **Persons with Disabilities**  
Unless particular attention is given to PWDs, they are always left out by default. There is an urgent need to empower and include them in any disaster risk reduction action. For a community can only be safe when each one of its most vulnerable members is safe.

vi. **Elderly**  
Though they are usually respected, the elderly are another group who are often left out. At the same time, the elderly are repositories of traditional knowledge and local innovations on disaster risk reduction. They are often more receptive to using and improving these techniques; which can be vital in small communities with limited facilities.

vii. **Livelihood-based groups**  
Livelihood compulsions can often restrict ‘safer’ behaviour. This includes fishermen going out to sea despite cyclone warnings or farmers refusing to evacuate during a flood. Targeting groups such as farmers, shepherds, fishermen, labourers and masons is therefore critical. Some of their inherent activities play a major role in DRR. So any breakthrough in getting these groups to incorporate risk reduction and preparedness measures as part of their daily routine will go a long way towards mainstreaming DRR!

**Balance of positive and negative stories**  
Coverage of local innovations and positive actions is encouraging and builds hope. It also serves as good examples that can be replicated elsewhere and as validation of efforts. Thing that could be considered include:

- Positive work being carried out by the government, NGOs or the community.
- Local innovations (either in early warning that prevented casualties) or in the aftermath that are helping people cope and rebuild their lives.
- Coming together of the community to recover, bridging previous divisions

**Mix of areas and regions**  
Often, reporting of a disaster gets confined to the supposedly worst-affected area. The other regions and surrounding places get left out. It is important to look at all of these areas as well. The repercussions of these build different ways

**Activist vs. neutral reporting**  
Particularly in post-disaster situations, the media tends to take on a more activist role. There is a rush to assign blame, to politicise and to miss the other angles. This sometimes takes away the focus from the actual event and affected communities. Reporters also need to careful of their own tone and pitch. A frantic tone and really loud report sends a very different message. Reporters must also strike a balance between telling the story and getting involved in physically helping the community.

Points to consider:

- Where do I draw the line between reporting and advocating for a cause?
- Am I reflecting my own personal opinions, rather than reporting what is actually happening? Are my viewers / readers clear about my biases?
- In a very serious situation, can I allow my priority to be to help rather than to report?
QUIZ 5

1. Sometimes the weightage of a story choice needs to consider factors beyond popularity.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

2. The voices of groups such as livelihood groups and people with disabilities can help reveal hidden issues.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

3. Positive stories can spur hope and provide validation for efforts.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

4. Reports should concentrate only on the area with the maximum damage.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

5. Tone and pitch influence the balance of a story.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

6. It is important to pinpoint blame right away.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]

7. A reporter must never get physically involved in helping the community.
   - True  [ ]  False  [ ]
LEARNING UNIT 5: DIGNITY
RESOURCES PERSON NOTE – Dignity

Objective: Maintain the dignity of disaster survivors when conducting interviews or telling a story.

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 hour). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Have plenary discussion and critique of the suggested actions. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenarios
Now that you have decided on your story and the people you will interview, you are headed for your destination. You are one of the first teams to reach the area. People are literally in shock and are a little unwilling to talk to reporters. However, you are determined to get you story.

Tasks:
- List 5 key questions you will ask for each type of interviewee (define these as per your previous exercise).
- List 3 visuals that you will want to capture to accompany your story.

Group discussion and examples
Following the simulation, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

- Interviewing: The manner in which disaster survivors are interviewed can badly affect their psychological state. Clearly, reporters are in a position of power. Taking care never to exploit this is vital.
- Visuals: The imagery of a disaster situation is often gory and filled with unimaginable destruction and suffering. Photojournalists and reporters must walk a fine line between telling the story to the public and keeping the dignity of the people intact. Where, how and in what size the visual is used may also make a difference. There may be some shots that are just vetoed altogether.
- Overall reporting: In putting together the whole story, including the anchoring/editorial/layout, ensure that it reflects a sense of dignity for the community.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local where possible and appropriate to the context. A couple of illustrative examples are given below:

Disrespecting the community

In the wake of the 2013 Uttarakhand floods, one reporter from a local station thought it appropriate to report while sitting on a survivor’s shoulders. The survivor was apparently carrying him through a flooded area as a mark of respect. Though his actions were widely condemned among the media community, the case itself points to a broader problem of journalists thinking they are ‘superior’ to the communities they visit.
A photo that lives on and on; impacting lives years later

During the Gujarat Riots of 2002, a BBC reporter shot this photo of a local tailor pleading for his life. The photo became iconic and was carried in papers and news reports throughout the country. It became the face of the riots. However, it also followed the subject throughout his life. He was impacted and shunned socially, becoming known as the person who ‘pleaded and cried’. He was even fired from a future job where his boss said he didn’t want any trouble. On a side note, there were allegations that the photo only showed one side of the story.

Quiz Answers
1. Affected communities always want to speak to journalists.
   **True**  [ ]  **False**  [ ]
   Answer: False. While many affected communities are glad to receive coverage in the hopes that it will bring attention to their plight, not everyone is comfortable speaking to a reporter.

2. The world is entitled to see everything that is happening so everything can be recorded.
   **True**  [ ]  **False**  [ ]
   Answer: False. Though there is a responsibility to report accurately on what is happening in the area, this does not give reporters the right to intrude on the privacy of a grieving family. Always ask permission before recording anything.

3. Survivors are often a little dazed so it is alright to prompt them a little with the answers.
   **True**  [ ]  **False**  [ ]
   Answer: False. Don’t push for sound bites. Allow the survivors to tell their story. Leading questions change the perspective.

4. Not just the actual interview, but the overall packaging of a story (including the music, the choice of clips, the size and use of photographs or the tone of a story) affects the dignity of an affected community.
   **True**  [ ]  **False**  [ ]
   Answer: True. These elements contribute to the overall context and the way that the audience views the situation. It turns real people into caricatures.

5. Insensitive questions can actually affect the psycho-social recovery of survivors.
   **True**  [ ]  **False**  [ ]
   Answer: True. Insensitive questioning makes recovery from the trauma more difficult.
Simulation scenarios
Now that you have decided on your story and the people you will interview, you are headed for your destination. You are one of the first teams to reach the area. People are literally in shock and are a little unwilling to talk to reporters. However, you are determined to get your story.

Tasks:

- List 5 key questions you will ask for each type of interviewee (define these as per your previous exercise).
- List 3 visuals that you will want to capture to accompany your story.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - Dignity

Psycho-social impact of insensitive questioning

The manner in which disaster survivors are interviewed can badly affect their psychological state. Clearly, reporters are in a position of power. Taking care never to exploit this is vital.

Interview tips

- Always introduce yourself, clearly stating who you are and why you would like to speak to them.
- People may have expectations that you have come to offer aid. Never promise anything – cash or kind – in exchange for the interview.
- Don’t expect people to jump at the chance to talk to you. Always confirm that the person is willing to speak to you before you begin. Make sure to respect their feelings if they say no.
- Ask whether they are comfortable with you taping/filming/taking notes. Always give the option of turning this off somewhere along the way if they begin to be uncomfortable or don’t want something recorded.
- In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, do not say ‘I know how you feel.’ You don’t. Instead say something along the lines of “I am sorry that this happened to you”.
- Do not place blame on anyone.
- Don’t ask leading questions that convey a bias. For example, “Don’t you feel that the government has done an excellent job of evacuation?” Instead ask. “How did you feel about the government evacuation?”
- Watch your body language. Make sure it is appropriate to the cultural context.
- Never yell or convey frustration if your interview is not going as you hoped.

Visuals

The imagery of a disaster situation is often gory and filled with unimaginable destruction and suffering. Photojournalists and reporters must walk a fine line between telling the story to the public and keeping the dignity of the people intact.

Where, how and in what size the visual is used may also make a difference. There may be some shots that are just vetoed altogether.

Sensitive writing

Writing sensitively requires a multi-faceted approach. The following elements must be kept in mind:

- Use gender-sensitive tone and language.
- Weigh your words – not just for accuracy but for their connotations (Refer accuracy handout)
- Avoid turning people into caricatures by ensuring that the
- Try and tell the parts of the person’s story that shows them in a more complete light – not just as a suffering victim.
- Always set the context for any stories or quotes used to ensure a full picture

Overall reporting

In putting together the whole story, including the anchoring/ editorial/ layout, ensure that it reflects a sense of dignity for the community. There are always ways to over-hype or subdue any story.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, do no harm.
DIGNITY

QUIZ 6

1. Affected communities always want to speak to journalists.
   - True
   - False

2. The world is entitled to see everything that is happening so everything can be recorded.
   - True
   - False

3. Survivors are often a little dazed so it is alright to prompt them a little with the answers.
   - True
   - False

4. Not just the actual interview, but the overall packaging of a story (including the music, the choice of clips, the size and use of photographs or the tone of a story) affects the dignity of an affected community.
   - True
   - False

5. Insensitive questions can actually affect the psycho-social recovery of survivors.
   - True
   - False
LEARNING UNIT 6: CONSISTENCY AND COLLABORATION
CONSENSUS AND COLLABORATION

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Consistency and collaboration

Objective: Collaborate across media to strengthen consistency of messaging; and build collaboration with government and NGOs.

Structure of the learning unit
This simulation unit is to be done as a plenary (allotted time – 1-2 hours). Have plenary discussion and critique of the suggested actions.

Simulation scenarios
You are back in the central town after filing your first major story. There has now been a major influx of news reporters into the town. You are feeling a little overwhelmed by the sheer number of people. The influx is putting strain on already scarce resources and prices are rising.

Certain families you’ve visited have talked about a never-ending stream of journalists wanting to interview them. Yet no one seems to be publishing the information that they need most. They keep asking you questions, but you don’t have the answers.

At a small tea shop, you bump into more journalists that you know and begin discussing some of these problems.

Tasks
Come to a consensus on:

- Three possible areas of collaboration between journalists
- Five possible common goals/areas of reporting that will help the affected community to recover
- List of people/types of organisation where tie-ups and collaboration is necessary
- Types of information / support that can either be extended to or is needed from the government and NGOs

Group discussion and examples
Following the presentations, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

Who needs to collaborate: Along with different media units, government officials at the national and local levels (especially PIOs/PROs) and NGOs on the ground all play a vital role in disseminating information.

Consistency of reports: Building consistency on the way of reporting within the varied team members in different areas strengthens the overall report. At the same time, extremely conflicting reports from within one company, as well as across different media can create massive confusion. This is especially true of life-saving information such as safe routes or aid distribution.

Common goals: In the larger context and as part of media’s public service prerogative, journalists play a key role in building public awareness. Public awareness campaigns are often scattered and done in silos. Collaboration between these three key stakeholders can bring consistency and greater weight to a nationwide campaign.

Other factors to consider during the discussion include:
What are the unique information needs of the community at that time? These will differ from hazard to hazard and region to region. For example, in the earthquake scenario, roadblocks and safe routes will be a priority. In the cyclone and flood instances, one need may be on clean water and ways to purify. In a drought scenario, the main emphasis will be on access to food and fodder for the livestock. Medicines, medical attention and basic rations are always needed. Information on applying to be on government lists, for schemes or finding information on missing family members are always questions to be considered.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - Simulation

Simulation scenarios
You are back in the central town after filing your first major story. There has now been a major influx of news reporters into the town. You are feeling a little overwhelmed by the sheer number of people. The influx is putting strain on already scarce resources and prices are rising.

Certain families you’ve visited have talked about a never-ending stream of journalists wanting to interview them. Yet no one seems to be publishing the information that they need most. They keep asking you questions, but you don’t have the answers.

At a small tea shop, you bump into more journalists that you know and begin discussing some of these problems.

Tasks
Come to a consensus on:

- Three possible areas of collaboration between journalists
- Five possible common goals/areas of reporting that will help the affected community to recover
- List of people/types of organisation where tie-ups and collaboration is necessary
- Types of information / support that can either be extended to or is needed from the government and NGOs
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Consistency and collaboration

A collaborative rather than antagonistic model between different media organisations, the government and NGOs can improve the quality of disaster reporting and can help build the resilience of communities across the country. This is particularly true when considering the dual role of media in a disaster context. It is the key channel for both disseminating key information down to the general public and affected communities; as well as a spark for humanitarian action and government response.

Who needs to collaborate?
Along with different media units, government officials at the national and local levels (especially PIOs/PROs) and NGOs on the ground all play a vital role in disseminating information. This collaboration can be strengthened by planning beforehand.

- Identify credible and authoritative sources of information that can be used to support messages in potential emergencies.
- Develop a plan for using information from other organizations in potential emergencies.
- Develop contact lists of external subject-matter experts able and willing to speak to the media on issues associated with potential emergencies.
- Issue media communications together to be more credible and trustworthy to the target audience.

Consistency of reports
Building consistency on the way of reporting within the varied team members in different areas strengthens the overall report. At the same time, extremely conflicting reports from within one company, as well as across different media can create massive confusion. This is especially true of life-saving information such as safe routes or aid distribution.

- Present information in a format that aids understanding and helps people act accordingly.
- Cite credible and authoritative sources.
- Aim for consistency of key messages across agencies. If real differences exist, try to clarify sources and course of action to your audience.
- Determine information clearance and approval and procedures in advance when possible.
- Identify significant misinformation, being aware that repeating it may give it unwanted

Collaboration tactics
In the larger context and as part of media’s public service prerogative, journalists play a key role in building public awareness. Public awareness campaigns are often scattered and done in silos. Collaboration between these three key stakeholders can bring consistency and greater weight to a nationwide campaign.

- Encourage media organisations to repeat or echo the same key messages – such repetition and echoing by many voices helps to reinforce the key messages for target audiences.
- Devote effort and resources to building bridges, partnerships and alliances with other organisations (including potential or established critics) before an emergency occurs.
- Respect the unique information needs of special and diverse audiences.

Further resources
As the subject is wide and dynamic, static reports will soon become outdated. References can be taken from ALNAP (www.alnap.org), Thompson Reuters Foundation (www.trust.org/Humanitarian) and PreventionWeb (http://www.preventionweb.net/english/).
LEARNING UNIT 7: FOLLOW UP
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Follow Up

Objective: Create follow-up stories to give a holistic picture

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, begin the learning unit with the simulation exercise (allotted time – 1 hour). At the end of this time, have each participant take the quiz individually (10 mins). Have plenary discussion and critique of the suggested actions. Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation scenarios
Six months after the disaster struck/was first known, there are no reports being done. In fact, everyone had moved onto the next story within the first month. However, you feel strongly about going back and finding out what is happening now. You know that it is going to be a hard fight with your boss to do so, but you know if you pitch a good story you have a chance.

You contact a local stinger you worked with who has always helped you ferret out the best stories and get a feel of the situation now. Since he has a good rapport with you, he agrees to help. He gets back to you in a few days with the following few snippets.

Earthquake
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. Roads are still being cleared and landslides periodically continue. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. In some areas, people are showing interest in reviving traditional earthquake-resistant architecture. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

Cyclone
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. One of the major problems is livelihoods as all the crops have been washed away and the salinity has ruined the soil. Fishing patterns have been affected. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. In some areas, communities are coming up with sack cultivation practices (growing crops in sacks that float on the water) to sustain themselves. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

Flood
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. One of the major problems is livelihoods as all the crops have been washed away. Areas of the coast continue to remain under water. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

Drought
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Water and malnutrition continue to be a problem. Outright famine continues in some areas. There are also many cases of missing people which are being whispered about. Some villages have now begun emulating the one village that managed to survive the drought, re-instituting community-led water conservation and collection practices.
FOLLOW UP

Tasks

- Think of a story pitch, a possible headline and the story angle.
- Five major points the story will cover
- Three people you will interview

Group discussion and examples

Following the presentations, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following:

**Use of or delivery of aid:** In larger disasters, there is a giant influx of aid money and government sanctioned relief funds in the initial days. Follow-up on the usage of this aid can help promote accountability. In cases where relief is not sanctioned at all, the ongoing media scrutiny can help the delivery of aid.

**Long-term recovery:** The reconstruction activity and recovery programmes should incorporate disaster risk reduction features, helping the community become more resilient.

**Lessons and good practices:** Often there is a reinvention of the wheel after every disaster; from a communications perspective, an aid perspective and a reconstruction/recovery perspective. Reporting over the longer-term on the lessons and good practices (perhaps even small local ones) can make a difference for the next one.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local where possible and appropriate to the context. An illustrative example is given below:

**Possible discussion points:**

- What kinds of stories can be told in order to keep the interest alive?
- How do you report them in order to influence positive practices? What kind of tone would that take?
- How do you report them in order to influence policy? What kind of tone will this take?
- What kinds of stories can help promote learning and accountability?

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**Helping people access aid years later thanks to the story being kept alive**

Though it wasn't due to a natural hazard, the case of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984 is a great example of how continuing media coverage keeps an issue alive. Even the sporadic media coverage (usually around the anniversary of the disaster) has meant that the community who are still suffering 30 years later can keep their fight alive. Disasters due to natural hazards are usually less political and thus lose interest much faster. Applying this same principle to disaster situations can play a major role in better recovery.
**Follow Up**

**Quiz Answers**

1. Follow-up stories play a key role in continued aid for affected communities.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: True. Continued media attention means continued visibility of the situation which plays a role in getting aid.

2. Once the immediate disaster is over, there are never any new stories to report.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: False. Many of the major challenges come in the medium and long-term after the story usually dies out and the community is left to fend for themselves.

3. Follow-up stories can promote accountability for aid and money that has been committed.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: True. Reporting can help bring accountability to aid that has been committed.

4. Follow-up stories are required for only one month after a disaster.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: False. Follow-up stories need to continue for the long-term; over many months or even years.

5. Follow-up stories are possible only when there are celebrities and VIPs taking interest.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: False. Follow-up stories are actually even more important for those areas where there is little interest.

6. Social media can help keep the momentum alive for follow-up stories.

   - True
   - False

   Answer: True. When finding space in traditional media is limited for such stories, social media can play a role in reviving public interest in the story.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - Simulation

Simulation scenarios
Six months after the disaster struck/was first known, there are no reports being done. In fact, everyone had moved onto the next story within the first month. However, you feel strongly about going back and finding out what is happening now. You know that it is going to be a hard fight with your boss to do so, but you know if you pitch a good story you have a chance.

You contact a local stinger you worked with who has always helped you ferret out the best stories and get a feel of the situation now. Since he has a good rapport with you, he agrees to help. He gets back to you in a few days with the following few snippets.

Earthquake
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. Roads are still being cleared and landslides periodically continue. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. In some areas, people are showing interest in reviving traditional earthquake-resistant architecture. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

OR Cyclone
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. One of the major problems is livelihoods as all the crops have been washed away and the salinity has ruined the soil. Fishing patterns have been affected. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. In some areas, communities are coming up with sack cultivation practices (growing crops in sacks that float on the water) to sustain themselves. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

OR Flood
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Parts of the affected area continue to remain under water. One of the major problems is livelihoods as all the crops have been washed away. Areas of the coast continue to remain under water. Many public schools haven’t reopened after being used as shelters. There are still many cases of missing people that haven’t been resolved. Issues of land ownership and tenancy have become a struggle for the majority of those affected; most of whom have no papers to prove their legal rights.

OR Drought
Government schemes are not running like they should. Many NGOs are doing work but in disjointed ways. Water and malnutrition continue to be a problem. Outright famine continues in some areas. There are also many cases of missing people which are being whispered about. Some villages have now begun emulating the one village that managed to survive the drought, re-instituting community-led water conservation and collection practices.

Tasks
- Think of a story pitch, a possible headline and the story angle.
- Five major points the story will cover
- Three people you will interview
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Follow up

Follow-up stories are important to keep the issue alive. In the days after a disaster event when interest wanes off and the media withdraws, the community is left to recover alone. Yet some of the greatest challenges come in the medium and long-term. Follow-up stories can also result in insightful lessons and replicable good practices.

Use of or delivery of aid

In larger disasters, there is a giant influx of aid money and government sanctioned relief funds in the initial days. Follow-up on the usage of this aid can help promote accountability. In cases where relief is not sanctioned at all, the ongoing media scrutiny can help the delivery of aid. Follow-up stories can include:

- Which areas received aid? How has it been used?
- What kind of monitoring systems are in place for this?
- Where the aid was in kind, has it been helpful? What challenges have been faced?

Long-term recovery

The reconstruction activity and recovery programmes should incorporate disaster risk reduction practices. Follow up stories can include:

- Use of sustainable construction practices and disaster risk reduction features in reconstruction
- Government schemes and compensation that can be applied to recovery programmes
- Alternate livelihood options
- Any new policy initiatives
- Long-term political and diplomatic implications of such disasters (including large-scale migration)

Lessons and good practices

Often there is a reinvention of the wheel after every disaster; from a communications perspective, an aid perspective and a reconstruction/recovery perspective. Reporting over the longer-term on the lessons and good practices (perhaps even small local ones) can make a difference for the next one. Follow up stories can include:

- Interesting innovations by communities or NGOs.
- Where did the problems in the recovery occur? What can be done differently to help this for next time?

Helping people access aid years later thanks to the story being kept alive

Though it wasn’t due to a natural hazard, the case of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984 is a great example of how continuing media coverage keeps an issue alive. Even the sporadic media coverage (usually around the anniversary of the disaster) has meant that the community who are still suffering 30 years later can keep their fight alive. Disasters due to natural hazards are usually less political and thus lose interest much faster. Applying this same principle to disaster situations can play a major role in better recovery.
QUIZ 7

1. Follow-up stories play a key role in continued aid for affected communities.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False

2. Once the immediate disaster is over, there are never any new stories to report.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False

3. Follow-up stories can promote accountability for aid and money that has been committed.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False

4. Follow-up stories are required for only one month after a disaster.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False

5. Follow-up stories are possible only when there are celebrities and VIPs taking interest.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False

6. Social media can help keep the momentum alive for follow-up stories.
   - [ ] True  [ ] False
LEARNING UNIT 8: ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Environment and development

Objective: Go beyond the ‘disaster’ alone with possible story ideas; and analyse risk reduction factors, including how climate change components and developmental aspects impact natural hazards.

Structure of the learning unit
Using the same groups already formed, explain the assignment to the participants and distribute the handout on Environment and Development and the quiz (to be taken individually). Then dismiss them and allow them free time to work on the assignment. Convene again the next morning for the presentations and discussion (1/2 day time). Finally, discuss other examples and the quiz answers.

Simulation assignment
As you look around your own city/town/area, you realise that a disaster risk reduction story is possible right there. Why wait for something to happen before reporting on it? Remembering what you learnt about hazard + vulnerability = disaster, you decide to put together a short story that you can then pitch to your boss for a larger piece.

Tasks: Put together a short disaster risk reduction related story set in your area/town/city. Both the story pitch and the medium (print, TV, radio) are up to you to decide. Your team will need to present the story tomorrow morning.

Pointers:
- Research the hazards that are possible in your area.
- Think about the vulnerabilities that can turn those hazards into a disaster should they strike.
- What is happening now that magnifies or can help reduce those vulnerabilities?
- Try and find a human angle to the story.

Group discussion and examples
Following the presentations, the plenary discussion and critique must keep in mind the following

Climate change and small-scale disasters: Climate change is expected to increase the number of large-scale unprecedented hydro-met events such as flash floods. At the same time, small-scale climate-induced stresses such as water shortages that are leading to disasters of their own.

‘Development’: What role is ‘development’ playing as a trigger for these disasters? Conversely, how much are hazard and vulnerability issues taken into consideration during construction planning.

Disaster risk reduction: DRR can be built into almost every aspect of life; including housing, livelihoods, civic infrastructure, education and environment.

Silent disasters: The Red Cross stated in 2012 that 91% of disasters worldwide are silent. This silence can be attributed to a number of reasons including media interest.

Linking stories: ‘Disaster’ stories are not disaster stories alone. They are linked to many mainstream issues including health, education, women’s rights and the economy. They are also linked to each stage of the disaster cycle.

The discussion can be enriched with examples and case studies that illustrate the core principle. These should be local where possible and appropriate to the context. A couple of illustrative examples are given below:
Environmental days and infotainment programmes
Several TV channels now run environmental awareness programmes and campaigns. Done more in an ‘infotainment‘ format, these shows do help generate interest among the general public. However, since they are not a regular feature, these issues still haven’t become daily discussion or attained that level of seriousness. They are a good first step, but more needs to be done to mainstream these issues.

The silent disaster in Changthang, Ladakh
In the winter of 2012-13, there was a silent disaster in Changthang where thousands of sheep and goats died. The area is in the higher regions of Ladakh which are snowbound and cut off from the rest of the world during winter. These high altitude plains of Eastern Ladakh are home to a nomadic tribe called the Changpas. For generations, their livelihood has centered around their livestock. The region produces around 40,000 kgs of pashmina every year. It also supplies butter, meat and wool for the Ladakh region.

That winter, the record snowfall and plummeting temperatures completely cut off all access to the normal winter pastures. Around 40,000 livestock perished due to starvation; with 90% of the young stillborn or dying. Since January and February are the key months both for pashmina hair growth and birthing, both goats and sheep require extra food at this time. Yaks and horses (which are equivalent to investments) also perished in large numbers. The few attempts to send fodder and relief were impossible at first, as most areas were completely cut off.

Yet there was no mainstream coverage, turning it into an invisible and silent disaster.
A short video on it can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_cq4kr2Q4
Quiz Answers
1. The construction of roads and dams affects the vulnerability of a community.
   - True  False
   Answer: True. When done in an unsustainable manner, this type of construction can actually increase the vulnerability of a community to natural hazards.
2. Smaller recurrent events such as annual floods don’t count as a disaster.
   - True  False
   Answer: False. Though these events are recurrent and small-scale, they still have an immense impact on the lives of the affected populations and can keep them trapped in cycles of poverty.
3. Disaster risk reduction can be built into everyday life, including houses and education.
   - True  False
   Answer: True. Disaster risk reduction can be built into almost all aspects of everyday life.
4. As climate change intensifies, the scale and intensity of hydro-met events will increase. There will also be a greater number of day-to-day climate stresses.
   - True  False
   Answer: True. Many of these impacts can already be seen.
5. The media is partly responsible for creating ‘silent disasters’.
   - True  False
   Answer: True. A major factor in creating ‘silent disasters’ is that their story is not heard.
6. The vulnerabilities that arise from mainstream areas such as poverty, education, women and child welfare and construction all have an impact on disasters.
   - True  False
   Answer: True. A disaster is linked to many factors besides the actual hazard. Disaster risk reduction can be mainstreamed into all these areas.
As you look around your own city/town/area, you realise that a disaster risk reduction story is possible right there. Why wait for something to happen before reporting on it? Remembering what you learnt about hazard + vulnerability = disaster, you decide to put together a short story that you can then pitch to your boss for a larger piece.

Tasks: Put together a short disaster risk reduction related story set in your area/town/city. Both the story pitch and the medium (print, TV, radio) are up to you to decide. Your team will need to present the story tomorrow morning.

Pointers:

- Research the hazards that are possible in your area.
- Think about the vulnerabilities that can turn those hazards into a disaster should they strike.
- What is happening now that magnifies or can help reduce those vulnerabilities?
- Try and find a human angle to the story.

Reference: You can refer to the handout – Going beyond a ‘disaster’ event, the websites of the National Disaster Management Authority and National Institute for Disaster Management, your state website and any other sources you require.
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Going beyond a ‘disaster’ event

Climate change and small-scale disasters
Climate change is expected to increase the number of large-scale unprecedented hydro-met events such as flash floods. It will increase the incidences and intensity of new hazards such as glacier melting, sea level rise and extreme weather events to levels never seen before. This will aggravate the existing disaster risks and vulnerabilities and expose millions of people never affected before around the world. Rural livelihoods are put at risk by the local impacts of global climate change or environmental degradation. Balancing diversity and sustainability with the need to compete in a globalising economy poses a great challenge. This is currently undermining coping capacity.

At the same time, small-scale climate-induced stresses such as water shortages that are leading to disasters of their own.

Examples of day-to-day stresses
- Water shortages and quality
- Changing crop patterns
- New insects and pests
- Increased health hazards
- Retreating glaciers
- Livelihood-compelled migration
- Food shortages and malnutrition

The economic impacts of these disasters may be small individually, but add up to be a massive portion of the economic loss due to disasters annually. For instance, floods accounted for 2/3rds of the total damages due to disasters in India between 1990 and 2011.

This is not counting the spiralling effect on chronic poverty, health, education and livelihoods that in themselves compromise development. Above all, addressing these problems can lead to greater community resilience that will have spin-off effects on every walk of life.

What can be done?
- Make disaster risk reduction a national and local priority, with strong institutions to implement decisions.
- Set up early warning systems that reach all people, in time for appropriate action and accompany the warnings with helpful advice.
- Incorporate climate risk in all urban planning and water and forest management processes.
- Maintain and strengthen coastal wave barriers, river levees, flood ways and flood ponds.
- Have adequate drainage systems to avoid flooding.
- Incorporate climate risks in infrastructure projects, especially in hospitals, schools and water supplies.
- Diversification, including new sources of income, new crops and agricultural techniques and new ways to improve water uptake and reduce erosion.
- Build mechanisms that will get people out of harm’s way in a hazard and prepare shelters to protect them when they are forced to move.

‘Development’
What role is ‘development’ playing as a trigger for these disasters? Conversely, how much are hazard and vulnerability issues taken into consideration during construction planning.

There are many examples of the drive for economic growth and social improvement generating new disaster risks. Rapid urbanisation is an example. The growth of informal settlements and inner city slums, fuelled by growing populations and rural migration, has led to unstable living environments.
These settlements are often located in ravines, on steep slopes, along flood plains or adjacent to dangerous industrial or transport facilities. The unsustainable use of new materials has compounded the risks.

**Disaster risk reduction**

DRR can be built into almost every aspect of life; including housing, livelihoods, civic infrastructure, education and environment.

**Silent disasters**

The Red Cross stated in 2012 that 91% of disasters worldwide are silent. This silence can be attributed to a number of reasons including media interest.

*What defines ‘silence’?*

- The story is not widely known or reported.
- Assistance is not given, is extremely delayed or vastly inadequate.
- District, State or National policies don’t consider it a disaster.

*What makes a disaster silent?*

- Scale: The amount of perceived damage and numbers of people killed/affected
- Site: The place affected and its accessibility
- Significance: Economic and/or political significance of the affected areas
- Stresses: Day-to-day events that aren’t classified as a disaster
- Slow-onset vs. sudden onset disasters

**Linking stories**

‘Disaster’ stories are not disaster stories alone. They are linked to many mainstream issues including health, education, women’s rights and the economy. They are also linked to each stage of the disaster cycle.

**Poverty**

Poverty and socio-economic inequalities are aggravating disaster factors. They not only exacerbate vulnerabilities, but can keep people trapped in a vicious circle of poverty.

**Health**

- Impact on infant mortality
- Water-borne and communicable diseases

**Education**

- Ongoing, frequent disasters (especially small-scale flooding and drought) that cuts off access to schooling
- Continuing / restarting education in the wake of a disaster
- Incorporation of disaster awareness and climate change into the school curriculum

**Women and child welfare**

- Why do more women die in disasters than men?
- Safety and trafficking issues in the aftermath of a disaster
Key messages on disaster risk reduction (UNISDR)

- Disasters are not “natural”; hazards are. Disasters can often be prevented and their impact mitigated.
- Prevention pays and has an immediate return. Prevention is not a cost, it is an investment.
- Disasters do not only cause immediate human suffering and destruction but impede long-term development by keeping people trapped in a vicious spiral of poverty.
- Disaster risk reduction is about saving lives and livelihoods by changing people’s mindsets. It is about shifting from response to prevention and reducing communities’ vulnerability.
- People have a right to live in safety and with dignity. It is the state’s responsibility to protect its citizens. It is therefore vital that disaster risk reduction policies are systematically integrated into sustainable development strategies at all levels, national to local.
- Hospitals, schools and all critical infrastructure safety are essential for reducing societies’ vulnerability. Governments have a responsibility to protect critical buildings such as schools and hospitals, making communities more resilient to disasters.
- Early warning systems can save lives. If alarms are sounded before disaster strikes, human loss can be avoided.
- Educate to build a culture of prevention. People need to be provided with knowledge, skills and resources to protect themselves from disaster risk, same as in health or traffic.
- A safe and healthy environment is vital. It is everybody’s responsibility to protect the environment to mitigate the impact caused by natural hazards.
- Climate change adaptation starts with disaster risk reduction. Climate change is predicted to increase frequency and intensity of storms, floods and droughts. Communities need to be prepared to be able to deal with the impact of climate related hazards.
QUIZ 8

1. The construction of roads and dams affects the vulnerability of a community.
   - True
   - False

2. Smaller recurrent events such as annual floods don’t count as a disaster.
   - True
   - False

3. Disaster risk reduction can be built into everyday life, including houses and education.
   - True
   - False

4. As climate change intensifies, the scale and intensity of hydro-met events will increase. There will also be a greater number of day-to-day climate stresses.
   - True
   - False

5. The media is partly responsible for creating ‘silent disasters’.
   - True
   - False

6. The vulnerabilities that arise from mainstream areas such as poverty, education, women and child welfare and construction all have an impact on disasters.
   - True
   - False
LEARNING UNIT 9: CHANGING MEDIUMS
NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – Changing Mediums

Objective: Facilitate and conceptualise a session to strengthen consistency of messaging across changing mediums.

Timeframe: 2 hours

Have the resource persons actually undertake the exercise. Keep one hour at the end for plenary discussion on the following points.

Tweaking messages across mediums

Break the participants into groups of 3-4 people. Have each group pick one story from the DRR stories they presented in the morning. Have them discuss:

a. How the story will differ across media. What will be the most important element in:
   - Print
   - Online
   - TV
   - Radio
   - Social media

b. Come up with a 140 character tweet for the story

Time allowed: 1 hour

After the break, have a plenary discussion of the thoughts generated in each group. Points to consider include:

- Do different mediums mean different stories altogether?
- In the context of social media, space is limited. Where there is no room for context, how do you ensure your message is not misinterpreted?
- Has different media meant that the way you interview and report has in itself fundamentally changed?
- What safeguards need to be considered to ensure that the principles apply uniformly across media?
- Where information is being sourced from social media, how do you ensure its verification?

Additionally, discuss new and upcoming problems with the resource persons? Is there something that needs to be added? How will these questions change in a local context?
RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Changing mediums

Objective: Strengthen consistency of messaging across changing mediums.

Timeframe: 2 hours

Have the resource persons actually undertake the exercise. Keep one hour at the end for plenary discussion on the following points.

Tweaking messages across mediums

Break the participants back into their groups. Have each group pick their DRR story they presented in the morning. Have them discuss:

a. How the story will differ across media. What will be the most important element in:
   - Print
   - Online
   - TV
   - Radio
   - Social media

b. Come up with a 140 character tweet for the story

Time allowed: 1 hour

Have a plenary discussion of the thoughts generated in each group. Points to consider include:

- Do different mediums mean different stories altogether?
- In the context of social media, space is limited. Where there is no room for context, how do you ensure your message is not misinterpreted?
- Has different media meant that the way you interview and report has in itself fundamentally changed?
- What safeguards need to be considered to ensure that the principles apply uniformly across media?
- Where information is being sourced from social media, how do you ensure its verification?
- What happens with citizen journalists where there is no filter?
- How do you draw a line between your personal views and whether you are representing your university/organisation/media unit on an online platform?
- Where information is being sourced from social media, how do you ensure its verification?
- What happens with citizen journalists where there is no filter?
- How do you draw a line between your personal views and whether you are representing your university/organisation/media unit on an online platform?
PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Changing mediums

Using your DRR story as a base, think about how it will differ when you present it across mediums.

Tasks:

- Define what the most important elements will be in: Print, Online, TV, Radio, Social media
- Come up with a 140 character tweet for the story
## PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Tweaking stories across mediums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of media</th>
<th>Points to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>This is a readership that gives more time and focus. Reporters also have more time to research and verify. Therefore, in-depth, analytical content is possible and desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>As a visual medium, there is a vital need to address and keep dignity issues as a priority. There need to be guidelines in place as to what to do when filming a live report from a disaster zone from this perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>This is a medium that reaches the majority of the population, including very remote locations. It is also the medium that stays active the longest after a disaster strikes. Radio reporters need to be well positioned for emergency communications. Content can be localised to deliver specific helpful information. The emerging field of community radio should also be explored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online writing</td>
<td>Since this is an interactive medium, it gets a lot of comments. There needs to be continued moderation of both the stories and the feedback to ensure it doesn’t spark something problematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Very focussed, live and instant. There is little scope for filtering. In 140 characters, there is little scope for giving context. Misinterpretation is very possible. Therefore, accuracy and sensitivity become even more important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Facebook news feeds have a huge overlap with personal content. There needs to be a formal/informal balance. It also needs to be clear whether the post is a personal view/observation or actual reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social media</td>
<td>Many other media such as Reditt, Pintrest and Instagram are being used and new ones keep coming up. Care has to be taken to understand the audience and character of these media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Internal validation
Each learning module will be validated through quizzes and observation. A pre-test and post-test will be used to indicate levels of change in understanding. The DRR assignment to be and presented on the last day of the training will be used to determine whether the trainee has absorbed key concepts.

External validation
Analysis of media coverage of disaster and DRR related topics will be done at periodic intervals (ideally six-monthly) to examine any shifts. The popularity and demand for the training module as part of the college courses will also be evaluated on an annual basis.

- Overall shifts in the tone/extent of coverage in the Indian media in general
- Specific changes within any of the media organisations that have been trained
- Specific changes at a particular level of a media organisation or in general (national/regional/district)

Based on these insights, more targeted training could be done. For example, if change is obviously visible at a certain level, more efforts could be concentrated there.
QUIZ 9 : POST-TEST

1. Follow-up stories are required for only one month after a disaster.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

2. It is important to pinpoint blame right away.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

3. Journalists never need counselling after being in a disaster situation.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

4. The vulnerabilities that arise from mainstream areas such as poverty, education, women and child welfare and construction all have an impact on disasters.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

5. A flood is a natural disaster.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

6. Survivors are often a little dazed so it is alright to prompt them a little with the answers.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

7. It doesn’t matter where the footage/photo was taken as long as it relates to the story.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

8. The media plays a role only in early warning.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

9. Vulnerability is a set of conditions which increases the susceptibility of the community to the impact of hazards.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False