

Preparedness Level of Disaster Management Institutions in Context of Floods in Delhi

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Abstract : Purpose: Over the years flood related risks have compounded due to increasing vulnerability caused by rapid urbanisation and growing population. This increase is an indication of the need for enhancing the preparedness of institutions to respond to floods. The study describes disaster management structure and its linkages with institutions involved in managing disasters. It addresses issues and challenges associated with readiness of disaster management institutions to respond to floods. It suggests policy options for enhancing the current state of readiness of institutions to respond by considering factors like institutional, manpower, financial, technical, leadership & networking, training and awareness programs, monitoring and evaluation. Methodology: The study is based on qualitative data with statements and outputs from primary and secondary sources to understand the institutional framework for disaster management in India. Primary data included field visits, interviews with officials from institutions managing disasters and the affected community to identify the challenges faced in engaging national, state, district and local level institutions in managing disasters. For focus group discussions, meetings were held with district project officers and coordinators, local officials, community based organisation, civil defence volunteers and community heads. These discussions were held to identify the challenges associated with preparedness to respond of institutions to floods. Findings: Results show that disasters are handled by district authority and the role of local institutions is limited to a reactive role during disaster. Data also indicates that although the existing institutional setup is well coordinated at the district level but needs improvement at the local level. Wide variations exist in awareness and perception among the officials engaged in managing disasters. Additionally, their roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined with adequate budget and dedicated permanent staff for managing disasters. Institutions need to utilise the existing manpower through proper delegation of work. Originality: The study suggests that disaster risk reduction needs to focus more towards inclusivity of the local urban bodies. Wide variations exist in awareness and perception among the officials engaged in managing disasters. In order to ensure community participation, it is important to address their social and economic problems since such issues can overshadow attempts made for reducing risks. Thus, this paper suggests development of direct linkages among institutions and community for enhancing preparedness to respond to floods.

Keywords : preparedness, response, disaster, flood, community, institution

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