

Re-examining principles of disaster reporting

A TRAINING COURSE FOR SENIOR JOURNALISTS, PIOs and PROs

Sub-deliverable of Deliverable 14

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



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BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

BACKGROUND

The media plays a critical role in informing the public during disasters and in promoting risk reduction behaviour during peace time. However, tight deadlines and the 24-hour news cycle amplify the pressure and the hunger for 'exclusive' updates. Images of death, disaster and destruction are powerful. So while journalists and photo-journalists are tasked with providing the public with quick and accurate information as it develops; the reality is that it is usually only the dramatic components of disasters that make the front pages. These are overhyped in order to pump up ratings. The problem is compounded by the increasing numbers of citizen journalists. However, training of citizen journalists falls beyond the purview of this course.

Reporting has also generally been confined to during and just after a disaster event (response and early recovery). There is little, if any, coverage, of risk reduction aspects during non-disaster times. Part of the limiting factor is the comparative unawareness of people on preventive and mitigative strategies and the linkages to broader stories.

The problem is compounded by media-shy or often media-antagonistic government officials (especially those tasked with formally disseminating information). The fallout of this volatile relationship reflects in the quality and scope of disaster reporting. It often fails to fulfil its potential as a key driver of change.

Training needs

Journalists need to be sensitised on the critical role they play in a disaster scenario; in issuing early warnings; and in spreading awareness to help preparedness and mitigation. They need to be made conscious of the possible positive implications or negative fallouts of a disaster report. Basic tenants of journalism need to be re-evaluated and examined against this backdrop.

Rather than prescribing solutions, the training need is to facilitate discussion and instigate the thinking process around these issues. It also seeks to promote collaborative relationships between different facets of the media and the government.

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 the end trainee?

The module is targeted at mid and senior journalists across all types of media – print, electronic (radio and TV), online and photo-journalists; Press Information Officers (PIOs) and Public Relations Officers (PROs) within the National Disaster Management Authority structure and PIOs and PROs from related ministries (particularly education, Panchayati Raj Institutions/Urban Local Bodies, health and rural development).

It will target trainees at the national, regional and district levels. It will look specifically at senior people in the bureau management and mid/senior-level reporters. This is essential to bring about actual change; as often juniors on the ground may suggest a story, only to have it shot down by the top brass. Shifts in perception are therefore required here as well.

BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

The potential universe of trainees is exhaustive. There are over 86,754 registered newspapers and periodicals (MIB, 31st March 2012); over 300 TV channels with permission under the News and Current Affairs channel category and numerous radio and online media outlets. However, this training (in the first round) can begin by addressing the most prominent and viewed media agencies at three levels:

National	State	District
National media including (but definitely not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times of India + allied sites • Hindustan Times + allied sites • The Hindu + allied sites • Indian Express+ allied sites • The Statesman + allied sites • NDTV + Regional group channels • Times Now + regional group channels • Headlines Today + regional group channels • CNN-IBN/IBN 7 + regional group channels • Aaj Tak • Doordarshan • All India Radio National-level PIOs and PROs of NDMA, MIB, Health, Education, Rural Development, PRI/ULB	State level bureaus of these national print, electronic and online media Leading regional language channels and papers State-level PIOs and PROs of SDMAs, MIB, Health, Education, Rural Development, PRI/ULB	District level bureaus of these national print, electronic and online media Leading local-level channels, papers and sites Community radio stations District-level PIOs and PROs of DDMA, MIB, Health, Education, Rural Development, PRI/ULB

Entry behaviour

Senior journalists are set in their attitude and methods. The cut-throat competition is driven by TRPs/circulation and they will have little incentive to even attend this training. In the same way, PIOs/PROs of various departments are already usually overburdened with work. Their mandates are never disaster-specific. At the same time, the relationships between various media outlets themselves are often conflictive. The media's relationship with government varies widely and can be antagonistic.

Number of trainees per course

The intensive discussion and role play base of the course will work best with smaller numbers. Therefore, each training batch should have no more than 18-20 trainees. This must include journalists from different media agencies and PIOs/PROs of different departments.

Who are the Master Resource Persons and Resource Persons?

BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

As these are senior journalists and government staff, the facilitation should not be done primarily by journalists as they will not carry the required weight. Senior government officials will be required to be Master resource and resource persons. These can be drawn from across the spectrum of concerned ministries. The Master Resource Persons must therefore be senior NIDM/NDMA staff. These may be supported by senior journalists who can provide an industry-specific perspective.

Aim

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

Objectives

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE	TRAINING OBJECTIVES	ENABLING OBJECTIVES
<p><i>In their trainings, the resource persons will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how to apply the fundamentals of disaster reporting to future work in disaster scenarios. • Prepare trainees to create programming/ articles that focus on broader developmental and environmental issues that affect disaster risk reduction; even during non-disaster times. • Build collaborative relationships among various types of media and government officials to improve reporting. 	<p><i>After the TOT, the resource persons will be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess critical issues of vulnerability, development and environment that impact disasters • Write/create accurate, balanced and holistic disaster-related reports. • Understand varying needs of different stakeholders. <p>Delivery related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate some basic broad consensus points on disaster reporting. • Select and adapt training material to suit the trainee group 	<p><i>During the TOT, the trainees will learn to:</i></p> <p>Content related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define basic disaster-related terminology. • Explain disaster concepts. • Link different stages of the disaster cycle with possible story ideas • Analyse risk reduction factors; including how climate change components and developmental aspects impact natural hazards • Ensure fact-checking and appropriate terminology. • Recognise the importance of rarely reported, positive stories. • Examine different facets and sides to each story. • Select a cross-section of people to feature in disaster reporting that represent the most vulnerable, unheard voices. • Analyse when and how to remain neutral; or to get involved. • Maintain the dignity of disaster survivors when conducting interviews or telling a story. • Apply principles and standards of safety. <p>Delivery related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the collaboration across media to strengthen consistency of messaging. • Encourage collaboration with government and NGOS. • Spark online discussion. • Facilitate simulations

INTRODUCTION

Overall projections over 5 years

Senior Journalists

86,754 registered newspapers and periodicals¹, 300 TV Channels (under News and Current Affairs Category), 300 radio channels, 300 online media outlets = 87,654 media outlets

20% of those 87,654 media outlets as high circulation/ useful to be trained = 17, 530

Average of 5 people from each media outlet (across national state and district) = 17,530 x 5

Sub-total = 87,650

PIOs / PROs

National level (can include PIOs/PROs from NIDM/NDMA, Health, Rural Development,

671 districts² x 5 people per district = 3355

35 states x 25 people per state = 875

Sub-total = 4,380

Total number of trainees: 87,650 + 4,380 = 92,030

Scale up the number of trainings over 5 years

1st year – 5,000

2nd year – 12,030

3rd year – 25,000

4th year – 25,000

5th year – 25,000

How many RPs are required?

Batch of 20 = 92,030/20 = 4601

Around 12 trainings per year (one a month) on average for each RP over 5 years: 4601 / (12 x 5) = 77 resource persons

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. This heterogeneity will mean that various methods will have to be adopted in order to try and reach the different stakeholders.
- Considering the tensions that already exist between these competing media themselves, not to mention the government, conflict is to be expected during the simulation.
- Since there is no mandatory 'ethical code of conduct' for journalists, enforcing these norms will prove to be a challenge.
- Commercial compulsions, TRPs and need for 'exclusives' will be continue to be a major hurdle.

¹ <http://rni.nic.in/> (accessed in October 2013). Numbers have since increased.

² Data on number of states, UTS and districts sourced from <http://goirectory.nic.in>

INTRODUCTION

Addressing the constraints

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

- Adapting to varying levels of knowledge and intent by using a blended learning methodology. The online component will attempt solve a few different constraints. It will address the lack of time problem, allowing busy senior journalists, PIOs and PROs to go through course material in their free time and at their own pace. People may be more comfortable and less embarrassed to do this. The online discussion board will also help the trainer figure out and modulate different conflicts before they meet face-to-face.
- Put the participants into each other's shoes during the simulation to try and get them to see each other's point of view and understand limitations. Suggestions on training delivery also look at how conflicts that arise can be turned into conversation stimulators.
- Base the module on principles that are easy to remember and may help journalists create stories that 'differentiate' themselves.
- Give practical insights on new story ideas that may spark interest among some of the press.

The media

The media to be used include online reading, discussion boards and quizzes; and a workshop component that uses role plays and simulation activities.

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

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.

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.

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 thought 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.

TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Approach to training

Keeping in mind the training constraints of senior journalists, the training approach should adopt a less rigid and more fluid structure that allows for maximum interaction and minimal 'teaching' modes.

- Avoid PowerPoint's and other one-way lecture tools. Instead use discussion, role play and other interactive tools
- Encourage participants to lead parts of sessions in groups where clear leaders emerge
- Solicit stories and examples from the experiences of the trainees themselves using those to expand the discussion, rather than rigidly giving right and wrong examples.

RESOURCE PERSON HANDOUT – Training techniques

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.
- Write only key points on powerpoint slides and don't just read from them.
- 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 not 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.

TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Approach to training

Keeping in mind the training constraints of senior journalists, the training approach should adopt a less rigid and more fluid structure that allows for maximum interaction and minimal 'teaching' modes.

- Avoid powerpoints and other one-way lecture tools. Instead use discussion, role play and other interactive tools
- Encourage participants to lead parts of sessions in groups where clear leaders emerge
- Solicit stories and examples from the experiences of the trainees themselves using those to expand the discussion, rather than rigidly giving right and wrong examples.

PART 2 - ONLINE LEARNING UNITS

NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – Online learning units

Aim: To teach resource persons the principles of disaster reporting and how to spark and guide discussion on online discussion boards

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

Explain how the online part of the blended learning system will work when Resource Persons are carrying out training of journalists. This will be simple reading and quizzes to re-acquaint them with the basic concepts. The core part of the online course will be the discussion boards.

For each of these learning units, do a review of the core information. Do not use power points. Instead start a discussion. You could use the quiz of each section as a basis to explain the basic concepts. You may use the blackboard/whiteboard to write key points.

What key topics should be touched on 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 cycle
- The role media can play across the disaster cycle

Accuracy

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

Balance

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

Dignity

- Interviewing
- Visuals
- Overall reporting

Environment and Development

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

Follow-up

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

Safety

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

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

Group work

Divide the participants into groups of 4-5. 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. Have each group discuss the online discussion board questions. Observe whether the facilitator lets each person talk. What happens when there are differences of opinion? What kinds of responses ensue?

Key discussion points for larger group discussion

Come back together and have a larger group discussion.

- How will this be different when you are writing online? How many times a day will you need to check and moderate?
- What will change in the way you moderate?
- How did you further spark discussion?
- What questions elicited strong emotions?
- 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?

FAQ: How do you engage people in a discussion online?

One major difference between face-to-face and online engagement will be about involvement. It is easier to engage people face-to-face. Some people may not be very comfortable writing. On the other hand, other people will feel much freer to voice their opinion. An online moderator needs to walk the fine line between ensuring that nothing impolite is said and inadvertently silencing people. Some tips to keep in mind include:

- Start by leaving the discussion broad enough to accommodate various points of view.
- However, give participants a question to answer that will help them gather their thoughts.
- Allow responses to be as short or long as they feel comfortable with; but set a cut-off. For example, no more than 500 words. This ensures that the discussion stays a discussion and doesn't turn into a monologue.
- Ask participants to write full sentences to make it easier for others to understand.
- In case you feel the discussion is going off track, use one of the pointer questions or add an example to narrow the focus.

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Online learning units

Overall aim: To sensitise 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: The entire online part of the module must be completed at home within one week as per the participants' convenience.

Conference call to introduce the course

Put together a conference call with all the participants in the batch. Ensure a mix of journalists from different types of media houses and of PIOs/PROs.

After a round of introductions of the participants, introduce the course. Explain how the online part of the blended learning system will work. This includes simple reading material and quizzes to re-acquaint them with the basic concepts. A core part of the online course will be the discussion boards. Explain that:

- This is a course to explore principles and how you can apply them to your work, not to teach black and white facts. Therefore, active participation is essential!
- Participation in the online discussion board is mandatory.
- All comments are to be made politely.

Set one day of the week for each part of the learning unit where the majority of the discussion can take place. This will help keep the momentum going.

The two-day workshop should be scheduled in the week following the online course.

FAQ: How do you engage people in a discussion online?

One major difference between face-to-face and online engagement will be about involvement. It is easier to engage people face-to-face. Some people may not be very comfortable writing. On the other hand, other people will feel much freer to voice their opinion. An online moderator needs to walk the fine line between ensuring that nothing impolite is said and inadvertently silencing people. Some tips to keep in mind include:

- Start by leaving the discussion broad enough to accommodate various points of view.
- However, give participants a question to answer that will help them gather their thoughts.
- Allow responses to be as short or long as they feel comfortable with; but set a cut-off. For example, no more than 300 words per response. This ensures that the discussion stays a discussion and doesn't turn into a monologue.
- Ask participants to write full sentences to make it easier for others to understand.
- In case you feel the discussion is going off track, use one of the pointer questions or add an example to narrow the focus.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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 that 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

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Understanding disasters

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

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 landslides.

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 main 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

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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.

Discussion board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. Road accidents and diarrhea kill more people annually than cyclones, floods or earthquakes. Floods (including small-scale flooding) have a greater economic impact annually than earthquakes. Yet it the dramatic visuals that are most often associated with a disaster. So what is a disaster?
 - On a related note, India has a national calamity fund. What is a national calamity?
2. The media has begun to take an interest in early warning as in the case of Cyclone Phailin. These reports helped raise awareness among the general public and assisted the government. However, what further role can it play in reaching out to last-mile communities who are often left out?
 - State suggestions of possible media action
 - Share any examples you have of such work or that you have done
3. The media reach is wide and varied. Yet, often they play a role only in the immediate aftermath of a disaster or in a limited way in early warning. What role can media play in other phases of the disaster cycle?
 - State suggestions of possible media action
 - Share any examples you have heard of such work or that you have done
4. When you write of an earthquake being 7.5 on the Richter scale or an approaching cyclone as a severe tropical depression, it is very hard for the general public to comprehend what that means. How do you simplify complex terminology and scales for a general audience?
 - State suggestions of possible simplification methods
 - Share any examples you have heard of such work or that you have done

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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.

Magnitude (Richter scale)	Intensity (Modified Mercalli scale)	Typical Observations of MM scale
1.0 - 3.0	I	I. Not felt except by a very few under especially favourable conditions.
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.
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Source: Magnitude/Intensity Comparison. http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/topics/mag_vs_int.php (Accessed in January 2014)

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 counter-clockwise 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, w

hen 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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

Category	Wind speed (Kmph)	Storm surge (metre)	Potential Damage	Action
Deep Depression			<p><i>Minor damage</i></p> <p>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</p>	Fishermen advised not to venture into sea
Cyclonic storm	62 -87 kmph		<p><i>Minor to Moderate damage</i></p> <p>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.</p>	Fishermen advised not to venture into sea
Severe cyclonic storm	88-117 kmph	Up to 1.5 metres	<p><i>Moderate damage</i></p> <p>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.</p>	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	<p><i>Large</i></p> <p>Total destruction of thatched houses/ extensive damage to kutcha houses. Some damage to pucca houses. Potential threat from flying objects.</p>	Fishermen not to venture into sea. Evacuation from

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

			<p>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. Blowing down bushy trees like mango. Phenomenal seas with wave heights of more than 14m. Visibility severely affected. Movement in motor boats and small ships unsafe. Inundation up to 10 Km in specific areas.</p>	<p>coastal areas needs to be mobilised. People advised to remain indoors. Judicious regulation of rail and road traffic needed.</p>
Very severe cyclonic storm	168-221 kmph	2 – 5 metres	<p><i>Extensive</i> Extensive damage to all types of kutcha 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.</p>	<p>Fishermen are not to venture into the sea. Evacuation from coastal areas is essential. Diversion / suspension of rail traffic may be required.</p>
Super cyclonic storm	Over 222 kmph	Over 5 metres	<p><i>Catastrophic damage</i> 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Adapted from: Indian Meteorological Department, <http://www.imd.gov.in/section/nhac/dynamic/faq/FAQP.htm#q51>

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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 un-even distribution of rain fall coupled with mindless urbanisation, encroaching upon and filling up natural drainage channels and urban lakes to use the high-value urban land for buildings.³

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.

³ <http://nidm.gov.in/idmc/Proceedings/Flood/B2%20-%2036.pdf>

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:

- Reduction in money lending
- Unusual movement of flocks and herds in search of pasture
- Unusual migration
- Rapid rise in price of daily food
- Remarkable decrease in train travel and festival attendance
- Abnormal unemployment
- Abnormal variation in liquor consumption
- Abnormal sale of family jewellery at inadequate prices

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 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:

$$\text{Disaster}^4 = \text{Hazard}^5 + \text{Vulnerability}^6.$$

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 (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.

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

⁴ 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.”

⁵ 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.”

⁶ 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”

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

- 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.
- Retrofitting of existing buildings to ensure earthquake-safe buildings

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 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'.
- 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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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

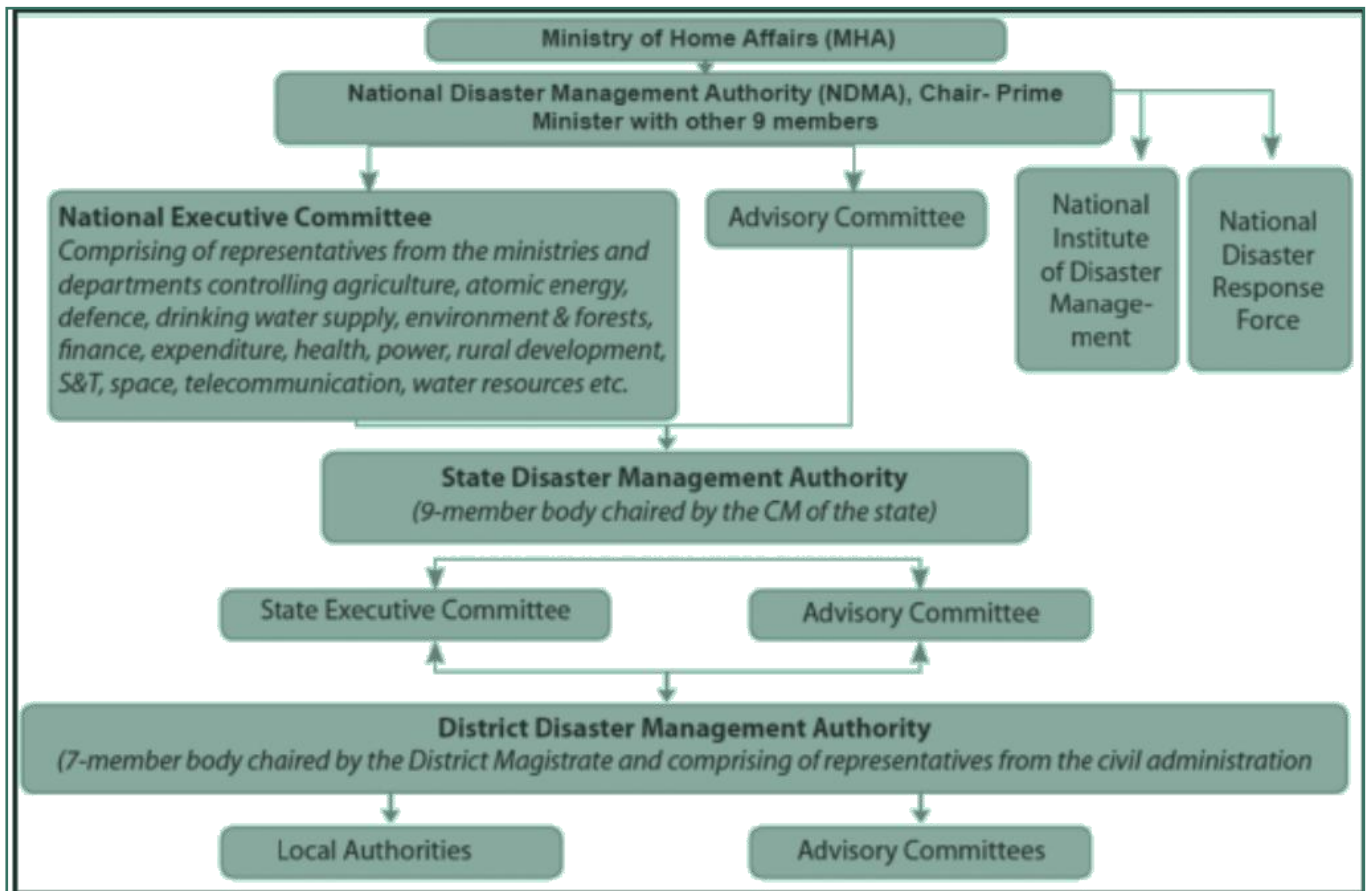
The administrative response

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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS



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 DDMA's 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

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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 is 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.

UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS

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 main 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

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE - Accuracy

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

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 who 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

ACCURACY

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.

Discussion board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. You are in an emergency situation where validated information or statistics are unavailable. Rumours are swirling; each one with totally contradictory numbers. In such cases, how and what do you broadcast/publish?
 - If using the numbers, are there any caveats you include in the report?
2. In a desperate situation where people are taking food and supplies to survive, is it accurate to label them ‘looters’. How would you frame your report?
 - In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, for example, only the African-American population was labeled as ‘looters’; while the Caucasian community doing the same thing was not. In an already tense situation, these racial overtones led to a law and order problem where none existed. How do you ensure that you are not 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?

Case stories to further understanding

Illustrative example: One word changes 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.

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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 needs 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: BALANCE

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE - Balance

Objectives: 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.

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.

True

False

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.

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.

7. A reporter must never get physically involved in helping the community.

True

False

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.

Discussion Board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. In the aftermath of an emergency, there are often situations where the primary instinct is to stop reporting neutrally and get involved. As you are reporting, you see several people trapped on the other side of the broken bridge. What do you do? Until what point do you stay neutral and when do you get involved?
 - Will your choices be different when it is a matter of life or death?
 - In case you decide to help, do you record/write about it? What kind of tone would that take?
2. In the aftermath of a disaster, there are several different types of stories that emerge.
 - Death and destruction (the death toll figures, causalities, broken buildings and others)
 - Suffering of survivors and their needs (including relief efforts)
 - Invisible / indirect impacts on people (including affected areas away from the centre and voices of different affected groups)
 - Stories of positive work and local innovations

What would you choose to report on and why? What weightage do you give to different stories?

- Does this weightage change as the disaster goes on (for instance is there a difference in the priorities between the first and the tenth day)?

Case stories to further understanding

Illustrative example: 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

BALANCE

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.

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Story choice

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 of core vulnerable target groups

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!

Finding positive hidden 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. Things 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 be careful of their own tone and pitch. A very fast, 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.

BALANCE

QUIZ 4

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 4: DIGNITY

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Dignity

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

Discussion Board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. In the aftermath of an emergency, people who are normally proud and private are forced to live out their lives in the open – from their raw emotion to using the toilet. Should they have a choice of being portrayed to the world like that in that moment?
 - How do you draw a line between reporting and intruding on privacy?
 - Will your choices be different when you already have a story in mind?
 - What do you do when you are interviewing someone and they break down? Do you show that?
2. Every place has its own customs and traditions. How do you ensure that your interview is not being rude or crossing unspoken lines?
 - What are the basic customs that you should know before attempting an interview?
 - What examples have you experience or heard of on this topic?
3. How do you consciously phrase questions that allow people to answer freely?
 - What do you do when you have a very strong opinion on a topic? Is it possible to remain neutral or does the bias come through in some way?

Case stories to further understanding

Illustrative example: 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.

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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.

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 story writing

The way a story is written; the words used to describe the survivors; and the choice of what footage or quotes to retain all play a role in the sensitivity of a story. When a person's most painful moments are recorded (often without their consent), it almost becomes exploitation. Even years later, these choices can badly affect a survivor's dignity and their psychological state. While a reporter's job is to tell the story, finding the nuance that allows people to keep their dignity intact is crucial.

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.

QUIZ 5

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 5: 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.

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.

Discussion Board

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1. Future disasters are currently brewing in a number of ecological hotspots across the country. In the mountains, rampant unsustainable construction and deforestation are taking place that put hill towns at even greater risk.
In coastal areas, overfishing, the fast disappearance of bioshields and seaside construction are a cause for concern in the face of rising sea levels.
In the river basins, construction right along the river and destructive crop practices are a problem.
How should these stories be reported?
 - 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 would that take?
2. Development is viewed as large scale infrastructure construction in the cities and tier 2 towns. How do we look at development in another way? In terms of the village where the nearest doctor is a 2-day walk away. In terms of the urban slums where water is dirty and the children are always falling ill. In terms of the communities where there are schools but no teachers. In terms of the safety for the most marginalised in a community. How do we look at development from the point of view of the vulnerabilities that make communities even more susceptible to disasters?
 - 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 would that take?

Case stories to further understanding

Illustrative example: 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.

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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

QUIZ 6

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 6: FOLLOW UP

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Follow up

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

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.

FOLLOW UP

Discussion Board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. Disaster reporting inevitably loses its space to more popular stories after the initial few days. Yet, there is a critical need for continued attention which can often mean continued aid. 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?
2. Often, large amounts of aid are committed that never see action on the ground. The wheel is also often reinvented in terms of the types of programmes and action that is taken. What kind of stories can be told to help learning and accountability?
 - 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 would that take?

Case stories to further understanding

Illustrative example: 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.

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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?

Possible follow-up stories on 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)

Cases of positive impact

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?

FOLLOW UP

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 7: SAFETY

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE

Objective: Reflect on principles and standards of safety

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.

SAFETY

Discussion Board

These discussion board questions are intended for use by Resource Persons. They will help spark discussion among the participants. The key questions given below can be modified with local examples or pertinent additions as per the local requirements or specific needs of the participant group. All the questions need not be used. You may choose to pick one or two depending on the level of engagement and understanding of the participant group. The prompter points below each topic can be used to guide the discussion or spark more points when it is underway.

1. There are situations where reporters need to take instant decisions about acceptable levels of risk to cover a story. What protocols are in place or do you feel need to be implemented to help them assess this?
 - Are there any personal examples you can share?
 - What policies does your organisation follow in regards to safety?

Case stories to further understanding

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/>).

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Safety principles

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

Physical harm

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.

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.

Dealing with trauma

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.

SAFETY

QUIZ 7

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

PART 3 – WORKSHOP

NOTE FOR MASTER RESOURCE PERSONS – Workshop

Objective: Facilitate and conceptualise sessions to build collaboration across media to strengthen consistency of messaging.

Timeframe: ½ a day (3 – 4 hours) for each activity.

Group activities

Have the resource persons actually undertake each exercise in a shortened time frame. Keep one hour at the end of each activity for plenary discussion on the following points.

Activity 1

Recap of principles learnt in the online course

The first part of the session will focus on a quick recap of the principles. Go around the room and get participants to talk about the core principles. Cite a few key points or examples that emerged from the online discussion board. Distribute copies of the Guideline and Handbook.

Critiquing through the principle lens

Pick a few of recent reports. These could be in any form (TV, radio, print or online). Break the participants into groups of 3 or 4 and have them discuss how these stories adhere to the principles.

Have groups think about:

- Where the story fits in the disaster cycle? Is it useful for that time frame?
- Does it portray the community with dignity?
- Is it accurate?
- Is the story balanced?
- How could it be tweaked to connect to larger issues

Activity 2

ROLE PLAY - Press conference

This simulation aims to put the variety of participants in each other's shoes in order to promote consistency and collaboration. A choice of scenarios is provided below. You can pick the most appropriate one depending on the location, key vulnerabilities and audience. The others should be discussed in the overall plenary discussion to give the Resource Persons an idea of where each would be appropriate.

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 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 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.

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.

*The handout 'Surakshit Pradesh: State Profile' should be handed out to the participants along with the simulation sheet and their specific role card.

Activity

48 hours after the disaster has struck, there is a press conference being held at the district headquarters. Their building itself has sustained some damage.

Roles

Editor / Anchor 1

A relatively junior editor in your organisation, you are still determined to prove yourself. You look at this opportunity as a chance to show your analytical skill. You are purely interested in getting one or two sound bites that will dominate your talk show discussion tonight. In your mind, each question is a chance to peg another panellist for your discussion.

Editor / Anchor 2

An old hand, you've seen many of these press conferences. You know that very little validated information will be available at the moment. You see this as a chance to probe a little more on what kind of relief measures are being thought of by the government.

Senior reporter 1

Your major aim from this press conference is to get any sound bite that will get you into primetime or on the front page. You purposely want to ask controversial questions that will rattle the PIOs/PROs.

Senior reporter 2

You are a local reporter who has seen your state going through mess after mess. To you, this is personal though you are trying to stay neutral. You want to ask about how such a disaster could happen. Why weren't there better preparedness measures in place?

PIO/PRO 1

You have spent 25 years in the revenue department and have seen many types of disasters. You are a pro at dealing with the media in these situations. Initial assessment reports that have come to you show that the death toll is far higher and the damage far worse than the media is reporting so far. However, you are waiting for the district collector to sign off on the report and have been given instructions to be non-committal about the numbers in today's press conference. In your experience, releasing unverified numbers has led to many problems.

PIO/PRO 2

You have recently joined the department and are determined to show the media how different you are from other government officials. You feel strongly that the media should be used as a tool to spread information. Initial assessment reports that have come to you show that the death toll is far higher and the damage far worse than the media is reporting so far. However, you are waiting for the district collector to sign off on the report and have been given instructions to be non-committal about the numbers in today's press conference. You are wondering how you can work around that to give them as much information as possible.

Activity 3

Tweaking messages across mediums

Break the participants into groups of 3-4 people. Have each group pick the example of Surakshit Pradesh from the press conference the day before. 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 20 minutes

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?

Activity 4

Open chair exercise

Start with four chairs in the middle of the room. Ask for three volunteers and have others sitting or standing around them. Spark the discussion with a question 'Why is reporting on disasters and DRR getting more difficult with time.' The three volunteers begin the discussion. Anyone who has something to say can go and sit on the empty chair. However, one of the other three must then get up, keeping one chair empty at all times.

This process goes on for 90 minutes.

WORKSHOP

The key role of the facilitator here is not to steer the process, but to only observe and take notes. Only get involved in the discussion if absolutely necessary and getting out of hand. This free-flow of discussion and thoughts often sparks new ideas.

At the end of the session, the resource person should summarise the key points that emerged during the session.

Note: This is a suggested question. If this question is changed, ensure that it is sufficiently open-ended in order to allow this free-flow of ideas.

Agreed way forward

Spend the last part of the workshop discussing common agreement to follow the guidelines and areas of collaboration where possible. Aside from the A-F and S, add any key points that may have emerged from the discussion over the last two days.

Key plenary discussion points for resource persons

- Where were the main sticking points?
- Where were the places that emotions ran high? How do you think it should be handled?
- 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?

RESOURCE PERSON NOTE – Day 1

Objective: Understand varying needs of different stakeholders.

DAY 1 – MORNING

Introduction

Have another round of introductions (in person) and again explain the context and aim of the training.

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.

Recap of principles learnt in the online course

The first part of the session will focus on a quick recap of the principles. Go around the room and get participants to talk about the core principles. Cite a few key points or examples that emerged from the online discussion board.

Distribute copies of the Guideline and Handbook.

Critiquing through the principle lens

The resource person needs to pick a few of recent reports. These could be in any form (TV, radio, print or online). Break the participants into groups of 3 or 4 and have them discuss how these stories adhere to the principles.

Have groups think about:

- Where the story fits in the disaster cycle? Is it useful for that time frame?
- Does it portray the community with dignity?
- Is it accurate?
- Is the story balanced?
- How could it be tweaked to connect to larger issues

DAY 1 – AFTERNOON

ROLE PLAY - Press conference

This simulation aims to put the variety of participants in each other's shoes in order to promote consistency and collaboration.

A choice of scenarios is provided below. MRPs / RPs can pick the most appropriate one depending on the location, key vulnerabilities and audience.

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.

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 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.

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.

OR

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.

*The handout 'Surakshit Pradesh: State Profile' should be handed out to the participants along with the simulation sheet and their specific role card.

48 hours after the disaster has struck, there is a press conference being held at the district headquarters. Their building itself has sustained some damage.

Roles

Editor / Anchor 1

A relatively junior editor in your organisation, you are still determined to prove yourself. You look at this opportunity as a chance to show your analytical skill. You are purely interested in getting one or

WORKSHOP

two sound bites that will dominate your talk show discussion tonight. In your mind, each question is a chance to peg another panellist for your discussion.

Editor / Anchor 2

An old hand, you've seen many of these press conferences. You know that very little validated information will be available at the moment. You see this as a chance to probe a little more on what kind of relief measures are being thought of by the government.

Senior reporter 1

Your major aim from this press conference is to get any sound bite that will get you into primetime or on the front page. You purposely want to ask controversial questions that will rattle the PIOs/PROs.

Senior reporter 2

You are a local reporter who has seen your state going through mess after mess. To you, this is personal though you are trying to stay neutral. You want to ask about how such a disaster could happen. Why weren't there better preparedness measures in place?

PIO/PRO 1

You have spent 25 years in the revenue department and have seen many types of disasters. You are a pro at dealing with the media in these situations. Initial assessment reports that have come to you show that the death toll is far higher and the damage far worse than the media is reporting so far. However, you are waiting for the district collector to sign off on the report and have been given instructions to be non-committal about the numbers in today's press conference. In your experience, releasing unverified numbers has led to many problems.

PIO/PRO 2

You have recently joined the department and are determined to show the media how different you are from other government officials. You feel strongly that the media should be used as a tool to spread information. Initial assessment reports that have come to you show that the death toll is far higher and the damage far worse than the media is reporting so far. However, you are waiting for the district collector to sign off on the report and have been given instructions to be non-committal about the numbers in today's press conference. You are wondering how you can work around that to give them as much information as possible.

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – SCENARIO

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.

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 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.

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. Laths 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.

OR

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.

48 hours after the disaster has struck, there is a press conference being held at the district headquarters. Their building itself has sustained some damage.

**A separate role card will be handed to you by the facilitator. You must ask/respond to questions in this role.*

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT - SURAKSHIT PRADESH: STATE PROFILE

Background

Surakhshith Pradesh is a multi-hazard prone district in the North of 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

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.

Surakhshith Pradesh at a glance:

Total Population	35 million
Child population (0-6)	12 million
Population below poverty line	21 million
Literacy rate	60%
Estimated number of child laborers	850,000
Gender ratio	950 (F) / 1000 (M)
Infant mortality rate	54/1000
Maternal mortality rate	740/ 100,000
Population , access to safe water	50%
Sanitation coverage	43%
Per capita income	Rs 3066/-
Total Household Income	Rs 17,208/-
Total area	155,707 Sq. km
Recorded forest area	59555 Sq. km
Actual vegetation cover	47m205 Sq. km
Irrigated area	59 Lakh ha.
Annual rain fall	150 cm.
Recorded forest area	59555 Sq. km

WORKSHOP

- 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 Adhwara 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

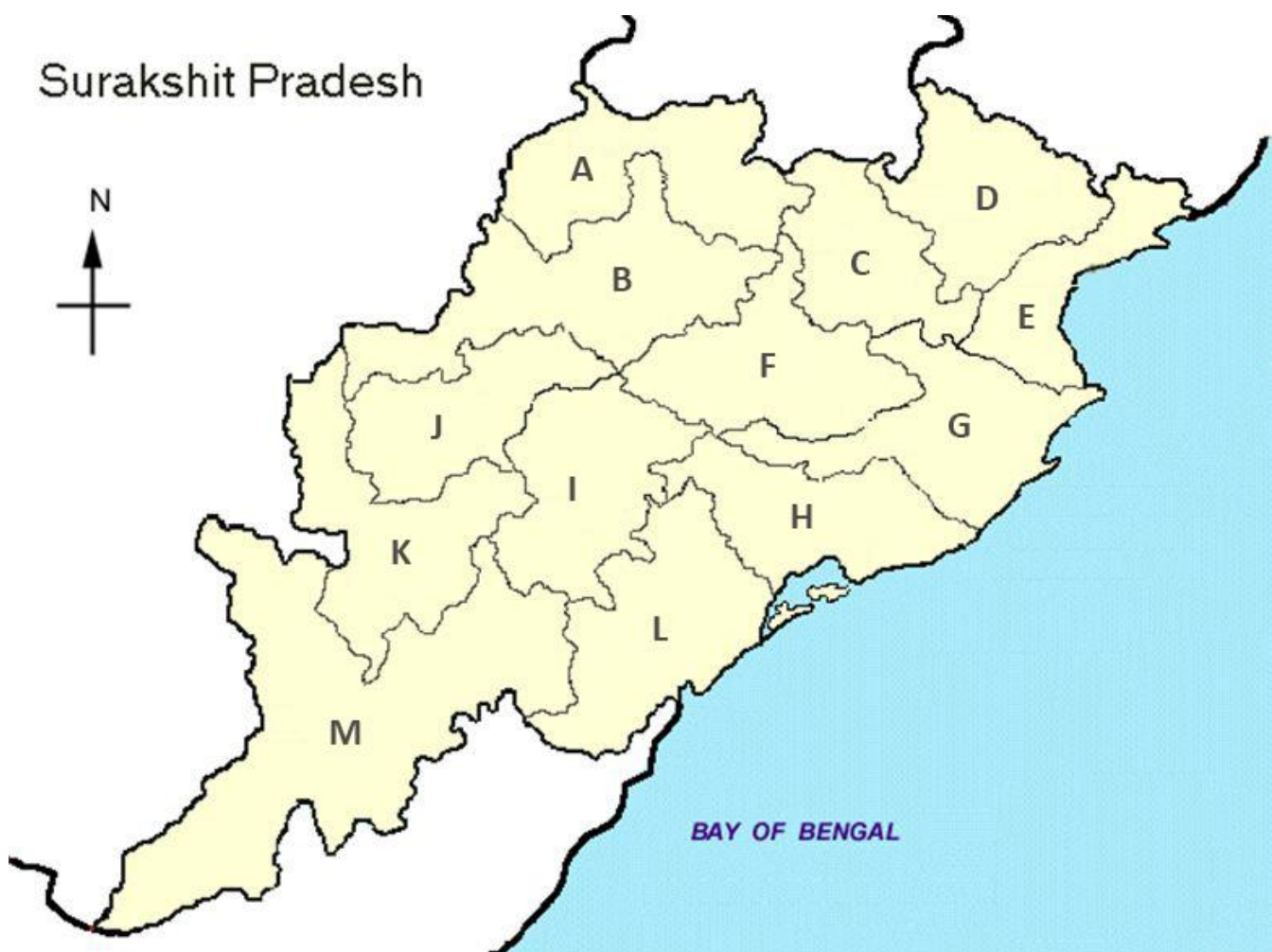
The rainfall varies between 900mm and 1300 mm; with an average rainfall of 1,273.2 mm. The high flood level is 54.017 m.

WORKSHOP

Recent occurrence of Natural Calamities

Natural Calamity	Years of Occurrence
Drought	1970, 1993, 2001, 2007
Flood	Almost yearly with the most major floods occurring in 1978, 1987, 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2008 and 2010
Cyclone	1977-78, 1982-83, 99-2000, 2006 , 2011

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.



RESOURCE PERSON NOTE -Day 2

DAY 2 MORNING - Tweaking stories across mediums

Break the participants into groups of 3-4 people. Have each group pick the example of Surakshit Pradesh from the press conference the day before. 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 20 minutes

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?

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – Tweaking stories across mediums

Type of media	Points to consider
Print	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.
Television	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.
Radio	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.
Online writing	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.
Twitter	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.
Facebook	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.
Other social media	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.

DAY 2 – AFTERNOON

Open chair exercise

Start with four chairs in the middle of the room. Ask for three volunteers and have others sitting or standing around them. Spark the discussion with a question ‘Why is reporting on disasters and DRR getting more difficult with time.’ The three volunteers begin the discussion. Anyone who has something to say can go and sit on the empty chair. However, one of the other three must then get up, keeping one chair empty at all times.

This process goes on for 90 minutes.

The key role of the facilitator here is not to steer the process, but to only observe and take notes. Only get involved in the discussion if absolutely necessary and getting out of hand. This free-flow of discussion and thoughts often sparks new ideas.

At the end of the session, the resource person should summarise the key points that emerged during the session.

Note: This is a suggested question. If this question is changed, ensure that it is sufficiently open-ended in order to allow this free-flow of ideas.

Agreed way forward

Spend the last part of the workshop discussing common agreement to follow the guidelines and areas of collaboration where possible. Aside from the A-F and S, add any key points that may have emerged from the discussion over the last two days.

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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Internal validation

Each learning module online will be validated through auto-marked quizzes. A pre-test to be done before the start of the online learning modules and a post-test to be done in the last session of the workshop will help reveal the shift in perception.

At the simulation workshop, the validation will be based mainly on the observations of the resource person and the feedback forms of the training participants. A major component of the success will be to see what consensus (if any) on collaborative action can be arrived at by the end of the training.

External validation

Analysis of media coverage of disaster and DRR related topics needs to be done at periodic intervals (ideally six-monthly) and in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. This has to be done at various levels:

- 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)

Key informant interviews should also be carried out to see how (if at all) relationships between the PIOs/PROs and media have changed.

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.