HP State Disaster Management Authority

Government of India-UNDP

Disaster Risk Reduction Programme (DRR) (2009-12)

AWARENESS GENERATION

Sharing the word, spreading the knowledge!

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle. – Khalil Gibran (Philosopher)

A. The Context

State of Himachal is prone to various hazards – natural and manmade - namely earthquakes, flash floods, riverine floods, land-slides, snow storms and avalanches and dam failures, fires – domestic and wild, road accidents etc. However, the hazard which poses biggest threat to the State is the earthquake hazard. From the earthquake hazard point of view the country has been divided into five zones. Zone V denotes the area which is highly vulnerable to earthquake hazard. The State of HP falls in seismic Zone IV and V according to the earthquake zonation map prepared by the Bureau of Indian Standards. District Chamba, Kullu, Kangra, Una, Hamirpur, Mandi, and Bilaspur Districts lie in Zone V. The remaining districts of Lahaul and Spiti, Kinnaur, Shimla, Solan and Sirmaur lie in Zone IV. Therefore, whole state is prone to severe earthquake hazard. The State has been shaken by more than 80 times by earthquakes having a magnitude of 4 and above on the Richter Scale as per the recorded history of earthquakes. None of us can forget the devastation caused by the 1905 Kangra earthquake, one of the deadliest earthquakes in the history of India. The earthquake resulted into the death 20,000 people, destruction of around 1.0 lakh houses, perishing of around 53,000 animals and was felt in an area of around 4,16,000 square kilometres.

2. A period of more than 100 years has elapsed since then and as per the scientific opinion the occurrence of a mega earthquake (having a magnitude of 8 and above) in this part of the country is a very strong possibility. Dr. Anand S Arya (Department of Earthquake Engineering, University of Roorkee, (presently National Seismic Advisory with the Ministry of Home affairs) has worked out a hypothetical recurrence of earthquake of *M* 8.0 in Kangra area of Himachal Pradesh (like that of 1905). The scenario highlights the disastrous situation that could have developed if the repeat earthquake had occurred in the census year 1991. The results are obtained for two cases of all buildings being of traditional construction (i) *without* earthquake safety features, (ii) *with* earthquake-resistant features as per the Indian Standard Building Codes.

It is seen that:-

- If all the 18,15,858 houses are without earthquake safety provisions, the direct losses will amount to Rs 51.04 billion. Since about 65,000 lives may be lost and 399,695 houses ruined completely, the trauma will be too great and cost of emergency relief will be exorbitant.

- If all the houses were made earthquake-resistant as per IS: 4326 and IS: 13928 when built initially, the direct losses will amount only to Rs 19.6 billion. The extra cost of earthquake safe provision for all houses would only be Rs 6.35 billion. Hence, there will be a net saving of Rs 25.09 billion or about 50%. Besides, the lives lost will only be one-fifth and totally ruined houses reduced to about one-fourth, the trauma and relief costs will also be reduced to about one-fourth. The damage scenario brings out clearly the economic and other social benefits of pre-earthquake preventive measures.

3. The scenario highlights the need to make the BIS building codes mandatory for all the future construction in the State. It also calls for amending the building bye-laws so that hazard resistant constructions can be made mandatory. Also calls for retrofitting the existing building stock which is not in a position to withstand the future probable earthquake shock.

4. Everybody of use have seen the devastation caused by the recent earthquakes like the 2004 Sumatra earthquake which generated Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2005 Kashmir earthquake, 2009 Haitian and Chilean earthquakes and the quite recently the New Zealand earthquake. The most recent earthquake which has shaken Japan is an eye opener and a wakeup call to all of us. The images of devastation caused by these earthquakes make us to think about the steps which are required to be taken at the State level. One of the instrument of preparedness is awareness generation. A awareness generation campaign needs to be started for the communities and all the stakeholders.

B. Why Communities?

5. Community is both victim and first responder to accidents, disasters or disastrous situations. A community which is well aware of the hazard it faces and is equipped, trained and prepared to deal with the same is more resilient to disaster shocks.

C. The Strategy

6. Holistic disaster management necessitates multi-stakeholder approach involving all segments of society. A massive awareness campaign is necessary to aware and prepare the communities about the hazard they are vulnerable to. Awareness generation is pertinent for creating capacity by improving infrastructure and training people, and finally marshalling resources of every kind, to cope with natural or human-induced hazards, and to prevent

them from turning into disasters. These campaigns would be carried out through various means like rallies, street plays, exhibitions, competitions in schools, distribution of IEC materials, wall paintings on do's and don'ts for various hazards. Meetings with the key persons of a village such as the village head, health worker, school teachers, elected representatives and members of the youth and women clubs also motivate the villagers to carry forward these plans for a safer living. Apart from print and electronic media, places with high public visibility such as hospitals, schools, airports, railway stations, bus terminals, post offices, Government Offices where public flow is in large numbers, ULBs and PRI offices, Patwarkhanas, would be used to spread the desired message. Slides in cinema halls wherever existing in the State would also be used to show regularly for mass awareness for taking steps against the fire and earthquake etc. risks.

D. Targeting the Audience

7. The awareness will be spread to the targeting audience/stakeholders by means of the following means and modes:-

i) Involvement of Folk Troupes, Volunteers, Fairs, Socio-religious platforms, festivals and fairs organised by the District and local Administration.

ii) The Information and Public Relations Department to train and prepare its folk singers and drama units to spread the message through all the officially organised functions. The department would also ensure the screening of the documentaries, movies and slides at the appropriate level targeting the audience. The Cable operators, cinema halls, public fairs and official gatherings would be targeted. Through their drama units the department would also develop songs and skits (nukkad-natak) for street display to make people aware of different aspects of disaster management.

iii) The offices stationery would be also utilised to include slogans on various aspects of DRM through printing and stationery department.

iv) The NSS and NCC and NYKS volunteers would be roped in to carry out information education communication (IEC) activities.

v) One of the key initiatives for preparedness is creating mass awareness regarding disasters. The transport sector will also be involved as carrier for disaster awareness messages particularly on road safety. The department of Transport and HRTC would play a lead role in this.

vi) Awareness messages could also be inserted with other documents issued by the different government departments and agencies such as fee receipts, toll tax receipts and any other cash receipt issued by various agencies of the Government.

vii) Various stakeholders which include District Administration, District Public Relations Officer, Local Urban Bodies, representatives of educational institutions, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Inner Wheel Clubs, Red Cross Members and Volunteers, NGOs, Resident Welfare Associations, Market Associations, Line Departments of the District etc. would be actively involved in the IEC.

viii) Competitions such as painting, debates, essay etc. would be organised in schools, mock drills would be conducted according to the DMPs prepared by the schools, panchayats, blocks, and districts.

ix) Advertisements through cable channels, hand bills, magic shows and street plays on disaster management would be staged on public places or public meetings, focussed awareness meetings with resident welfare associations, civic organisations etc., awareness messages would be shown through cinema halls, fire fighting demonstrations in educational and big govt. establishments through HP Fire Services would be organised.

x) Door to door distribution of leaflets, handbills and posters through volunteers and NGOs and CSOs.

xi) International Disaster Risk Reduction Day (Second Wednesday of October) would be celebrated at the State, District and Sub-Division level every year.

xii) Mock drills in schools and offices would carried out on 4th April every year to mark the remembrance of Kangra earthquake.

E. Awareness Generation Material

8. Printed Material

Printed material in the shape of leaflets, handbills, posters, pocket guides, safe construction guidelines, slogans on government stationery, booklets, SOPs etc. would be designed, printed and distributed through various available modes.

Signage

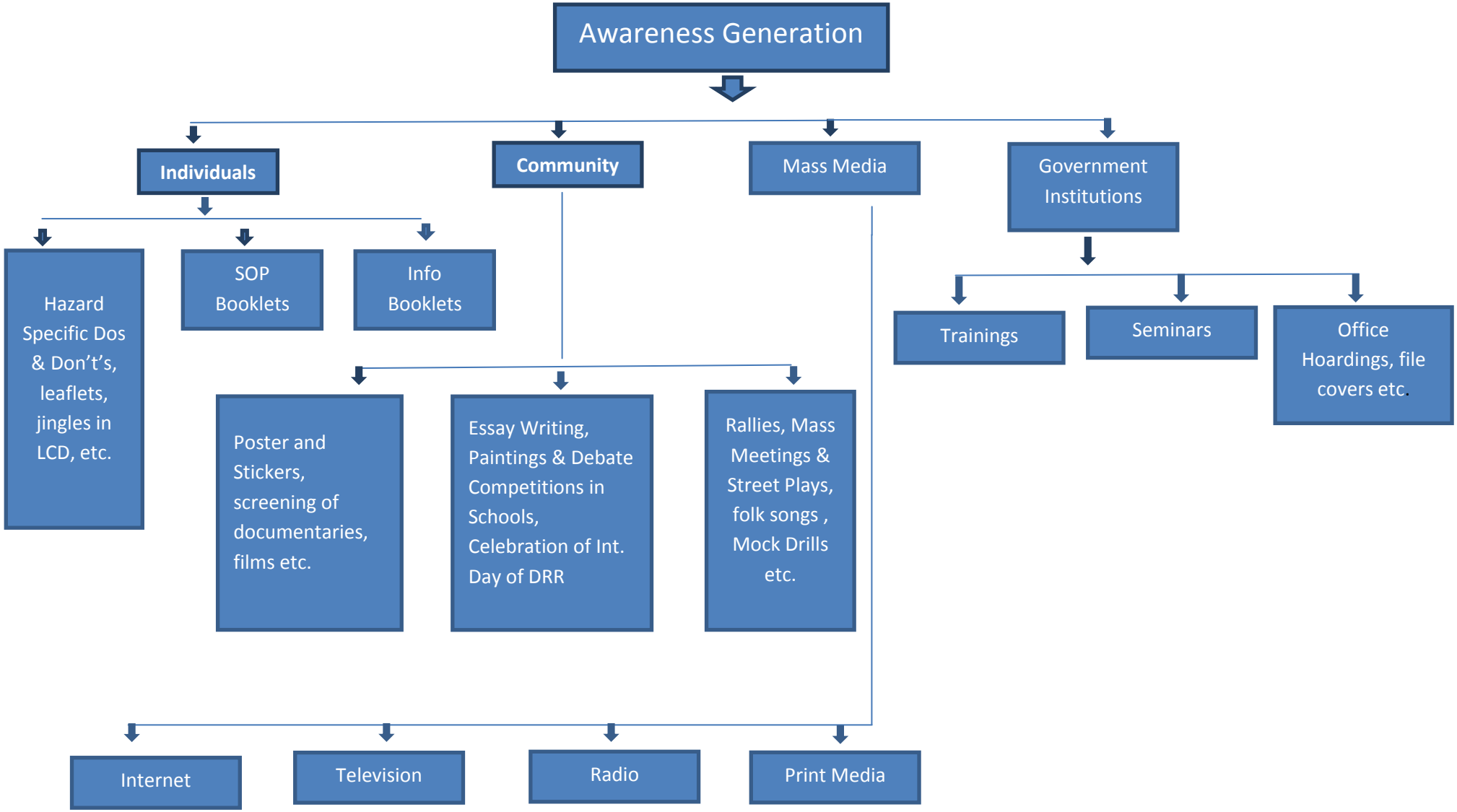
Hazard specific signage containing do's and don'ts for the public places and offices would be designed, printed and placed at appropriate locations.

Documentaries

Short documentaries for screening at schools, fairs, cable networks, social and official gatherings on various hazards would be got prepared, distributed and screened though IPR department and other means.

Skits/Street Plays/Folk Songs

The drama unit of I & PR would prepared its cultural troops to prepare short skits/street plays and folk songs on various aspects of disaster management and awareness.


Awareness Generation
Individuals
Community
Mass Media
Government Institutions
Hazard Specific Dos & Don't's, leaflets, jingles in LCD, etc.
SOP Booklets
Info Booklets
Poster and Stickers, screening of documentaries, films etc.
Essay Writing, Paintings & Debate Competitions in Schools, Celebration of Int. Day of DRR
Rallies, Mass Meetings & Street Plays, folk songs , Mock Drills etc.
Trainings
Seminars
Office Hoardings, file covers etc.
Internet
Television
Radio
Print Media