



DISASTER AWARENESS
STRATEGY FOR THE STATE OF
HIMACHAL PRADESH

Abbreviations

BRO: Border Roads Organization

CCA: Climate Change Adaptation

CPWD: Central Public Works Department

DDMA: District Disaster Management Authority

DMC: Disaster Management Cell

DMCs: Disaster Management Committees

DP: Disaster Preparedness

DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

HPC: High Powered Committee

GLOF: Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

ICU: Intensive Care Units

IDDR: International Day for Disaster Reduction

KAP: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

NCRB: National Crime Records Bureau

NGOs: Non-governmental Organizations

NCC: National Cadet Corps

OPD: Out Patient Department

OTs: Operation Theatres

PHC: Public Health Centre

PRI: Panchayati Raj Institutions

SDMA: State Disaster Management Authority

SEC: State Executive Committee

Background

Himachal Pradesh is predominantly a mountainous state located in North West India. It shares an international border with China. The state has highly dissected mountain ranges interspersed with deep gorges and valleys. It is also characterized with diverse climate that varies from semi tropical in lower hills, to semi arctic in the cold deserts areas of Spiti and Kinnaur. Himachal Pradesh is vulnerable to 25 out of 33 types of hazards identified by the High Powered Committee (HPC) of Government of India. Apart from identified hazards by HPC, the state is also confronting the emerging threats of climate change and human-wildlife conflict.



Various geophysical factors such as steepness of slopes, saturation by heavy rains, melting snow and ice, rock vibrations, excess load from embankments, fills, waste and debris dumps, change in water content, frost, change in vegetation cover and toe cutting by rivers and streams are some of the other natural factors influencing the occurrence of disasters. The vulnerability of the geologically young and not so stable steep slopes in various Himalayan ranges, has been increasing at a rapid rate in the recent decade due to inappropriate human activity like deforestation, road cutting, unscientific road construction, terracing,

water intensive agricultural practices and encroachment on steep hill slopes.

The state is highly prone to earthquake, landslide and flood/flash flood. Flood/flash flood has become the most frequent disaster causing loss to life and property. The major causes for flood and flash flood are cloudburst, excessive rainfall in the catchments and melting as well as bursting of glacial lakes. Satellite observation of the mountain top lakes have revealed a steady increase in the size and volume of many glacial lakes at high altitudes, enhancing the possibility of a devastating glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) affecting sizeable populations and damaging precious socio-economic infrastructure and development assets in the Himalayan belt. The higher reaches of the state particularly the northwestern part is also prone to snow avalanches as it receives considerable precipitation in the form of snowfall.

Forest fires are another prominent disaster in the state and a major cause of degradation of the forests in the state. The forests in the state are rich in vascular flora, which forms the conspicuous vegetation cover. Over the years, the forest wealth of the state has been destroyed by the incidences of fire attributed to both anthropogenic and other reasons leading to an ecological imbalance. People residing within forests or nearby areas are dependent on them for their source of income and for day-to-day fuel requirements. At times they set parts of forests on fire for collection of forest produce or for improving the productivity. Some fires are caused due to poor knowledge and negligence of the people. Environmental degradation is one of the major factors contributing to enhancing the vulnerability of agriculture, forestry and rangelands to natural disasters because it directly magnifies their risks.

Over the years, road accidents have become a major killer in the state. The rate of accidental deaths per thousand registered vehicles has made Himachal Pradesh the third highest accident hotspot in

the country as per the recently released report on accidental deaths by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The number of deaths due to road accidents in 2013 stood at 1,056 in a total of 2,981 road accident cases in 2013 alone. The topography of the state combined with other human induced factors is contributing to rising cases of road accidents in the state.

Himalayan ecosystems are also predominantly sensitive to climate changes. The conservation of these fragile regions is a big challenge. The economy of the state is dependent on sectors like the hydro power generation, horticulture, agriculture, forestry and tourism. For example, agriculture contributes over 45 percent to the net state domestic product. It is the main source of income and employment in the state. Over 93 percent of the population depends directly upon agriculture, which provides direct employment to 71 percent of its people. The apple cultivation constitutes 49 percent of the total area under fruit crops and 85 percent of total fruit production in the state. Natural hazards coupled with impact of climate change have the potential to adversely affect the agriculture and horticulture in the state.

As per the State Strategy and Action Plan on Climate Change, Himachal Pradesh 2012, the temperature in the Himalayan region has risen by 1.6 degree Celsius in the last century. Shimla is witness to approximately 17 percent decrease in rainfall and a decreasing trend in snowfall since the 90s. Monsoon discharge in Beas River has decreased while winter discharge in Chenab River has increased. The quality of the apples has been affected and some of the area under apple cultivation has shifted to vegetable cultivation due to rise in temperature.

The life and livelihood of people of the state are under threat of natural hazards and climate change. Hence, in addition to various prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures taken by various stakeholders, it is important that people are made aware about the disaster and climate risks in order to motivate them to undertake individual, family and community level actions to mitigate such risks.

Why Generate Disaster Awareness?

Despite continued efforts toward reducing disaster risks, economic losses from natural disasters are rising globally. It is estimated that it has increased from US\$50 billion each year in the 1980s, to just under \$200 billion each year in the last decade.¹ India is also experiencing a similar trend with an average annual estimated economic loss of \$9.8 billion out of which more than \$7 billion is accounted due to floods² which is a recurring phenomenon in most states in the country. One of the key drivers behind such increasing economic loss due to disasters is lack of knowledge about hazard impacts and access to risk information. Also there is a continuous accumulation of newer risks due to increasing exposure to hazards resulting from risk insensitive planning mechanism and unsustainable development practices, ecosystem degradation, population growth and poverty.

¹ World Bank and Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). 2013. Building Resilience: Integrating Climate and Disaster Risk into Development— The World Bank Group Experience. Washington, DC: World Bank.
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/762871468148506173/Main-report>

² The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015.
<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/42809>

We cannot eliminate disasters but we can mitigate risk. We can reduce damage and we can save more lives” – Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General.

Creating awareness about the risks posing the community is one of the key steps for risk mitigation, and preparedness to build resilience of the community. An aware community realizes the need to protect their assets and livelihood and would be able to build

back better after a disaster. The primary objectives for developing a state level mass awareness strategy are:

- To enhance the level of awareness and strengthen the culture of safety at different levels in the state.
- To influence behavioral changes through shift in the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) of the community as a means to prepare them to cope with disasters.
- To sensitize the community and different educational and civil society organizations to implement preparedness and mitigation measures.

Disaster Awareness in Himachal Pradesh

According to the Himachal Pradesh State Policy on Disaster Management, 2011, “promoting a culture of prevention, preparedness and resilience at all levels through knowledge, innovation and education”



is among its top priorities. Also, the policy objectives, *inter alia*, states “Using IEC for community awareness and preparedness in DM” as a key area of focus. The State Executive Committee (SEC) set up under the Disaster Management Act -2005 is the executive arm of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA). The Section 22 of the Act mandates the SEC with certain responsibilities which includes development of an awareness campaign strategy and its implementation in the state. In addition, it expects the awareness to be generated by the state through guidelines to integrate Disaster

Risk Reduction (DRR) into the development process. In addition, the Act mandates the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) with “facilitation of community training and awareness programmes for prevention of disaster or mitigation with the support of local authorities, governmental and non-governmental organizations.”

Current Status of Awareness and Publicity

A number of different types of activities have been adopted by different states across India. Literature review suggests that Central Government as well as State Governments have been using television and radio for creating mass awareness. In addition, slogan competitions, street plays, road shows,

media workshops, exhibition through stalls and celebration of International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) are some of the common platforms used by different states to enhance disaster awareness.

Past Initiatives for Enhancing Awareness in Himachal Pradesh

Samarth is the annual mass awareness and capacity building campaign of SDMA, Himachal Pradesh. Each year, *Samarth* puts together a series of activities as a means to lend solidarity with the global efforts to make the IDDR, a success. Over the last three years, *Samarth* has built awareness through activities such as:

- Citizen's solidarity march for DRR
- Exhibitions on disaster preparedness and response tools and techniques
- Demonstration drills on disaster safety and preparedness
- Workshop on roles and responsibilities of Media – before, during and after emergencies
- Symposiums and screening of documentary films on disaster preparedness for the masses
- Emergency preparedness workshops for the disabled
- Online and web based campaigns
- Distribution of IEC materials
- Awareness campaigns on radio (jingles, talk shows etc.)
- School based awareness activities such as mock drills, poster, slogan writing competitions and quiz competitions

As part of the "Mandi Earthquake Scenario: Multi State Exercise and Awareness Campaign", various Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions were involved in awareness generation activities. In addition, an extensive media campaign was launched.

Each year, the State Government organizes a "shakeout drill" to be practiced in the government as well as private schools. The earthquake drill helps to practice the drop-cover-hold on technique as an immediate response and has been endorsed by survivors who confirmed it saved their lives. In addition, the state held a one day sensitization workshop on school earthquake safety to commemorate the anniversary of the Kangra earthquake that struck in 1905.

The Strategy to Generate Awareness at Different Levels in Himachal Pradesh

The mandate of DRR cannot be treated in isolation. Simply put, enhancing knowledge and awareness on multiple issues that help to address risk will invariably reduce the vulnerability, threat and exposure to hazards. *In order to enhance awareness at all levels in a holistic manner, it is important to integrate areas that are overarching and related to the primary mandate of DRR.* Disasters pose a serious risk to the following areas:

- Risk to life of people
- Risk to housing and other assets
- Risk to livelihood (horticulture, agriculture, floriculture, tourism)
- Risk to cattle (sheep, cows, poultry, yaks)
- Risk to the fragile ecosystem and environment (forests, mountains, river basins, alpiners, meadows, etc.)

- Risk to infrastructure and community assets (roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, business establishments, etc.)
- Risk of loss to the economy as a whole

As a result, this document attempts to design a strategy that seamlessly integrates different areas of concern into a holistic overarching strategy with the sole objective of enhancing public awareness in Himachal Pradesh. Hence, it is proposed that there will be close coordination between the state and DDMA, other relevant government departments, corporate houses, NGOs, schools, colleges and the media in order to roll out a state wide awareness drive.

The Framework

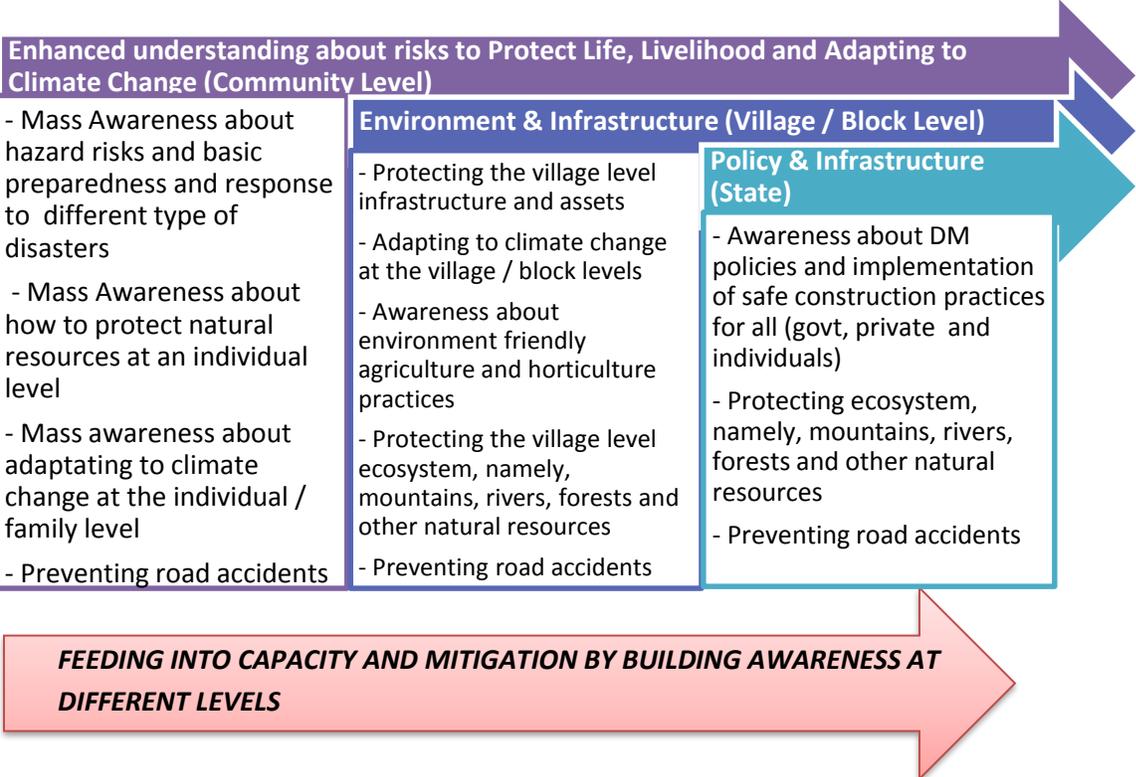
The diagram below represents the broad framework conceived to be a part of this strategy to address numerous issues related to creating awareness at the state, district and village levels.

For the community at large, it would be important to cover basic preparedness, life-saving and response actions to be taken before, during and after different type of disasters common to Himachal Pradesh. In addition, the same opportunity should be used to communicate measures to mitigate disaster impact and adapt to climate change at an individual level. Besides the community, awareness through mass and other media modes should also target schools, colleges and hospitals.

At the village level, the target audience should comprise village leaders, teachers, farmers, horticulturists, and skilled labor such as masons, as well as any other influential members of the village.

For the district and state levels, the strategy should be tailored to enhance awareness of key officials for policy implementation, safe construction practices (government, private companies and individual builders), protecting the eco system namely, mountains, rivers, forests, alpine, meadows, land under cultivation and all other natural resources of the state.

A group comprising corporates (urban), youth volunteers (urban and rural) and NGOs/CBOs (urban and rural) should be included as partners to help roll out the strategy at different levels.



It is strongly recommended that awareness be built along three verticals targeted at three distinct groups. These are:

I. A Mass Awareness Campaign for the Community at Large (To Influence Knowledge, Attitude and Practice)

A well-executed awareness campaign has proven time and again to be an effective change agent. Whether we refer to the “Eradicate Polio” or the “Save the Tiger” campaigns, the results are available for the world to see. In order to generate mass awareness with the objective of influencing change, an IEC campaign is recommended for the wider community. The primary meaning of "awareness" in the communication domain is to make a target audience "aware of" a product, service or issue that can be of benefit to them. In Social Awareness campaigns, it goes further by stimulating long-term change in the Knowledge + Attitude + Practice (KAP) of the target audience. Hence a campaign is a strategic communication carried out with series of interventions.

Campaigning = (Strategic) Communication X Interventions

Social cognitive theory suggests that self-efficacy—the belief that one has the skills and abilities necessary to perform the behavior —and motivation are necessary for behavior change. In other words, hazard awareness alone will not directly lead to people adopting risk reduction measures. They will take action only when they:

- Know the specific actions they need to take to reduce risk

- Are convinced that these actions will be effective
- Believe in their self-ability to take those specific actions

Most successful campaigns require a sustained, repeated and consistent thematic set of messages repeated over a long period of time. Considering the gradual process of behavior change that moves from contemplation to planning, planning to execution, then to action and finally to retention, we need to ensure that our key messages are characterized by:

- The nature and potential of the risk
- The human and physical elements that are most vulnerable or most-at-risk
- Actions that they can take to prevent and prepare for a potential disaster
- Safety and survival actions that they can take during and after a disaster
- Climate change adaptation measures to mainstream in day-to-day activities

As part of this particular strategy, a campaign period of three years is suggested in order to allow the space and time for the messages to repeat and percolate down to the last person. Depending upon the season, the topics should be rotated.

Campaigns	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Earthquake	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Fire/Forest Fire			■	■	■							
High speed wind					■	■	■					
Flood						■	■	■				
Landslide / Avalanche						■	■	■	■	■		
CCA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Preventing Road Accidents	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Year-end Evaluation											■	■

Selected members from the SDMA and respective DDMA collectively as a campaign team should be made responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the mass awareness campaign.

Media for Urban Settlements

Behavior Change Communication (BCC) for the community at large

- Social Media Campaign – Social media is an effective tool that allows many more advantages over and above traditional media. Today, social media users are receptive to messages - it allows for customized targeting according to location, vulnerability, education levels and even the cultural profile of the area. Through social media, campaigners can respond to problems immediately, and it provides a fairly good medium to connect personally with the target audience. If planned right,

social media can help earn some major media attention, which is otherwise impossible to do in a cost effective manner with a traditional awareness campaign. Multiple platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram, Blogs etc. can be strategically used simultaneously.

Note: Social media as a campaign platform can go beyond Himachal Pradesh and could be used to roll out a national campaign. Common messages for homogenous communities that face the same geophysical features, challenges and share natural resources can easily be a part of the social media campaign strategy.

- Mass Media Campaigns –The great promise of mass media campaigns lies in their ability to disseminate well defined behaviorally focused messages to large audiences repeatedly, over time, in an incidental manner, and at a low cost per head. The mass media that could be included are:
 - Television Campaigns – talk shows, ads, documentaries, celebrity endorsements, and other content driven shows in popular satellite channels would make for a good choice of medium. For example, “Save the Tiger” campaign of NDTV.
 - Radio Campaign – content driven talk shows, jingles, and preparedness messages by celebrities, *call-give the right answer-win prize* competitions, etc. Local radio stations that have maximum coverage and good listenership would prove to be a good medium.
 - Newspapers – full and half page print ads, case studies, articles, expert interviews, educational material.
 - Other Print Media - booklets and brochures, house magazines, periodicals or newsletters that reach different type of target audience can be strategically chosen and messages tailored. For example, periodic newsletters to schools and colleges.
 - Outdoor Media – billboards, banners and posters.

Note: The campaign team must study penetration and popularity of different TV channels, radio frequencies, local and regional newspapers and the reach of cable television while selecting the right platform. It is also very important to study audience preferences in order to arrive at the right mix of media for a mass awareness campaign.

- Films / Documentaries in Theatres – Animated short films or documentaries should be played just before and in-between popular movies.
- Street Plays – Street theatre has been a powerful form of art in India to spread awareness about social issues. Worldwide too, theatre is recognized as an effective means to bring practical information to isolated communities. Cleverly scripted plays, along with catchy slogans, song and dance, influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change.



Ice Skating Festival

- Exhibitions, Events and Festivals – Handicraft exhibitions, public events like music and dance festivals, festival get-togethers (Maha Shivratri, Baisakhi, Kullu Dussehra, International Himalayan Festival, Ice Skating Carnival, etc.) offer a very good opportunity for transmitting important messages to drive change.

- Rallies / Road Shows – Audio messages, video messages and IEC material such as brochures with safety information and CCA adaptation can be handed out to local masses. Quiz and other type of competitions can be run outside colleges, universities, coffee shops, public parks and other public places. The masses could be encouraged to ask their questions on disasters which could be answered live by an expert via conference.

For Schools and Colleges

- School/ College Cultural Day – Magic shows, plays, animation films on preparedness
- Drama Competitions – inter school / college competitions on the theme of disaster preparedness
- Poster and Painting Competitions – Between students of different class divisions
- Painting Books – Multi-hazard messages on painting books for primary students
- Flip Charts / Card Games – Older students with flip charts randomly approach other students in the break time and flip the charts with messages. Similarly, they approach students with card games on campus and engage them to compete with each other in giving the right answers
- Human Banners – Older students/ school scouts and guides/ students from National Cadet Corps (NCC) stand with placards on important messages at key points on the campus on non-study days such as annual days, sports days, open house, Diwali and Christmas parties etc.
- IEC Material – Books in the library, wall paintings and life sized games in open play areas (with messages) and hand books on basic family preparedness and response for every secondary child to takeaway
- School Book Labels – With important messages and catchy illustrations that are used to write one's name, class, division and roll numbers can be distributed free to all students at the start of the academic year
- Debates and Discussions – For which schools can invite experts in the subject to facilitate such programs using audio visuals, presentations or similar material for better effect

For Hospitals

- Posters – Could be put up at areas of common use, namely, hallways, canteens, parking areas, open spaces and Out Patient Department (OPD), besides other areas
- Competitions and Discussions – Between different departments with subject matter experts as facilitators could be a quarterly event throughout the campaign period
- Disaster Management Plans – Awareness for hospital staff about DM Plans including those for critical care areas such as Intensive Care Units (ICUs), Operation Theatres (OTs) and Emergency Wards should be undertaken.
- Wall paintings – In open areas on campus such as parking lots, storage areas, etc.

Note: In addition to generic knowledge on disasters, it is important that the respective Sections/Departments of Hospital also address hospital specific disaster related issues such as storage of chemicals and inflammables, infection control, epidemic control, hygiene protocols, safe handling of gas and oxygen cylinders, etc.

Media for Rural Settlements

Some of the challenges when dealing with rural settlements are – poor infrastructure, poor literacy rates and poor media penetration, diversely spread rural audiences characterized by variations in language, culture and lifestyle. One of the best places that help to seek out villagers' participation is

events like games and sports competitions, fairs and festivals. It has been observed that alternative and innovative ways of communication play a key role in building reassurance and trust. While we may have a state level strategy, we have to think and act locally.

Conventional Media

- Television – Talk shows, advertisements, documentaries, celebrity endorsements, and other content driven shows through locally available channels including cable television wherever possible are a medium that offer opportunities for change
- Radio – Content driven talk shows, jingles and advertisements in local radio channels. Community radio frequencies would be an appropriate driver for change
- Newspapers – Local and regional newspapers to insert print ads, case studies, articles, expert interviews and other educational material
- Movie Theatres – In smaller towns closer to rural areas, documentary films and short ads before and during movie intervals

Non-Conventional Media

- Wall Paintings – To be customized with messages in accordance with the hazard profile, regional language variations without impacting their artistic content
- Folk Media – Folk theatre, folk song and dances, are an intrinsic part of the culture and heritage of the land, folk media clearly offers an opportunity to customize area specific messages for greater relevance³
- Markets (Mandis) – Markets provide an area for open discussions, competitions and games with important messages
- Video Vans / Road Shows – Video and audio messages, IEC material such as brochures with safety information and CCA can be handed out to the villagers
- Magic and Puppet shows – Cultural activities with puppet shows are a medium traditional to Himachal Pradesh
- Temple Fairs and Festivals – A number of colorful fairs and festivals offer a very good platform for behavior change communication.⁴
- Using Locally Existent Infrastructure and Information – Including public address system at places of worship, information available at local fairs/*haat*/ market, public places⁵ and distributing posters, leaflets, and other IEC material at these locations
- Creating Community 'News Board' - "Such 'News board' can be created by youth clubs and community radio network can also be used if available



³ Some of the dance forms of Himachal are Losar Shona Chuksam (Kinnaur), Dangi (Chamba), Gee Dance and Burah dance, (Sirmour), Naati, Kharait, Ujagjama and Chadhgebrikar (Kullu) and Shunto (Lahaul and Spiti).

⁴ Amongst these fairs and festivals are the Kullu Dussehra, Shivratri Fair (Mandi), Minjar Fair (Chamba), Mani Mahesh Chhari Yatra (Chamba), Renuka Fair (Sirmour), Lavi Trade Fair (Rampur), Vrajeshwari Fair (Kangra), Jwalamukhi Fair (Jwalamukhi), Holi Fair (Sujanpur), Shivratri Fair (Mandi) and Naina Devi Fair (Bilaspur)

⁵ Bus stops, railway station, *panchayat ghar*, Public Health Centres (PHC), Block headquarter, Court (*kachahri*, *Thana* etc.)

Influencer Strategy

The role of the influencer is very vital when tapping into rural audiences. The strategy revolves around the influence of different influential people to put across the message. To have a long lasting effect of a campaign, the “influencers” (religious leader, school teacher, registered medical practitioner, *mukhiya*, etc.) endorse the campaign and act as a friend and guide in this process and hence, need to be managed effectively.

Campaign Partners

Besides the media, as part of this strategy, it is recommended that *panchayat* *functionary*, *corporates*, *NGOs*, *CBOs*, *religious groups*, *grassroots government functionaries*, *workers* and *youth groups* be engaged as partners to deliver significant change. A pool of campaigners comprising members from these groups be created, trained and allotted specific target groups. For example, NGOs would be good at street plays while corporates (based out of Himachal Pradesh) could be made responsible for developing modules for schools, colleges and hospitals. The youth groups and SHGs / CBOs could prove very effective as change agents especially in rural areas. The campaign planning team would geographically divide the urban and rural areas and customize the tools and messages to be used based on the hazard profile and need of the hour.

Campaign Content

Some of the topics that would find a place in the campaign messages are:

- Dos and don'ts of different disasters
- Preparatory steps before, during and after earthquakes, landslides and floods
- Safe construction practices
- Preparing children to respond to disasters
- Causes and types of fires
- Preventing fires (electrical safety, safe cooking, using LPG, maintenance, handling, etc.)
- Preventing forest fires
- Conserving natural resources in small easy ways
- Harvesting rain water wherever possible
- Adapting to climate change
- Protecting the environment through doable everyday micro practices
- Preventing road accidents
- Any other relevant subjects

Success Indicators / Evaluating Awareness

Indicators to measure impact and especially a positive outcome:

- Positive shift in the KAP as a result of awareness
- Increased level of individual and community disaster awareness
- The community begins to take responsibility for their own risks through knowledge, skills and abilities to make informed decisions
- The community begins to implement a few preparedness / mitigation measures, (at least) randomly

- The community provides active support to the government and makes an effort to implement hazard risk reduction and climate adaptation measures

II. At the Village Level (Protecting Environment, Assets and Infrastructure)

An effective way to begin raising awareness at the village level could be by rolling out sensitization programmes for the village level school principal and teachers, *aanganwadi* workers, *mahila mandals*, SHGs, CBOs civil defense volunteers, youth volunteers and other stakeholders involved in assisting with village level initiatives. These would comprise the pool of campaigners that would help the *Panchayat* authorities deliver the message right down to the communities at the grass roots.

It is suggested that awareness should be built for three main domains at the village level – Disaster preparedness, Strengthening the built environment and Protecting livestock and livelihood.

Awareness Related to Disaster Preparedness / DRR at Village Level

- Communicating disaster risk to masses to enhance their understanding
- Communicating vulnerability and risk reduction/mitigation, preparedness and response measures
- Sensitizing about CCA as an urgent need of the hour
- Setting up functional village level Disaster Management Committees (DMCs)
- Organizing orientation on the village DM plans as a tool for significant change
- Maintaining resources / stockpile as a means to cope with disasters
- Preventing road accidents

For Infrastructure, Planning, and Built Environment at the Village Level

- Impact of climate variability (including heat and cold waves, extreme rainfall, landslides and floods) on habitat
- The state's policy on seismic and climate friendly construction and retrofitting
- Sensitization towards climate friendly designs
- Overview into how to network with Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Border Roads Organization (BRO), and the Indian Army

Awareness Related to Protection of Livestock and Livelihood at the Village Level

- Awareness related to different features of crop insurance
- Understanding related to soil, water and local seeds conservation
- Introduction to rain water harvesting at the village level
- Sensitization about the need to protect cattle during disasters (cattle shelters, medicines, fodder stock and disposal of carcasses, etc.) and appropriate disposal of carcasses

Success Indicators / Evaluating Awareness

- Priorities are jointly defined by the DDMA, PRIs, and village leaders
- A formal plan is worked out and action points are agreed upon for the next three or five years

- The outcomes (as a result of awareness and partnerships) are measured and monitored by each village's DMC and reported to administrative authorities at the district level
- As an outcome of sensitization, further training and development plans for village level stakeholders are developed
- Reflection of DRR and CCA in the village's development planning and implementation in small measures.

Platforms for Raising Awareness at the Village Level

Given the type of the need for awareness at the village level, consultative meetings and sit down orientation programs are recommended. It is important to allow room for healthy discussion and record the concerns and issues faced by the stakeholders at the village level. It is suggested that the target audience be divided based on topics customized to meet specific needs. However, for awareness related to disaster preparedness and mitigation, all direct and indirect beneficiaries should be included as audience.

The Stakeholders as Beneficiaries of the Awareness Initiatives

As target audience for "Awareness on DP / DRR at the Village Level", it is suggested that the Departments of Rural Development, , Education Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Forest and Environment, as well as PRIs and local masons, farmers, cultivators, horticulturists, community volunteers, youth village leaders, NGOs, SHGs, CBOs, *aanganwadi* workers, etc. should comprise the target audience of the meeting.

It is suggested that farmers, horticulturist, floriculturists, cultivators, village and youth leaders' officials from Department of Panchayati Raj, Animal Husbandry, Forest and Environment etc. should comprise the target audience for "Protecting Livelihood and Livestock".

Similarly, Departments of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, local masons, individual builders, and youth and village leaders should comprise the target audience for "Infrastructure, Planning and Built Environment".

III. At the State and District / Block Levels

The SDMAs play the most crucial role in ensuring the continuity of the awareness initiatives that start at the state level. The impact and outcomes clearly would not just be evident at the State level, but, right down to the grass root, at the community level. In this strategy, the SDMA is expected to proactively lead and strengthen regionally coordinated initiatives through whole-of-government leadership and targeted programs.

The awareness targeted at key players in the state as well as district and block level departments could also integrate a role for bodies such as NGOs, corporates and civil society institutions.

Based on the needs, priorities and preparedness status of Himachal Pradesh, the following is a broad framework that could be referred to develop the content modules / curriculum of the awareness program at the state level.

Awareness Related to DP / DRR for State / District / Block Level DRR Actors –

- Introduction to aligning DRR and CCA
- Orientation on DDMA as a road map for change
- Functions of a State-level Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)
- Alternative channels of communication available with the state
- Sensitization on CCA as an urgent need of the hour
- Maintaining resources / stockpile as a means to cope with disasters
- Preventing road accidents

For Infrastructure, Planning, and Built Environment –

- Overview into DRR and CCA as an opportunity in appropriate development planning
- Awareness about land use, zoning regulations and development control regulations
- Introduction to safe and good construction practices

Awareness Related to Protection of Livestock and Livelihood

- About the impact of climate change on the soil and crop productivity in the state
- Policies related to protecting crop and irrigation infrastructure during disasters
- Awareness related to contingency crop planning
- The need to bring more areas under assured irrigation schemes
- Introduction to rain water harvesting at the state and district levels
- The need to add more cattle shelters and more importantly, to provide facilities such as fodder banks, medicines and trained staff

The Stakeholders as Beneficiaries of the Awareness Initiatives

At the state level, again, consultative meetings would offer an effective platform for deep discussion and further development planning. The meetings are expected to lead to further trainings, Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs), strategies and implementation of mitigation plans at the state /district level. Impact studies would help to tie up the results of the process that started out with the simple agenda of generating awareness.

It is suggested that key officials from the District Administration, Public Works Department (PWD), Fisheries, Civil Defense, Town and Country Planning, Urban Development, Rural Development, PRIs, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Forest and Environment, Education, CBOs, private construction companies, etc. should comprise the target audience of the respective meetings based on the respective areas of interest.

Success Indicators / Evaluating the Awareness

- Priorities are jointly defined by the SDMA and other State Departments, infrastructure developers, private construction companies and partners from civil society
- Formal partnerships forged (e.g. MoUs) between key stakeholders at the district level and important research organizations
- The outcomes (as a result of awareness and partnerships) are measured and monitored by each District's Disaster Management Cell (DMC) and reported to the SDMA
- Reflection of DRR and CCA in the district's implementation and development planning (over 2-3 years)

Conclusion

This strategy document aims to guide the state and district authorities to undertake awareness measures at different levels on various aspects of DRR and CCA. The strategy therefore, takes into account the hazard profile, geo physical features, the current needs as well as some of the challenges and constraints experienced by the state. To address the increasing threat posed by disasters and their link to climate change, the SDMA and DDMA could draw and implement awareness campaigns on DRR and CCA to generate mass awareness in the state focusing on preparing the people for both, sudden as well as slow-onset disasters.

Subject to the directions of the DDMA, the tehsil/sub tehsil/block DMC could be made responsible for the implementation of block, village and community awareness initiatives. Community involvement for awareness generation, particularly of the vulnerable segments of population and women as emphasized in this paper should be adopted. Community involvement is a critical component for effective disaster preparedness and risk mitigation and therefore, unless they are empowered and made capable of managing disasters, any amount of external support cannot lead to optimal results. Mass awareness therefore, should be properly designed keeping the vulnerable communities in mind. This could go a long way in building resilient communities in the state.
