

An Exposure Visit to Nepal: Brief Report and Recommendations

A study visit to Nepal was organized by the Department of Revenue- DM, Government of Himachal Pradesh with the support from United Nations Development Programme for a period of One Week (13th December 2017 to 20th December, 2017) The following officers were in the team:

1. Shri Dev Dutt Sharma, IAS, Special Secretary (Rev-DM)/Team Leader.
2. Shri D.C. Rana, HAS, Special Secretary (Industries and Forest)
3. Shri Vinay Singh, HAS, Additional Commissioner (Transport)
4. Shri Shubh Karan Singh, HAS, AC to Divisional Commissioner (Kangra)
5. Shri Vivek Chandel, HAS, Executive Director, HRTC.
6. Shri Nishant Thakur, Joint Director, Urban Development.
7. Shri Charanji Lal Chauhan, Joint Director, Revenue Training Institute, Jogindernagar, Mandi.
8. Shri Gian Sagar Negi, Joint Director, Rural Development.
9. Shri Manas Dwivedi, SPO, UNDP, Himachal Pradesh.

Background: -Two devastating earthquakes hit Nepal on 25th April and May 2015, commonly called Gorkha Earthquake 2015. The death toll was over 8,700 while more than 22,000 people were injured. Out of 75 districts in Nepal, 33 were affected by the earthquakes, 14 of which were heavily damaged. In the hardest hit districts, as much as 95 percent of the structures were destroyed. Some 3 million people were displaced and hundreds of thousands of livelihoods were lost or damaged. Over 800,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged and public infrastructure lost, making government services slow to return.

The study visit had two distinct OBJECTIVES:

- a. To look at the key concerns and practices related to Reconstruction, Recovery and Rehabilitation initiatives being taken up by various organizations and agencies (both government and non-government) in Nepal.
- b. To look at the governance aspects related to citizens engagement and Hospital Preparedness in terms of Disaster Management.

The team visited Kathmandu ,Lalitpur, Sindhupalchowk and Gorkha districts for learning about the post disaster reconstruction and recovery efforts made by the Government of Nepal and various International agencies including United Nations.

To reiterate the objective in a nutshell, it was aimed at gaining exposure and learning from some of the Post disaster recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects implemented in Nepal to strengthen and enhance Post disaster recovery and implement Build Back Better approach.

Therefore, the visit to various organizations, especially the following, has given deep insight and opportunity to learn and exchange ideas for the participants:

1. United Nations/United Nations Development Program, Nepal
2. Meeting with Under Secretary , Ministry of Home Affairs
3. Chief District Officer, Sindhupalchowk
4. Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Sindhupalchowk Municipal Committee
5. National Reconstruction Agency Chief, Gorkha District
6. Shree Swara Saghan Gaun Bikas Kendra (NGO)
7. Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital
8. NSET Nepal

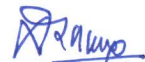
Out of the many things the team has seen and learnt from interactions with different stakeholders and project site visits, the following are some of the key recommendations, the team would like to emphasize:

Recommendations:

1. During the response phase, cluster system reportedly worked well in Nepal. The State has also notified Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) in 2012 which is similar to the Cluster System practiced there. There is need to institutionalize the same. We may consider constituting ESF committees at the Block and PRI level too.
2. Safe Construction practice is key to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). There is urgent need to focus on safe construction practices in the State. In this regard, the studies conducted through SEEDS and NIT Hamirpur in the year 2012 and trainings being imparted to Masons, should be taken into consideration. Besides, a strategy for masons training (2012) has been finalized in the State. There is need to start working according to the recommendations contained in these

studies and strategy. Creating a cadre of trained and certified masons is the most important need of the hour.

3. Blocks may act as centre of dissemination of safe construction practices in the rural areas and ULBs HQs for urban areas. Fully equipped knowledge hubs should be created in all these locations. The dissemination system adopted in Nepal EQ reconstruction is good practice.
4. Learning from the reconstruction of Nepal, we should institutionalize reconstruction action plan/guidelines in the State right now. Detailed guidelines should be issued for safe reconstruction in the State, taking a cue from Nepal. We may consider implementing the guidelines so issued for private houses reconstructed after disasters in the state such as fires, landslides, rain/monsoon damages, etc. The Mainstreaming of DRR in all policies, programmes and projects be done.
5. There is urgent need to popularize the use of building codes along with mechanism of compliance. Assistance of organizations like N-SET, IITs, NITs, BMTPC, CBRI etc may be taken for this purpose.
6. Gorkha earthquake 2015 damaged old shrines (Mankamna Temple) and places of historical importance in large number. Taking a cue, we may consider assessing the vulnerability of such structures in the State and retrofit them.
7. All lifeline structures of the State should be assessed from EQ vulnerability and retrofitted wherever required.
8. The compliance mechanism developed by the National Reconstruction Agency Nepal for safe reconstruction is a good practice. We may consider adopting such model in our State Disaster Management Plan too.



(Dev Dutt Sharma)

Special Secretary (Rev-DM) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh.