

REPORT ON MEGA MOCK DRILL, HELD ON EARTHQUAKE DISASTER ON 24th NOVEMBER 2016.

A mega mock exercise on earthquake covering the districts of Shimla, Mandi, Kinnaur, Kangra, Chamba, Solan and Kullu was jointly organized by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Government of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) on 24th November, 2016. The purpose of this exercise is to measure and validate performance of following components and their associated critical tasks:-

- Initial Response
- Communication
- Coordination Mechanism
- Public Information and Media Coordination.

The District Administration was to organize the rescue and relief response in the field and the State authorities were to monitor the situation and step in if required. 7 observers had been deputed by the NDMA jointly with the support of Indian Army and District Administration for participating districts. The 3 NDRF Companies consisting of 47 Jawans each led by Assistant Commandant, NDRF, deployed at Shimla, Mandi and Dharamsala respectively by NDRF for Mega Mock Exercise at Himachal Pradesh.

Comprehensive preparation of this exercise was done through Media Publicity and by the Conducting of Orientation, Coordination Conference and Table Top Exercise.

The Mock Exercise was conducted at 36 locations in the Himachal Pradesh on 24th November, 2016 from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM. 36 sites had been selected by the District Administration of participating

districts where NSS/NCC cadets, local office staff were deployed as volunteers. The Indian Meteorological department was reported the occurrence of Earthquake on 10:30 AM, epicenter at Sunder nagar Subdivision, Mandi District. A siren was sounded at 10:30 am and everyone evacuated buildings at the selected sites. The local police, fire and other authorities started search and rescue operations. Simultaneously, information about the mock incident was conveyed to District Incident Commanders on 1077. Soon after the receipt of the information of the incident, the District IC immediately established Staging area, Relief Camps, etc. Resources like Ambulances, Mini trucks, Mini buses were deployed at the staging area per requirement and availability of resources.

At State level, an Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) was set up in Secretariat which was equipped with communication system like Wireless system, Satellite phone, landline and SIM phones, Telefax, Computers and Laptop. Stationery articles such as file covers, folders, papers, writing pad, gel pens, highlighters, markers, chalks, white/black boards, charts, etc. were kept in the EOC. Maps of participating districts were displayed. Also, phone numbers of the Unified Command at Himachal Pradesh Government Secretariat at Shimla were displayed. The Unified Command at the EOC was also specified where the Chief Secretary was designated as Responsible Officer (R.O.), ACS (Revenue) as Incident Commander, Secy (GAD) as Nodal Officer (Air Operation), Director, Information and Public Relations as Media Officer, Special Secretary (Rev-DMC) as Dy. Incident Commander, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) as Safety Officer and Special Secretary (Revenue) as Deputy Incident Commander. Further, according to the NDMA guidelines, three groups: Operation, Planning and Logistics were set up as part of the Incident Command. The Planning

group consisted of Special Secretary (Finance), Operations group was headed by Director General of Police (CD, HG & FS) .Logistics group was headed by Secretary (IPH) A copy of State Disaster Management Plan and District Disaster Management Plan of participating districts were also placed in the EOC. Lt Col. Manoj Dhapola was the observer at the Incident Command Post at Secretariat.

5. Mock Incident: The earthquake struck at 10.30 AM and first report to this effect came in to EOC at 10.37 AM from DEOC Chamba through wireless. The report of loss as received from the field was 562 Deaths, 1731 Injuries, 5 Missing persons and 300 buildings and houses damaged or collapsed. The Mock exercise was called off at 1:30 PM. The RO briefed the Press about the situation of earthquake in the Secretariat at 4:30 pm.

At 2:00 pm, a debriefing session was held in the Conference Hall of the Secretariat where the following needs assessments were discussed:

I. Prior to incident

- (i) There is a requirement for alternative communication systems to be in place like Satellite phones since wireless systems get jammed/choked quickly. If possible, there should be an exclusive network of communication during disaster, and all responders should be properly networked/linked with it.
- (ii) State level mapping of resources should be done beforehand and be a part of the State Disaster Management Plan.
- (iii) Community sensitization about disaster is crucial. Masses should be educated on awareness on disaster and mitigation and response efforts through inclusion in school curriculum, publicity drives, mass media campaigns, etc. These campaigns should include students, youth, families, elected representatives, etc.

- (iv) Roles of Officers should be clear beforehand and they should be properly trained. Response Teams of officers who give information about damage/losses on reaching a particular spot could also be trained to start rescue and relief operation immediately and not wait for medical teams to arrive. It was also highlighted that when the army is called in to assist the local administration, the chain of command down to the level of the field spot should be clear so that there is no conflict. Further, roles of all officers in the Incident Command should be clear to them and they should be brief beforehand.
- (v) Mock drills should be conducted in evenings, nighttime and on holidays. A siren with a distinct, separate sound than the one usually used to mark time should be used for drills and actual disaster.
- (vi) Places for relief camps, storing of food/medical supplies/equipments, etc. and for cremation should be identified beforehand and known to all concerned.
- (vii) Contact numbers of specialized agencies who can conduct firefighting operation in places having extremely high inflammable materials like petrol pumps, chemical factories, etc. should be available beforehand.
- (viii) Information on location of relief camps and details like their capacity, routes, materials available etc. should be available with the concerned officers and all stakeholders beforehand.
- (ix) Non government organizations and volunteers should be involved in all aspects like community sensitization and should also be involved in planning for disaster management and trained in rescue and relief.
- (x) It was suggested that all mock drills and other joint exercises should be conducted along with Army authorities and Central Police Forces to ensure smooth functioning during actual disaster.
- (xi) Teams should be trained to provide support for psychological trauma.

During the operation


- (i) EOC and other areas like disaster sites and relief camps should immediately cordoned off so that only those involved in rescue and relief operation or Law and order have access to it and no

unauthorized/unnecessary person enter the sites since it may cause law and order problems or hinder rescue and relief measures.

- (ii) It should be ensured that NDRF/SDRF is provided unobstructed access to the site. Local guides should be also be provided with the teams coming in from outside.
- (iii) The disaster hit area should be divided into zones and Rescue and Relief teams constituted zone wise to provide better response
- (iv) Separate Unified Command for ambulances and mobile medical teams should be established.
- (v) NGO's and volunteers should be involved in rescue and relief operations.
- (vi) Messages should be broadcast on All India Radio and Doordarshan appealing for people to maintain calm and maintain law and order. Location of Relief Camps could also be broadcast on AIR and DD.

Suggestions by the various Stakeholders:-

- The representative of Department of Health and Family Welfare suggested that there is a need of fully equipped trauma vans in every district.
- There is also an urgent need for modern and fully equipped mortuaries to deal with mass causality management.
- Health and Police Department may prepare the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for conducting of Mass Postmortem in case of big level disasters. Both departments also requested to check legal implications/issues for preparing the SOPs
- The Representative of National Disaster Response force (NDRF) suggested that in future, dilapidated buildings should be used for such exercises for search & rescue purpose.
- The NDMA representative also suggested that there is an urgent need of portable equipments for the remote areas. District administration may prepare the list of such equipments and provide it to Tehsil level.
- Every district should procure the Satellite phones.
- There should be proper training of District/ Sub division level officers on various aspects of Incident Response System.
- There is an urgent need of training of first responders at Community level and create a pool of such trained personnel's.



*(Special Secretary Rev-DME)
to the Govt of H.P.*