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THE ASSAM GAZETTE

অসাধাৰণ

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

REVENUE & DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

NOTIFICATION

The 10th December, 2010

No. RGR/ASDMA/7/2010/61.-- In terms of Sec. 18 (1) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, (Act No. 53 of 2005), the Assam State Disaster Management Policy as approved by the Government of Assam is published in the Assam Gazette for general information.

“ASSAM STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY, 2010.”

1. Disaster Risks in Assam :

Preamble

- 1.1 The unique geo-environmental setting of the North eastern region vis-à-vis the Eastern Himalayas, the heavy rainfall, weak geological formations, accelerated rates of erosion followed by silting and meandering of rivers, very high seismicity makes the North east one of the most disaster prone regions in the country. Considering this, and the comparative inaccessibility, the North-eastern region demands special attention to minimize loss of lives and social, private and community losses and to ensure sustainable development.
- 1.2 The State of Assam is vulnerable to natural disasters and the major natural hazards for the State are floods, flash floods, cyclones, earthquakes, erosion, landslides, cloudburst, drought, lightning, etc. Besides this, the State is also vulnerable to various man made and health related disasters.
- 1.3 Assam falls in the highest rainfall intensity zone of the country. Floods visit the State annually and erosion is an offshoot. The flood plains are located in both the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys.

- 1.4 Seismically Assam also lies in one of the most active regions of the world and falls in zone V [high risk zone], the most vulnerable seismic zone. The devastating earthquakes of 1897 and 1950, both measuring more than 8 on the Richter scale rank as two of the highest magnitude earthquakes in the world. In the past, it has been observed that earthquakes in this region have caused changes in river courses, floods, liquefactions, landslides and erosions.
- 1.5 Occasional cyclones do occur in the region, particularly in western Assam and their severity is more during monsoon. At times these cyclones are devastating bringing colossal loss of human lives and damage to property.
- 1.6 Landslides and urban floods are two most pervasive natural hazards that undermine the urban development of Guwahati as well as other towns in NE region. In the recent past Guwahati has witnessed a number of devastating landslides in its hilly belt. The hill slope failure and soil erosion associated with siltation is further aggravated by continuous rainfall during monsoon.
- 1.7 These disasters have caused extensive damage to life and property and have adversely impacted economic development. It is however difficult to have a proper measure of the human, animal, economic and environmental costs caused by disasters. The gains from development initiatives, brought about through immense efforts, are offset and often ravaged by the onslaught of disasters. The disasters divert energies and limited resources away from opportunities for sustainable growth.
- 1.8 It is also the poor and socio economically weaker sections of people who are the most vulnerable to disasters. Their habitats are in marginal/vulnerable areas, and the quality of their habitats is such that they cannot withstand natural calamities/disasters. Their asset base is marginal and therefore easily wiped out.
- 1.9 While occurrences of hazards are often beyond human control, disasters take place due to vulnerability of assets and infrastructure, and lack of adequate coping capacity of human beings. Therefore, the vulnerability to these hazards can be reduced by planned mitigation and preparedness measures. There needs to be concerted and sustained steps towards reducing the vulnerability of the community to disasters.
- 1.10 Past disasters have highlighted the inverse linkage between disaster and development. Therefore, the current perceptions of disasters need to change. Disasters should not be considered rare occurrences managed by emergency response and relief services. Rather, there needs to be a common awareness and community responsibility for reduction of the impact of disasters in every aspect of their lives.

- 1.11 The Government believes that taking into consideration the value of development gains which are wiped out through disasters, as also the huge quantum of funds required for post disaster relief and rehabilitation, any investment in disaster mitigation will yield a higher rate of return than any other development project.
- 1.12 The Government of Assam recognizes the need to have a proactive, comprehensive, and sustained approach to disaster management to reduce the detrimental effects of disasters on overall socio-economic development of the state. The Government of Assam believes that there is a need for a policy that articulates its vision and strategy for disaster management in the State.
- 1.13 Thus, taking the above factors into account the Government of Assam has decided to enunciate a policy laying down the roadmap/direction for Government endeavours in this field and to delineate the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders in disaster management.

Approach &
Policy
Objection.

2. 2.1 Vision :

To create "A State Prepared" and build "A safer Assam"

2.2 Disaster Management :

As per the Disaster Management Act, 2005(Central Act No 53 of 2005) a disaster means a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or man-made causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or damage to, and degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected community.

Further as per the aforesaid Act, "Disaster Management" means a continuous and integrated process of planning, organising, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for:-

- i) Prevention of danger or threat of any disaster.
- ii) Mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences.
- iii) Capacity building
- iv) Preparedness to deal with any disaster.
- v) Prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.
- vi) Assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster.
- vii) Evacuation, rescue and relief.
- viii) Rehabilitation and reconstruction.

2.3 Approach :

A **holistic** and **integrated** approach will be evolved toward disaster management with emphasis on building strategic partnerships at various levels. The **Fundamental tenets** of the policy are :-

- The safety of the community is the prime responsibility of the State Government. Reduction of vulnerability of the community to disaster would, therefore be one of the principal tenets of the State policy.
- The general approach to the management of disasters shall be holistic - with emphasis on prevention, mitigation and preparedness. The financing arrangements will take this changed focus into account.
- The Government believes that vulnerability reduction - prevention and mitigation – are not isolated activities but need to form every sphere of Government endeavour. Accordingly, every Department of the Government will carry out a review of its legal/policy framework as well as the guidelines for schemes and build mitigation and preparedness concerns into them.
- Disaster Mitigation concerns will be adopted as a standing policy imperative in all schemes/projects/development plans being executed by the Departments of the Government. Each department will issue a policy document indicating the methodology which will be adopted for the purposes of building in disaster mitigation concerns in its schemes/plans. The said policy document will lay down the disaster management imperatives/objectives which will be kept in view in the schemes/plans being implemented by the Department and also mandate that each scheme/plan will necessarily state the manner in which the said scheme/plan addresses disaster mitigation imperatives and indicate the legal/administrative measures and financial outlays on the scheme contributing towards this objective.
- Women, children, aged and the disadvantaged are more vulnerable to disasters. The disaster management efforts will lay a special focus on them and their participation in the planning for preparedness as well as response.
- Disaster management cannot remain in the sphere of Government alone – it needs to involve non-governmental organizations, private sector, academic institutions and community as well. The community, NGOs and organizations like Nehru Yuvak Kendra, National Cadet Corps, Bharat Scouts and Guides, National Service Scheme volunteers, Indian Red Cross etc. will be sensitized, trained and co-opted into the planning process as well as response mechanisms. Awareness regarding disaster mitigation and preparedness shall be the essential components of NYKs and NCCs. The community at the village level will be involved by way of *Gram Sabhas* in setting up their own disaster management teams and task forces. Self-reliance for the community shall be one of the corner stones of policy.

2.4 Policy Objectives :

Recognizing the need to mainstream disaster management in development planning at all levels and to ensure the highest level of preparedness and response capabilities in the context of multi-hazard vulnerability of Assam, the Government enunciates the following objectives of the Assam State Disaster Management Policy:

- To develop appropriate disaster prevention and mitigation strategies;
- To delineate the roles and responsibilities of the State Government and to establish appropriate legal and institutional framework;
- To ensure that disaster reduction elements are dovetailed with development planning;
- To develop and maintain arrangements for accessing resources, equipment, supplies and funding in preparation for disasters that might occur;
- To ensure that arrangements are in place to mobilize the resources and capability for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery from disasters;
- To ensure that awareness, education, training and capacity building in hazard risk management are integral to the education and training policies of the state;
- To establish strong coordination mechanism for quick and effective response and recovery;
- To establish reliable emergency communication network;
- To ensure co-ordination with agencies related to disaster management in other Indian states and those at the national and international level.

3. Institutional Framework under the DM Act :

3.1 The State Disaster Management Authority :

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister and other members will ensure inter-ministerial coordination covering all aspects of disaster management. The State Authority shall have the responsibility for laying down policies and plans for disaster management in the State, recommend the provision of funds for mitigation and preparedness measures, review the development plans of different departments of the State and ensure that prevention and mitigation measures are integrated therein and issue necessary guidelines or directions as may be necessary.

3.2 State Executive Committee :

The State Executive Committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam will assist the State Authority in the performance of its function and coordinate action in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the State Authority and ensure the compliance of directions issued by the State Government under this Act.

3.3 The District Disaster Management Authority :

The District Disaster Management Authority constituted for every district in the State is under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner. The District Authority shall act as the district planning; coordinating and implementing body for disaster management and take all measures for the purposes of disaster management in the district as per the guidelines laid down by the National & State Authority.

The district authority will prepare the District Disaster Management Plans, review capabilities and preparedness measures, give directions to the concerned departments at the district level, organize and coordinate specialized training programmes for different level of officers, employees, voluntary rescue workers and take all such measures as may be appropriate for a holistic and pro-active approach to disaster management.

3.4 Local Authorities :

The local authorities will include the Panchayati Raj Institutions, Municipalities, Urban local bodies etc.

The local authority will ensure that its officers and employees are trained for disaster management, resources relating to Disaster management are so maintained as to be readily available for use in the event of any disaster situation; construction projects under it or within its jurisdiction conform to the standards and specifications laid down for prevention of disaster and mitigation; and carrying out relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the affected area in accordance with the State Plan and the district plan.

3.5 National Disaster Response Force :

The Disaster Management Act, 2005(Central Act No 53 of 2005) has mandated the constitution of a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Presently, the NDRF comprises eight battalions which are positioned at different locations. One such battalion is also based in Assam.

NDRF units will maintain close liaison with the designated State Governments and will be available to them in the event of any serious threatening disaster situation. The NDRF units will also impart basic training to all the stakeholders identified by the State Governments in their respective locations.

Other Important Institutional Arrangements :

3.6 Armed Forces :

The Armed Forces form an important part of the Government's response capacity and are immediate responders in all serious disaster situations. On account of their vast potential to meet any adverse challenge, speed of operational response and the resources and capabilities at their disposal, the armed forces have historically played a major role in emergency support functions. These include communication, search and rescue operations, health and medical facilities, and transportation, especially in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Efforts should be made by the State to ensure closer coordination and cohesion with the local representatives of the armed forces

3.7 State Police Forces and Fire Services :

The State Police forces and the Fire Services are crucial immediate responders to disasters. The police force will be trained and the Fire Services upgraded to acquire multi-hazard rescue capability.

3.8 Civil Defence and Home Guards :

The Civil Defence and the Home Guards can play an effective role in the field of disaster management. They can be deployed for community preparedness and public awareness. A culture of voluntary reporting to duty stations in the event of any disasters will be promoted.

3.9 State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) :

The State will create response capabilities and will raise the State Disaster Response Force. NDRF battalions and their training institutions will assist in the capacity building of the SDRF.

4.1 State Disaster Response & Mitigation Funds :

Financial assistance to be provided to the State Governments for disaster management including post disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation will be decided in accordance with the norms laid down from time to time by the Government of India.

As mandated by the Disaster Management Act, 2005(Central Act No 53 of 2005) the State government will create a disaster response fund for meeting expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Central Government.

Similarly, as mandated by the Act, the disaster mitigation fund will be created by the State Government for projects exclusively for the purpose of mitigation.

Techno Legal
Framework.

4.2 Disaster Management to be Inbuilt in Development Plans :

The State Government will ensure that disaster risk reduction measures are mainstreamed into developmental planning and that all existing and new programmes and projects incorporate disaster resilient specifications in the design and construction.

- 5.1 The relevant Department/ District Administration /local authorities shall ensure that the building codes and type designs correspond to the requirements for safe construction as laid down by BIS for seismic zone V.
- 5.2 All development control regulations and zoning regulations will be reviewed and enforced by the relevant department of the State Government to ensure that the future development of cities and towns do not contribute to increasing the risk to people living in those areas. The Government will put in place appropriate legal framework to review the adoption and enforcement of requisite construction norms and zoning regulations by appropriate regulatory authorities responsible for issuing completion certificates.
- 5.3 Where any government scheme provides for funding of construction, wholly or partly, the guidelines of the scheme shall stipulate the need for adhering to zoning regulations and construction norms laid down for the hazards to which that area may be prone.
- 5.4 All Financial institutions in which the Government has a major/controlling interest will review their lending guidelines to provide for adoption of safe construction practices as also the requirements for insurance.
- 5.5 The Government will appoint an Ombudsman at the State level who will review the adoption and enforcement of the requisite construction norms by the appropriate regulatory authorities responsible for issuing of completion certificates. The Ombudsman will have the authority to initiate action against the regulatory agency which is not taking due care to ensure adherence to the regulations and norms for safe constructions.

Disaster
Prevention,
Mitigation &
Preparedness.

6.1 Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Mapping :

Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment is an important element of disaster risk reduction. Appropriate Hazard Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) will help in making risk-based choices to address vulnerabilities, mitigate hazards and prepare for response to and recover from hazard events. Disaster Management Plans prepared at various levels need to be based on a detailed hazard risk and vulnerability assessment which will help in identifying priorities for disaster risk reduction programming, planning and resource allocation.

Hazard zonation, mapping and vulnerability analysis in a multi-hazard

framework will be carried out by the DM authorities at the State and District levels of all disaster prone areas. HR&VA will focus on developing a database of disasters which will be collated, analyzed and validated to make appropriate risk information available. In addition to structural and physical vulnerabilities, social and economic vulnerability indicators shall be identified and assessed. These will help develop feasible multi-hazard risk and vulnerability assessments and the likely hazard-scenario. It will include an assessment of the probability and incidence of all major hazards. Further, the activity will also look at differential indicators of vulnerability including occupational and settlement patterns, poverty and migration, and socio-economic and cultural vulnerabilities etc. The assessment reports will seek to prepare hazard maps, vulnerability and risk profiles and risk quantification and exposure data.

6.2 Urban Risks :

While growth and urbanization go hand in hand, they come with a catch. The perils facing the urban population are projected to be greater than compared to those in the rural areas due to their higher population density. Rapid urbanization in the 1990s and beyond has dramatically increased the numbers of people and scale of physical assets exposed to hazards (particularly earthquakes and flooding) because of inadequate urban land-use planning and construction standards. Therefore, huge urban population combined with poor quality and ill-maintained infrastructure, low quality building stock, and lower resilience of the high-density society increases the risks in the urban centres.

Keeping this in mind, the State Policy emphasizes the need for action plans for checking unplanned urbanization and ensuring safer human habitat against all forms of disasters. The State Government will also accord priority for improving urban drainage systems with special focus on non-obstruction of natural drainage system.

6.3 Awareness Generation :

Awareness generation is a key prerequisite for mitigation and preparedness by the community. People living in areas vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, landslides etc will be sensitized to the hazards which they face as well as methodologies for mitigating the risk. Wide dissemination of safe construction practices and do's and don'ts for various hazards will be undertaken through various mass media. Public education on disaster risk management will be made an integral part of the school and university curricula.

6.4 Plans :

Disaster Management Plans will be drawn up at the district and State levels as well as by relevant departments to ensure coordination and holistic

response to a disaster. The plans will incorporate the inputs of all stakeholders for integration into the planning process. The participation of all stakeholders, communities and institutions will inculcate a culture of preparedness. A bottom-up approach needs to be adopted for better understanding and operationalization of these plans.

6.5 Early Warning :

It is most essential to establish, upgrade and modernise the forecasting and early-warning systems for all types of disasters. IT and other emerging technologies will be used for forecasting and prediction, early warning dissemination, disaster database management, web-based inventorization of resources for disaster management and other such efforts to reduce vulnerabilities.

6.6 Strengthening of Emergency Operations Centre :

The Emergency Operations Centre is the core place of activity in a disaster situation. The 24 x 7 x 365 EOC at the State and District level should be functional round the clock throughout the year.

The establishment of State & District level EOCs and equipping them with the contemporary technologies and communication facilities and their periodic upgradation, will be accorded priority. The EOC, its system, and procedures will be designed in such a way that information can be promptly assessed and transmitted to concerned agencies. Rapid dissemination contributes to quick response and effective decision-making during emergency.

6.7 Medical Preparedness and Mass Casualty Management :

A crucial sector for response in the event of a disaster is the Health Sector which will have to deal with the problem of Mass Casualty Management. Medical preparedness is therefore a crucial component for any DM Plan.

Health Department will therefore prepare DM plans for hospitals which will include developing and training of medical teams and paramedics, capacity building, trauma and psycho-social care, mass casualty management and triage. The surge and casualty handling capacity of all hospitals, at the time of disasters, will be worked out and recorded through a consultative process, by the Health Department in the pre-disaster phase. In this regard, the Health Department will also formulate appropriate procedures for treatment of casualties by the private hospitals during the disasters.

6.8 Capacity Building :

Training in Disaster Management will be made an essential component of post recruitment training for all categories of officers and staff with field functions/responsibilities.

Special programmes will be developed and implemented for capacity building of local authorities, engineers, architects, planners and others responsible for safe design and construction standards.

The Community who are the first responders to any disaster needs to be empowered to manage disasters through a concerted programme. As such, awareness and preparedness programme to enhance their coping capacity will be initiated.

Disaster mitigation technologies will be an essential component of the undergraduate course in Engineering, Architecture, ITI, Polytechnic etc. The Government will encourage research and application in disaster prevention and mitigation technologies at institutes and other centres of excellence.

6.9 Mitigation :

Critical infrastructure like dams, roads, bridges, power stations, embankments etc shall be constantly monitored for their safety standards and strengthened where deficient. The concerned departments would ensure that requisite actions and measures are taken to ensure that the building standards for these infrastructures are aligned to the safety norms.

The State Government shall take steps to ensure that all lifeline buildings in the Government sector are examined for their structural vulnerabilities and if required, retrofitted.

The State Government shall also ensure that existing multi-storied buildings in the private sector or such buildings where public congregate like cinema halls, shopping complexes etc are examined for their structural vulnerabilities and if required, retrofitted.

The State Government shall ensure that mitigation elements are dovetailed into the recovery, resettlement and rehabilitation programmes.

The State Government will devise adequate strategy to ensure that mitigation concerns are addressed in all aspects of development planning.

Response

7.1 The State Executive Committee will coordinate response in the event of any threatening disaster situation or disaster. The SEC will give directions to the concerned departments regarding measures to be taken by them for responding to any such situation.

7.2 Disaster Management is a multi disciplinary activity requiring the pooling together of resources across a wide spectrum of departments. All departments will identify in advance the emergency support functions which they will be expected to perform in major disasters and will prepare a detailed plan for emergency response. They will identify the personnel/teams that will perform these tasks, the

equipment/stores necessary and keep them in readiness for mobilization at the request of the nodal agency.

7.3 The State Government recognizes the need for constituting specialized response teams for Search & Rescue with state of the art equipments. The government will encourage training and equipping these teams for specialized disaster response.

7.4 SOPs will be laid down for handling all specific disasters. Periodic drills will be organized at all levels to institutionalize the SOPs for handling specific hazards by all relevant departments.

Relief and Rehabilitation.

8.1 The present relief manual will be revised so as to convert them to disaster management codes/manuals providing for institutionalizing the planning process, mitigation and preparedness in addition to the present provisions for response and recovery.

8.2 The State Government will establish an efficient and transparent relief administration. Also it will develop mechanism for recovery and rehabilitation of key public assets and also assistance to socially and economically weaker sections.

8.3 While providing compensation and relief to the victims of disaster, there shall be no discrimination on the ground of sex, caste, community, descent or religion.

8.4 The District Disaster Management Authorities, especially in recurring disaster prone areas will identify locations for setting up the temporary relief camps. These camps will have adequate provisions of drinking water, sanitation facilities, health facilities etc.

Risk Financing.

9.1 The government will encourage pre-funding of disaster risk/disaster risk insurance for those income groups, which have the capacity.

General

10.1 All departments will revise the relevant guidelines/circulars so as to bring these in accordance with the policy enunciated above.

10.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to the Department to ensure that the policies laid down above are implemented in all relevant spheres of his department's activities.

10.3 Communities are always the first responder to any disaster situation. Hence communities will be trained in the various aspects of response such as first-aid, search and rescue, management of community shelters, psycho-social counselling, distribution of relief and accessing support from government/agencies etc.

10.4 Involvement of Corporate sectors till today is restricted to relief and rehabilitation activities. Effort will now be required to be made to involve the corporate sector as an active partner in Disaster Management.

Therefore, the SDMA need to network with the corporate entities to strengthen and formalise their role in the DM process for ensuring safety of the communities

- 10.4 The policy framework outlined above shall be reviewed at the interval of five years and updated where necessary.

V. K. PIPERSENIA,
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