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## **REPORT ON STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION**

Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Kerala

### **Date**

16.07.2019

### **Venue**

Appollo Dimora, Thampanoor, Thiruvananthapuram

### **Organized by**

KSDMA and UNDP.

## **Introduction:**

Kerala state Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) and UNDP jointly organized a consultation on Community Based Disaster Risk Management on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) programme empowers the local community to assess their own hazards & vulnerabilities based on their experiences. Under this approach, the local community not only becomes part of creating plans and decisions, but also becomes a major player in its implementation. Community empowerment for disaster risk management demands full participation of the local community in assessing risks; mitigation planning; capacity building; participation in implementation and developing systems for monitoring which ensures their stake. Although the community is given greater roles in the decision-making and implementation processes, the approach does not ignore the importance of scientific and objective risk assessment and planning. It acknowledges that as many stakeholders as needed should be involved in the process, with the end goal of achieving capacities and transferring resources to the community. It is for this reason that communities should be involved in managing risks that may threaten their well-being.

## **Objective of the Consultation meeting.**

- To introduce an integrated approach to community based disaster risk management
- To develop a road map in community preparedness in the state
- To establish an institutional mechanism for disaster preparedness and response at the community level
- To share the lessons learnt, best practices and challenges in CBDRM

The Consultation meeting started at 10.30 am, with the inaugural session.

Dr. Sreeja S. Nair, DRR specialist welcomed the gathering and introduced the delegates about the scope of the consultation. The inaugural session was presided by Dr. Sekhar. L. Kuriakose Member Secretary, KSDMA. In his speech he stressed the need for the Community participation in Disaster Risk reduction. Dr. Shekhar in his address highlighted the need for community based interventions. Historically relief and compensation is been carried out by the revenue department. Village is the lowest administrative unit of Kerala and the disaster response teams needs to be set up at the village level and capacities needs to be developed. To strengthen the institutional mechanism Village Level Disaster Management Committees needs to be set up. Disaster Management Plans will be formulated by the VDMC and will be

monitored by the DDMA. This will not be affecting the Gram Panchayat's role in implementing development activities and assuring that they are risk sensitive. GPs capacities needs to strengthened to integrate DRR in every aspect of development. Disaster risk and mitigation measures needs to be incorporated in the Grampanchayat level development plans which are made annually.

Mr. G. Padmanabhan, Former Emergency Analyst UNDP delivered the keynote speech. Although, Govt. recognizes the importance of CBDRM, till now a national guideline is not in place. He said that, Odisha state made substantial progress in CBDRM. There are two approaches for CBDRM, one is external consultants are involved for preparation of plans and will hand over the plan to villages on GPs for implementation. In this approach ownership will be limited. Second approach is to engage a consultant to facilitate plan preparation, and community as well as village and GP functionaries prepare the plan. It is important to involve Government i.e. LSGs to assure success of CBDRM. CBDRM is not a one time process and it has to be embedded in the GP's development plan itself.

The consultation was Inaugurated by Sri. Binu Karunakaran, Hon'ble Panchayath President, Munroethuruth Grama Panchayath, Kollam district. Recently KSDMA identified Munroethuruth village for implementing the UNDP supported CBDRM initiative. Under this, village level DMP was prepared and four specialized village level response teams were set up. The village is highly vulnerable because of its ecological sensitive features and disaster risks. During the recent floods it was really hard to carry out relief operations. There is a need to adapt modern techniques since the life style of people are getting changed. He also shared a video depicting the successful rescue and relief operations carried out in the village after floods in August 2018.

Dr. Joy Elamon, Director KILA delivered a felicitation address. CBDRM is not a new concept in Kerala. There were similar initiatives in the past as well. He also requested the organizers to clarify various terminologies used in the disaster management sector. Mr. Joe John George State Project Officer, UNDP KSDMA proposed vote of thanks.

### **Technical Sessions**

The first technical Session was chaired by Smt. Valsala Kumari, IAS, (Retd), DRR Consultant, UNICEF.

Mr. G. Padamanabhan delivered the first session on National Perspective on community based disaster management. He has mentioned that there is no national perspective or guideline presently. He emphasized the need for a national perspective of disaster Management. There are few good models of CBDRM from the state of Odisha, Bihar and Uttarakhand. He stressed the need for a futuristic plan to curb the menace of the disasters in future and also differentiated between the terms CBDRM and CBDRR. CBDRM is managing the disaster involving community, however CBDRR is to address the underlying causes of vulnerability and risk with the help of the government. He also stressed the need for sustainability of the CBDRM components in the community. He also suggested on inclusiveness, Linkages, Volunteer forces, Multi hazard approaches, Migrant Population, Urban Rural areas differences in approaching the disasters management. He concluded his presentation putting up alternative mechanisms in managing the Disasters in District Level.

Dr. Joy Elamon, in his presentation on “Disaster Risk Reduction at the Local self Governments” suggested that the Local Self Governments are the first respondents of the any disasters. The LSGDs play a critical role in the disaster risk reduction activities like organizing response, relief and rehabilitation.

Mr. Binu Kumar, Panchayath President of Manrothuruth Grama Panchayath, shared the learnings from Manrothuruth Disaster Preparedness programme. A video was displayed to show the activities carried out by the panchayath during 2018 flood period. Application of indigenous knowledge is a must for the disaster preparedness. He suggested that disaster management initiatives should be made as part of the Panchayaths, and not with the Revenue Department i.e. the Village Offices. This will allow more flexibility in the procedures, and thus ensures the community participation in DRR. According to him, GP is having influence to mobilize resources even from various well-wishers and local vendors.

Mr. Joe John George, State Project Officer UNDP did a presentation on the experiences, lessons learnt, challenges and recommendations based on the CBDRM implementation in two villages namely Peringara from Pathanamthitta district and Munroethuruthu village from Kollam district. He stressed the need for different committees like disaster management committees and task forces. The PRA and PLA exercises were used for making hazard map, evacuation map, resource map etc., and a mock drill was also conducted for the better awareness about disaster response and application of plan. He also mentioned that the indigenous and modern technologies were merged at the time of the preparing the

CBDRM plan at the local level. He recommended that community based response teams like NYK, NSS, Student Police Cadets etc may be used for a comprehensive approach. He recommended that a great level of convergence is needed between Revenue and Local Self Government Department. A wide range of training programme for all walks of life is also needed to initiate. A comprehensive CBDRM put in place for the effective disaster management.

Mrs. Valsala Kumari IAS (Retd.) DRR consultant, UNICEF made a very detailed presentation of Risk Informed Planning at Grama Panchayaths. Risk informed planning at Grama panchayaths is one of the most important component of local level planning of DRR. Her presentation also covered the basic concepts of hazards, vulnerability, risks and exposure as well as the key statistics of the LSGDs in Kerala, then the DRR cycle, Risk formula and what is risk also explained. There are three steps in Risk Informed planning (RIP), that is Conducting risk analysis, Review, Adjust, and develop programmes, incorporate risk indicators in monitoring and evaluation process of GPs. Then she stressed the Risk analysis. In the Grama Panchayath Development Plan (GPDP) it should mandatory to include the DM components in every year and also need to do the risk analysis at GP level. She put up a innovative scales such as Likelihood scale, Impact score, exposure scale Vulnerability assessment etc which was a new experience to the participants.

Mr. Ramesh Krishnan who was the former CPC, UNDP presented on community based DRR in urban areas, with specific reference to Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. In his presentation, he pointed out the primary activities of the CBDRM like awareness programme, Trainings, Community sensitization, Mason trainings, School disaster plans, Safety audit, Climate and Disaster resilience index, formed ward DM committees, volunteer committees and also ward DM plans. He explained about the city disaster management plan, Early warning system, Hazard and vulnerability assessment report, Urban risk reduction (URR), Purchase of emergency equipment etc are the major activities. But he pointed out some of the challenges that he faced during the time of various interventions in the Trivandrum Municipal Corporation. Participation from councillors, Less participation from target group in the training programmes, and other red tapism are the major challenges.

Mrs. Annie Geroge, State Coordinator, UNDP shared about the CBDRM Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu experience with special focus on the work done in coastal areas of Tamilnadu. She acknowledged the need of the participation from local people for the effectiveness and sustainability of the programmes. She again

suggested that risk informed development planning and use of local knowledge and wisdom is a must for effective implementation, however, there is a need to use modern technologies particularly GIS for mapping resources so that anyone can easily access the geocoded data at their finger tips. There are few major challenges in CBDRM similar to any other developmental initiative. Regular transfer of Officers is a disadvantage and this makes it really difficult to establish an institutional base and the intensity of engagement is often under-estimated. She also suggested an exit strategy for the outsiders for sustaining the programmes including setting up of community level task forces, engaging women, engaging youth and strengthening coordination with Panchayats.

Dr. Sreeja. S. Nair DRR Specialist, UNDP presented template for the VDMP and guidelines as well as steps in formulation of VDMP. In her presentation there are guidelines for Village disaster Management guidelines and templates. Disaster Management Plans needs to be formulated at the lowest administrative units, i.e. villages, however with the participation of community and leadership of LSGs. As a first step Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMC) and Village Response Teams (VRTs) have to be facilitated in the process of Community Based Disaster Risk Management. The disaster management committee lead the process of disaster management planning in the village. The Village response teams may be constituted to carry out important tasks i.e. like dissemination of warning, evacuation and response, first aid, damage assessment, water and sanitation, carcass disposal, shelter management, psychosocial counseling, relief management and rehabilitation Setting up of Village Disaster Management Committees with GP President as Chair Person and VO as Members Secretary and other members from Police, Fire, CBOs/NGOs, representation from women and vulnerable sections including marginalized sections of the community. A VDMP is prepared to involve the local community in the entire planning process to ensure that there is ownership of the plan within the community, enable the immediate deployment of resources in an organized manner during an emergency and to establish link between the disaster management planning at village level and the development plan of the village. A VDMP shall include the following chapters viz. (i) VDMP (Concept of VDMP, Need for developing VDMP, Framework & Components of VDMP, Process of developing) (ii) Hazard, Vulnerability, Capacity and Risk Assessment (Hazard mapping, vulnerability mapping, historic analysis, seasonality charts, problem tree (DRR Centric) (iii) Response Plan (Constitution of DMT's and training ,Standard Operating Procedures of DMC and DMT's) (iv) Mitigation and Preparedness plan (Standard operating procedures of DMC and DMTs in pre disaster phase, Identifying

Safe Evacuation Routes, Community level Mitigation Programmes, Skill training, Mock Drills) (v) Linkages with GPDP (vi) Contact Details and updating mechanism. She has also shared the experiences of VDMP formulation and intergration DRR in developmental planning in 6 villages covering AP and TN under the GIZ supported Adaptpcap programme. User friendly modern tools like GIS Mapping using google earth, sharing information through social media etc. can complement with the PRI methods in carrying out HVRA, EWS, response and so on.

After the technical presentations a question answer session based on three questions was held. The three questions were (i) Whether Panchyats or Village level the plan needs to be developed (ii) what kind of capacities needs to be developed for sustaining the initiatives (iii) how can we integrate VDMP, School Safety Plans and GP level developmental plan.

The government order to constitute working group in LSGIs (G.O. (Rt) 2462/2018/LSGD; dated 19th September 2018) has directed the panchayats to have a working group on biodiversity, climate change and disaster management will be strengthened while implementing this programme. Every Panchayat in the state will be empowered through the CBDRR programme to prepare towards a disaster resilient community and thereby achieve the vision of 'towards a safer state' thereby ensuring community resilience and a safer state. . The Chairperson Dr. Joy Elemen concluded the session and summarized the key recommendations. The consultation meeting was completed by 5 pm with vote of thanks.

## Participants

Sl.No.	Name	Designation & Department	Contact No:	Email Id
1	Uma Vasudevan	DPO - UNDP	9496370435	<a href="mailto:unneema@gmail.com">unneema@gmail.com</a>
2	Neethu.V. Thomas	KSDMA	9747570954	<a href="mailto:neethuvt0503@gmail.com">neethuvt0503@gmail.com</a>
3	Latheef	DPO - UNDP	9961194759	
4	Mujeeb	DPO - UNDP	8547378429	<a href="mailto:md.mujeeb@gmail.com">md.mujeeb@gmail.com</a>
5	Ani Thomas	DPO - UNDP	9744789037	<a href="mailto:anithomas777@gmail.com">anithomas777@gmail.com</a>
6	Joe John George	SPO, UNDP-KSDMA	9947756700	<a href="mailto:mailstojoeg@gmail.com">mailstojoeg@gmail.com</a>
7	Sreejith	KSDMA	8138070085	
8	Sarath Kumar	DPO - UNDP	8547878727	<a href="mailto:Sarathsk@gmail.com">Sarathsk@gmail.com</a>
9	Jeby Simon	UNDP	8281720764	<a href="mailto:jebymechary@gmail.com">jebymechary@gmail.com</a>
10	Sooraj. S	STO, F&R	9446903249	<a href="mailto:soorajfire@gmail.com">soorajfire@gmail.com</a>
11	Sreeja. S. Nair	DRR Specialist	9810079551	<a href="mailto:sreejanair@gmail.com">sreejanair@gmail.com</a>
12	Cyriac. K. J.	SCM, NCRMP	8547826900	<a href="mailto:cyriacncrmp@gmail.com">cyriacncrmp@gmail.com</a>
13	Ramesh Krishnan	CPC, TVM MC	8129207788	<a href="mailto:rameshkrishnan@gmail.com">rameshkrishnan@gmail.com</a>
14	Abdul Noor C.K.	DPO - UNDP	9946105780	<a href="mailto:aamynoor@gmail.com">aamynoor@gmail.com</a>
15	Annie George	SPC, UNDP	9442100074	<a href="mailto:annie@bedroc.in">annie@bedroc.in</a>
16	Divya Chandran	FDA, NGO	8593003776	<a href="mailto:divbavan@gmail.com">divbavan@gmail.com</a>
17	Indu V	Shelter Coordinator UNDP	9496367928	<a href="mailto:ar.induv@gmail.com">ar.induv@gmail.com</a>
18	Ann Mary George	FDA	9947910839	<a href="mailto:annmary.grg@gmail.com">annmary.grg@gmail.com</a>
19	Shaji Clement	JDC CRD	8301025364	<a href="mailto:Shajiclementpkda@gmail.com">Shajiclementpkda@gmail.com</a>
20	Dr. Sindhu Sreedharan	JAMO	9747853036	<a href="mailto:drsindhusreedharan@gmail.com">drsindhusreedharan@gmail.com</a>
21	Dr.Ashok Jacob	DPO - UNDP	9787150871	<a href="mailto:ashokjmathews@gmail.com">ashokjmathews@gmail.com</a>
22	vyas Yenakhom	UNDP	9899679273	<a href="mailto:vyas.yenghom@gmail.com">vyas.yenghom@gmail.com</a>
23	Akhilesh	Asst Engineer-PWD Roads section	9048296869	<a href="mailto:akhilesh.k.mohanan@gmail.com">akhilesh.k.mohanan@gmail.com</a>
24	Pradeep. G.S	HA, KSDMA	9895817557	<a href="mailto:pradeepgsgeo@gmail.com">pradeepgsgeo@gmail.com</a>
25	Binu Kumar	Panchayat President - Munroe		
26	Gopalakrishnan	Munroe thuruth		
27	Abhijith.S	Munroe thuruth		
28	Midhun. V.L	Admin. Assistant - UNDP Kerala	9995050932	<a href="mailto:midhunvl@gmail.com">midhunvl@gmail.com</a>
29	Dr. Joy Elamon	Director, KILA	9446521312	<a href="mailto:director@kila.ac.in">director@kila.ac.in</a>
30	Vijeesh.P	SPO, Sphere India	9746649929	
31	Abhijith Anirudhan	Aptamitra volunteer	7907716614	<a href="mailto:abhijithanirudhan94@gmail.com">abhijithanirudhan94@gmail.com</a>
32	Ajay. T	Aptamitra volunteer	9809401415	<a href="mailto:ajayt667@gmail.com">ajayt667@gmail.com</a>



33	K.B. Valsalakumari	Consultant DRR UNICEF	9497724714	<a href="mailto:valsalakumari@gmail.com">valsalakumari@gmail.com</a>
34	Ashokan	KSDMA		
35	Shekhar. L. Kuriakose	Member Secretary KSDMA		
36	Dr. Shibu Augustine	Project Officer (Care India)	9048691832	
37	G. Padmanabhan	Former EA	9810402937	
38	T. Sreenivasan	KSDMA	9495200917	
39	Balaram	KSDMA	8086213779	
40	Siji. M. Thankachan	S.O, KSDMA	9447759655	

## Photos

