

GOI-UNDP Project on Enhancing Institutional and Community Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change

Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) has been implementing the GOI-UNDP Project on Enhancing Institutional and Community Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change since 2013.

During the year 2016 the following activities were taken up in the State covering three district viz. Dhemaji, Morigaon and Barpeta and one Urban centre in Barak Valley viz. Silchar.

1. Development of detailed Guideline for making villages flood resilient through departmental schemes and projects.

The Govt. of Assam has been undertaking a number of initiatives like construction of embankments through Water Resource department, construction of raised platforms and bunds through Panchayat & Rural Development department, Flood forecasting & warning, flood hazard zoning, institutional strengthening for Disaster Management etc. However despite of these initiatives the loss on account of houses damage, infrastructure damage (bunds, irrigation canals, roads & bridges, railway lines, embankments etc.), agricultural crops, livestock & poultry, fishery, crafts & looms due to flood has remained more or less the same.

Needless to state that resilience building in such a highly flood vulnerable state like Assam is a very challenging task which requires addressing a number of issues & areas of concern. These issues & areas can be summed up as below:

1. Legislation- Disaster Risk Reduction governance/regulation systems in the village.
2. Planning-Contingency plans, community action plan for DRR, local development plan
3. Institutional mechanism at village level/forum for convergence among sectors and stakeholders
4. Funding-Community contingency fund/resource mobilization
5. Capacity building-training education, IECs, training of volunteers etc.
6. Undertaking mitigation activities-early warning dissemination & preparedness for emergency response & recovery.

Stakeholders/ Development Partners to collaborate in the activities: The proposed community based initiative for making villages flood resilient encompasses the following activities through convergence of various departments-Panchayat & Rural Development, Public Health Engineering, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Agriculture, Water Resources Department, PWD(Roads), Health & Family Welfare Department, State Rural Livelihood Mission & NGOs. The focal point for implementation and monitoring as well as co-ordination with other departments. The activities mapped out are-

- Village mapping exercises viz. shelter places/open spaces/safer zones/ alternative routes/ resources etc.
- Installation of simple water level markers.
- Flood diversion structures.
- Post flood food security.
- Bunds using local materials.
- Fuel efficient cook stoves.
- Emergency flood evacuation kit.
- Raised Plinth level of the houses/Granary extension for emergency shelter.
- Raised hand-pumps.
- Health & Sanitation.
- Integrated Rice fish culture units, Water bed vegetable cultivation.
- Village Savings & Loans/Microfinance for post flood livelihood options.
- Small Farming Tools for women.
- Training of village task-forces.
- Community radio for dissemination of messages.

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY:

The methodology to be adopted for building the flood resilient village has to be a combination of several activities. The community being a major stakeholder in averting any kind of misfortune due to natural disasters, need empowerment and sensitization. The community also needs to be sensitized on cross-cutting issues of DRR like climate change and its impacts. In order to make the communities resilient certain activities have been chalked out which need to be integrated with departmental schemes. However the activities need to be prioritized based on feasibility and have to be carried out in three phases viz. Pre-monsoon, during and Post-monsoon.

The project has been taken up in five villages of five districts viz. Morigaon, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Barpeta and Kamrup.

2. Socio, Economic vulnerability and risk mapping of 90 villages in three programme districts in GIS platform.

90 villages have been surveyed under this initiative on Socio, Economic vulnerability and risk parameter and GIS map based atlases have been prepared for Dhemaji, Morigaon and Barpeta.

GIS mapping of village level common property that includes the following

- I. Community halls, location and Photo
- II. Public drinking water source, location and Photo
- III. Public sanitation (common toilets e.g. in schools) location and Photo
- IV. Public health centre, location and Photo
- V. Village School, location and Photo

3. Training of Community Members / Volunteers on flood early warning dissemination, Search & Rescue and Relief Camp Management

The Government of Assam has been carrying out a number of initiatives for disaster risk reduction in the State. Since the implementation of GoI-UNDP DRM Programme from 2003, a number of activities like Disaster Management Plan preparation, training and capacity building, Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk assessment, safety audit of infrastructure and buildings, Non-structural Mitigation Measures for school and hospital, research studies, utility mapping, MIS inventory, flood hazard atlas etc. for decision support system etc. has been carried out extensively for the State.

Assam is also the first State in the country to have developed Flood Early Warning System for the entire State and also have notified Disaster Management Manual covering the three phases of disaster management.

It has been realised that there is an urgent need to build the capacity at community level in terms of understanding of local hazards, identify need based mitigation measures and training and capacity building for relief, response, early warning dissemination and recovery. For example, ASDMA disseminates flood early warning in flood season up to Revenue Circle level and the Circle Officer disseminates it to the LR Staff and Village head. At present the early warning does not reach the last mile i.e. the community. It is because, there are no designated or trained volunteers or community members who are familiar with the early warning system and no organised structure or force to disseminate it to the entire village community. This gap needs to be bridged and community members and volunteers need to be raised and build their capacity in this regard.

It is in this context, the Training of Community Members / Volunteers on flood early warning dissemination, Search & Rescue and Relief Camp Management has been envisaged.

Objective of the programme:

The objective of the training is to build capacity at community level for immediate relief and response measure during emergencies. This initiative will enhance the local capacity to assist various responders to carry out their task in an efficient manner.

This training will provide comprehensive understanding on disaster risk reduction and practices to the selected volunteers.

The training will also assist the volunteer to develop their knowledge base and enhance skills on Disaster Risk Reduction and at the same time would develop the understanding and

abilities in light of the planned activities, implementation process and monitoring methodology.

Deliverables under the training:

The following deliverables will be achieved upon completion of the training programme:

1. The participants will have a sound grasp of Basic Search & Rescue, First Aid, Early Warning Dissemination and Relief Camp Management.
2. Will be able to discuss the basic concepts, terminology and models of disaster risk management
3. Identify and assess local disaster risks
4. Plan and develop effective strategies and systems for Rescue and Relief measures
5. Develop effective processes for preparedness planning, early warning dissemination in order to improve disaster response
6. Set up and manage Relief Camps to manage disaster events

Scope of the Initiative:

A team of volunteers will be identified in the villages and they would be trained on-

- a) Flood Early Warning Dissemination
- b) Search & Rescue
- c) First Aid and
- d) Relief Camp Management