



**Disaster Management  
Community**



**Decentralization Community**



## **Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community Consolidated Reply**

*Query: Involving Zilla Parishads in Disaster Management –  
Referrals; Advice*

Compiled by [G. Padmanabhan](#) and [Joy Elamon](#), Resource Persons and [Nupur Arora](#)  
and [Tina Mathur](#), Research Associates

Issue Date: 10 February 2009

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**From [H. S. Bhrama](#), National Disaster Management Authority, New  
Delhi**

**Posted 5 January 2009**

I work with the National Disaster Management Authority in New Delhi. The Authority and Government of Assam are jointly conducting a "Consultation to promote involvement of Zilla Parishad's in Disaster Management activities". The workshop is for the Chairpersons of Zilla Parishads and is planned to be organized during the second week of January 2009. The workshop aims to explore the possibilities of the participation of Zilla Parishads in disaster risk management activities.

Participants will discuss and come out with specific roles and suggestions for Zilla Parishads to work in disaster management. The focus of this event would be specifically on natural hazard induced disasters.

In order to plan the proposed event, I would like to request members to share their views and suggestions on:

- Specific issues regarding involving Zilla Parishads in disaster management that need to be addressed at the workshop
- References of development practitioners/organizations who could be invited to participate in the workshop
- Duration and structure of the workshop

The above information would be useful to design the workshop in order to have focus on relevant aspects, to get appropriate resource persons and to compile suitable background material.

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### Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [U. C. Pandey](#), School of Good Governance and Policy Analysis, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
2. [Ashok P. Ghule](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Thane
3. [Abha Mishra](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi
4. [G. Gandhi](#), Ex. Faculty National Insurance Academy, Pune
5. [Amit Srivastava](#), Indira Gandhi National Open University, Jabalpur
6. [G. Uma](#), Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu
7. [P. P. Balan](#), Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh
8. Himadri Maitra, Department of Disaster Management, Kolkata ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
9. [Santosh Passi](#), Duke University, Dehradun
10. [Ashok Kumar Pathak](#), GoI-UN Joint Convergence Programme, Uttar Pradesh
11. [Kanta Singh](#), Women Power Connect, New Delhi
12. [Rudra prasanna Rath](#), Orissa State Disaster Management Authority, Jajpur, Orissa
13. [Prasad Sankpal](#), Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of Maharashtra, Kolhapur
14. [Rajpal](#), PRIA, Jharkhand
15. [Mahesh Arora](#), Anubhooti Society, Jaipur
16. [M. P. Sajani](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi
17. [Pradosh Ranjan Jena](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Nuapada
18. [Ranjan Praharaj](#), Focus Humanitarian Assistance India, Gujarat
19. [M. K. Teotia](#), Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh
20. [Snigdha Chakraborty](#), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Bangladesh
21. [Kalika Mohapatra](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bhubaneswar
22. [Harish Nayak](#), Disaster Management Team, Orissa
23. [Sunil Chauhan](#), Indian Navy/Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation, USI, New Delhi
24. [Asha Hans](#), Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre, Bhubaneswar
25. [C. M. Muralidharan](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Consultant, Chennai
26. [P. Rajarethinam](#), Development Consultant, JORA Development Support Services, Chennai
27. [Jos Chathukulam](#), for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam
28. [Sarat Panda](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi
29. [Shakeb Nabi](#), CARE India - Tsunami Response Program, Andaman and Nicobar Islands
30. [Anuradha Vidyasankar](#), Freelance Development Professional, Chennai
31. [Parimita Routray](#), Sphere India, New Delhi \*

*\*Offline Contributions*

***Further contributions are welcome!***

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[Summary of Responses](#)  
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## Summary of Responses

Effective disaster management (DM) requires the participation of various agencies and institutions, and provides the proximity and potential for people's participation. Local governments have an important role to play in disaster management. Responding to the query requesting inputs for a "Consultation to Promote Involvement of Zilla Parishads (ZP) in Disaster Management Activities," members offered suggestions and views on the issues involving Zilla Parishads in disaster management, references of development practitioners/organizations working in the area and made recommendations regarding the duration and structure of the workshop.

Respondents pointed out that disaster management strategies tend to be most effective when implemented in a decentralized manner through local self-governments; provided these bodies be empowered. They discussed the need of awareness and capacity building, specific roles of the ZPs, the possibility of integrating the disaster management plan with the local development planning process and gave various inputs for the proposed workshop.

### Awareness and Capacity Building Issues

Contributors highlighted the need to give the ZP functionaries an overview of disasters, their role and responsibilities in various phases, various Acts and provisions, the principles of community based disaster management including preparedness, response, and rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. They said that there could be programmes to increase the knowledge of ZP functionaries on convergence of DM Plans with development plans and to sensitize them on the importance of involving the community in disaster preparedness. Members put forth the requirement for sensitizing the ZP members about mechanisms and agencies, which could provide support including the financial support. Other suggestions include:

- Importance of making elected representatives at village, block and Zilla Parishad level more gender sensitive.
- Providing training to Zilla Panchayat members to identify and analyze the cross cutting issues in Disaster management and to mainstream these through the developmental programmes at their level.
- Capacity building is a continuous process and should be able to motivate and instill confidence.

### Role for ZPs in Disaster Management

Respondents said that Zilla Parishad has a role in all phases of disasters. They opined that the involvement of Panchayats alone could provide quick response and help communities better withstand disasters and minimize their dependence on State or Central government rescue and relief operations.

Respondents referred to the provisions in the Eleventh Schedule of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act and pointed towards the need for a detailed activity map. They also highlighted the Disaster Management Act 2005, which too envisages creation of the District Disaster Management Authority with chairperson of the Zilla Parishads as the co-chairperson. Discussants noted that a major challenge is to define clear roles and responsibilities to different institutions

and departments in DRR and integrating them. They felt that there also has to be unambiguous delineation of roles and responsibilities between the chairperson and the co-chairperson, and that leveraging resources, coordinating with government agencies as well as linking people with post-disaster response and rehabilitation activities could be the main responsibilities of the Zilla Panchayats.

### **Integration with Local and District Plans**

Most of the activities related to disaster management can be well integrated and executed under the Development Plan of Zilla Panchayat, members pointed out. They also felt that ZPs could prepare short and long-term plans for disaster risk mitigation and ensure urban-rural convergence through district plan.

Discussants mentioned that the Zilla Panchayat could also help in convergence of various departments and programmes. They pointed out that the Backward Region Grant Fund and the Eleventh Plan approach paper also emphasize the role of local governments in decentralized planning.

### **Additional Suggestions**

Overall, discussants felt the workshop could play an important role in clarifying the role of local governments in disaster management in the context of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment and in helping to mainstream DM into local development plans. They pointed out that the proposed workshop could discuss issues such as preparation of training manual, knowledge networking, effective implementation of building byelaws and prudent land use, welfare schemes for disaster effected people, best practices pertaining disaster mitigation and management. They also advised discussing the limitations/constraints of ZPs and ways to overcome these issues.

Finally, respondents shared the names of various experts, organizations and state governments who could be resource persons and advised inviting experts from the insurance sector and NGOs who have experiences in the sector.

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## **Related Resources**

### ***Recommended Documentation*** ***Response\_det, xxx, xxx***

From [G. Uma](#), Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu

### **On Role of Panchayats in Natural Disaster Management: A Case Analysis of Tsunami in Tamil Nadu**

Paper; by Dr. G. Palanithurai and Dr. G. Uma; Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies; Tamil Nadu

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010901.doc> (Doc Size: 65 KB)

*Paper gives details on interventions made by Panchayats after the 2004 Tsunami struck coastal areas of Tamil Nadu.*

### **Strengthening of Local Self-Governments in Disaster Preparedness and Management**

Paper; by Dr. G. Uma; Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies; Tamil Nadu

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010902.doc> (Doc Size: 60 KB)

*Analyses the response of panchayats to natural disasters and evolves strategies to help strengthen panchayats for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities.*

**The Disaster Management Act 2005** (from [Shakeb Nabi](#), CARE India - Tsunami Response Program, Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

Act; Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi; 2005

Available at [http://www.nidm.net/DM\\_act2005.pdf](http://www.nidm.net/DM_act2005.pdf) (PDF; Size: 1.67 MB)

*Central level Act addressing the issue of management of disasters and plans for disaster preparedness, including the role of local self-government bodies.*

From [Tina Mathur](#), Research Associate

**Disaster Management through Panchayati Raj**

Book; by Dr. Kamal Taori; Concept Publishing Company; New Delhi; 2005

Available for purchase at <http://www.flipkart.com/disaster-management-through-panchayati-raj/8180692159-6v23f9sc4o>

*Examines the role of Panchayati Raj in disaster management and provides operational guidelines for the same*

**Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Post Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation**

Proceeding; by BASIN, South Asia, Regional Knowledge Platform; Tamil Nadu; 2005

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr/res19010603.pdf> (PDF; Size: 56 KB)

*Cites coping mechanisms adopted by Panchayats in the aftermath of natural disasters, and discusses their potential to manage and implement post-disaster R and R programs*

**Preparing for the Unexpected**

Checklist; by Emergency Management Australia ; Australia; Permission Required: No

Available at

<http://www.ema.gov.au/agd/ema/emaInternet.nsf/Page/RWPC7AF0EEDB2B58615CA256CC2000CF078?OpenDocument>

*Two tool kits for disaster preparation and management are helpful resources for individuals and can be taken as reference for preparing the PRI training manual*

**Emergency Manual on Recovery**

Checklist; by; Emergency Management Australia ; Australia; Permission Required: No

Available at

[http://www.ema.gov.au/agd/EMA/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/\(63F21BC6A4528BAE4CED2F9930C45677\)~Manual+10A.pdf/\\$file/Manual+10A.pdf](http://www.ema.gov.au/agd/EMA/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/(63F21BC6A4528BAE4CED2F9930C45677)~Manual+10A.pdf/$file/Manual+10A.pdf)

(PDF 628 KB )

*Is one of the Emergency Manual Series made by Emergency Management Australia and can be taken as reference for preparing the PRI training manual*

From [Nupur Arora](#), Research Associate

**Managing Disasters-An Introductory Guide for Panchayats from a Panchayat Handbook**; Trust for Village Self Governance (TVSG); Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu; September 2007

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res25110802.pdf> (PDF; Size: 4 MB)

*Describes steps towards panchayat disaster management planning including building support mechanisms, roles & responsibilities, facing disaster and rehabilitation measures*

**Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Post-Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation**

Workshop Proceedings; Basin South Asia, Regional Knowledge Platform; New Delhi; April 2005

Available at

<http://www.devalt.org/da/tsb/basin/basinsouthasia/events/docs/Panchayati%20Raj%20Institutions%20in%20%20Post%20Tsunami%20Reconstruction%20and%20rehabilitation%20.pdf> (PDF; Size: 293.58 KB)

*Documents lessons from a workshop examining the strengths of PRIs in disaster response & bottlenecks faced by agencies involving them in relief and rehabilitation*

### **Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Disaster Management- A Suggestive Framework**

Paper; National Institute of Rural Development; Hyderabad; 2008

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res25110801.doc> (Doc; Size: 166 KB)

*Suggests a framework for disaster management by Panchayati Raj Institutions, including role of Standing Committees and outlines suitable amendments to State Panchayat Acts*

### **Transforming Charity into Empowerment for ending disaster**

Paper; by Mr.. Ranjit Kumar Maiti; Panchayat & Rural Development Department; West Bengal; Permission Required: No

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res18110701.doc> (Doc 522 KB)

*This training module looks at what changes are needed in an emergency response programme, and what changes are needed in an agency administering the programme.*

### **Disaster Preparedness and Role of PRI**

Paper; by Mr. Ranjit Kumar Maiti; Panchayat & Rural Development Department; West Bengal; Permission Required: No

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res18110702.doc> (Doc 117 KB)

*It discusses the process of Disaster Preparedness and Response at village level and details out the role of PRI's in managing disasters.*

### **Training Needs Analysis for Rohtak and Cuddalore**

Research Presentation; by Ms. Swati Mitra; National Institute of Disaster Management; New Delhi; 2007; Permission Required: No.

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res18110704.ppt> (PPT 28 KB)

*Covers need analysis of the districts in order to prepare a training module on disaster management for the Zilla Parishad, can be helpful to understand the grassroots needs.*

### **A Hand Book for Trainers on Participatory Local Development**

Handbook; by Mr. S.P. Jain & Wim Polman; FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Bangkok; Permission Required: No

Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/ad346e/ad346e00.htm>

*Very well designed Training Module on Planning for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation and can be a useful resource for the Trainers to train PRI's*

### **Block Disaster Management Training Manual**

Training Manual; by Gol-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme; United Nations Development Programme; New Delhi; Permission Required:No.

Available at <http://data.undp.org.in/dmweb/uverp-rpts/manuals/Block%20Disaster%20Training%20Manual.pdf> (PDF 332 KB)

*Trainers manual focussing on training of Block Disaster Management Committee, Gram Panchayat Disaster Management Committee, Villagers and disaster management teams*

### ***Recommended Contacts and Experts***

From [G. Uma](#), Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu

**Dr. G. Palanithurai, Head of the Department, Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul**

Gandhigram 624302 Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-451-2452371/6; Fax: 91-451-2451775; [gpgri\\_hung1@rediffmail.com](mailto:gpgri_hung1@rediffmail.com); <http://www.prgri.in/index.htm>

*Has widely studied the involvement of the Gram Panchayat representatives in disaster management and preparedness, recommended as a resource person for the workshop*

**Dr. G. Uma, Research Coordinator, Department of Political Science, Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul**

Gandhigram 624302, Dindigul Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-451-2452371/6; [umamirun@yahoo.com](mailto:umamirun@yahoo.com)

*Worked on strengthening local self-governments in disaster management & preparedness & has written papers on it, recommended as a resource person for the workshop*

### ***Recommended Organizations and Programmes***

From [Abha Mishra](#), United Nations Development Programme, New Delhi

**Government of India-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi**

55 Lodhi Estate, Post Box No. 3059, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11-46532333; Fax: 91-11-24627612; [http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=163](http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=163) website; Contact G. Padmanabhan, Emergency Analysis; [g.padmanabhan@undp.org](mailto:g.padmanabhan@undp.org)

*Aims to reduce vulnerabilities of communities at risk to natural disasters in 169 multi-hazard prone districts in 17 states, has prepared 5 day training module for PRIs*

**National Institute of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, Hyderabad**

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad 50003 Andhra Pradesh; Tel: 91-40-24008526; Fax: 91-40-24016500 [dhiraj@nird.gov.in](mailto:dhiraj@nird.gov.in); <http://www.nird.org.in/index.html>; Contact Mr. S. K. Singh, Centre for Panchayati Raj

*Conducted a study with UNDP as background for preparing a disaster management training module for Zila Parishads, carried out a consultation on the training module.*

**Save the Children, United Kingdom** (from [P. Rajarethinam](#), Development Consultant, JORA Development Support Services, Chennai)

1 St John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR, United Kingdom; Tel: 020-7012-6400; <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/>

*Involves and trains local government authorities and people's bodies in their programmes focusing on child-based disaster reduction and coping strategies.*

**People's Science Institute, Dehradun** (From [Nupur Arora](#), Research Associate)

252 Vasant Vihar-I, Dehra Dun 248 006; Tel: 91-79-27439375; Fax: 91-79-27450449 [perd@perdcentre.com](mailto:perd@perdcentre.com); Contact Mr. Ravi Chopra;

*Conducts training and Capacity Building of PRI's and have prepared various Training and Capacity Building Manuals, IEC materials and other technical support material.* **Related Consolidated Replies**

**Disaster Management Tool Kit for PR Functionaries, from Parimita Routray, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bhubaneswar (Advice; Examples).** Decentralization Community and Disaster Management Community, Solution Exchange India, Issued 31 December 2007

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/cr-se-drm-decn-18110701.pdf> (PDF, Size: KB)

*Highlights good practices, references and resources to be included for developing a tool kit for PRIs in disaster management*

**National Disaster Management Act and Local Bodies, from V. R. Raghavan, Oxfam GB, Kolkata (Examples; Experiences).** Decentralization Community, Solution Exchange India, Issued 26 March 2007

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr-public/cr-se-decn-17020701-public.pdf> (PDF, Size: 468 KB)

*Looks for experiences from across states about the roles built in for panchayats and urban bodies in the National Disaster Management Act 2005*

**Role of Panchayats and Municipal Bodies in Tsunami and Disaster Relief and Recovery, from A. Kalamani, Centre for World Solidarity, Secunderabad (Advice; Experiences).** Decentralization Community, Solution Exchange India, Issued 7 February 2006

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/decn/cr-public/cr-se-decn-19010602-public.pdf> (PDF, Size: 197 KB)

*Examples and considerations on the mandated, actual and recommended roles for local bodies in the Tsunami (and disaster) relief and rehabilitation*

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## Responses in Full

**U. C. Pandey, School of Good Governance and Policy Analysis, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal**

This is a laudable initiative and I think specific issues which can be dealt in the workshop are as below:

- There is a great need for sensitising the zila parishad members about the importance of involving the community in disaster preparedness. We have to make them realise how important it is to focus on preparedness through community participation.
- The agencies like religious organisations, welfare organisations, NGOs and motivated individuals need to be involved in the disaster preparedness. The zila parishad members need to be sensitised about such mechanisms through which they can seek support of such agencies.
- The disaster preparedness should be inbuilt in the developmental planning at local level. The zila parishad member should be sensitised about these issues.
- There are important issues like need of sensitising the general public at local level about the risk transfer through insurance and use of disaster resistant construction practices. Zila parishads can play a vital role in sensitising the general public.

Above mentioned issues need to be made part of the agenda of the workshop.

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**Ashok P. Ghule, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Thane**

PRI involvement in DM activity is the crucial issue. I think role and responsibility in the Disaster Management cycle should be the focal point in this workshop.

As per my experience, during the any kind of disaster PRI member can play a key role. He/she can manage the disaster if he or she can be properly sensitized.

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**Abha Mishra, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi**

Today the rural community approaches the elected representatives during the normal time for ensuring that the benefits of development activities (state or central) reaches them while during disasters the look up to them for compensation immediately after the disaster and for the rehabilitation and reconstruction benefits.

Thus the Zilla Parishad has a role in all phases of disasters be it the preparedness planning and its implementation during the impact and post- impact phase. The involvement of Panchayat is also necessary as this alone can provide quick response and also make people to withstand the threat of the disasters and minimize their dependence on Government response for rescue and relief operation at the time of any crisis.

<b>Phase -I</b>	<b>Tasks to be performed by Zilla Parishad for Preparedness</b>
1	Before the onset of monsoon and likely periods of cyclone coordinate with the District Collector/ CEO-DDMA to have a meeting of all District Heads of the Sectoral Departments and the Members of the Z P for preparedness .
2	Ensure that all the concerned departments, specially Roads & Buildings, Major and Minor Irrigation, PDS, Communication Police , Revenue Electricity, etc., have take up necessary Repair and maintenance and related works for preparedness to counter Flood& Cyclone Disasters besides have prepared a proper response and rehabilitation plan of a likely scenario. The DDMP has also been prepared and updated with relevant information.
3	Mapping of hazard and vulnerability should be initiated, if it is not available and detailed maps should be prepared for each block till the village level and district and should be placed in both district and blocks
4	Ensure that a District Disaster Management Team is available and trained at the all levels.
5	To identify and enlist NGOs/ Trust/Corporate (having establishments in their area of operation) who are useful in extending help during disasters
6	Random Check the inventories of items (available in the district as uploaded in IDRN or mentioned in the District Disaster Management Plan) required at a short notice for rescue and relief operations during the impact of disasters.
7	At the first warning, call the meeting of the Crisis Management Group and alert all concerned at Block and Village levels.
8	All the members of the Crisis Management Group (CMG) should be asked to keep their personnel in full preparedness, at all levels down the line
<b>Phase- II</b>	<b>Tasks to be performed by Panchayats for rescue and relief before and during the impact of disasters</b>
1	In the event of On-set of a cyclone / flood disaster monitor the situation, identify the Blocks and villages most likely to be affected and issue warnings at close intervals to all concerned.
2	Activate control rooms at Panchayat levels and keep full watch on the situations
3	Arrange emergency communication system with the help of Police Wireless / Ham Radio, etc. if required for the Panchayat
4	Activate CMG and put them on job for assisting Block and Village Panchayats for taking counter disaster measures.
5	Monitor transport for the evacuation of the people and livestock
6	Monitor and if required support the district officials for temporary emergency shelters/ relief camps and supply and transport of all essential food and non - food items to relief camps
7	Monitoring of the rescue and relief operations at the all levels

<b>Phase- III</b>	<b>Reconstruction and long term planning</b>
1	Planning and Implementation of Rehabilitation of affected people, repair and reconstruction of damaged houses, physical infrastructure, etc and return to normal economic activities including farming etc
2	Ensure timely compensation for loss of lives, properties of individuals
3	The repair and reconstruction activities should be integrated with a long term mitigation planning so that the quality of the reconstruction and repair is in consonance with the specifications provided for disaster resistant structures
4	The long term mitigation plan should integrate normal development plan in such manner that protective and preventive measures against the disasters adhered in the implementation of all development projects under each and every sector
5	Special funding are made available for the construction of physical infrastructure to include disaster resistant technologies particularly in the construction of houses roads electric transmission lines, drinking water facilities, culverts, telecommunication, irrigation canals, tanks and reservoirs etc for the sections which are most vulnerable
<b>All Phases</b>	<b>Role of Panchayat in Capacity Building</b>
1	Zilla Parishad should ensure that awareness about all the hazards among the Panchayat functionaries and build their capacity through regular trainings.
2	Zilla Parishad should also ensure that sustained effort in this direction is being undertaken by the district authorities for creating awareness at the community level to ensure less dependency on the local administration at time of need
	<b>Role of Panchayat in Managing Information</b>
1	Collection, analysis and dissemination information both for disaster preparedness and mitigation
2	Collection, analysis and dissemination of information to ensure that no overlapping of benefits occur during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases

Looking at some of the activities the Zilla Parishad needs to undertake--there is a need to give them an overview of disasters, their role and responsibilities in various phases, various Acts and Provisions under which we have to work, community-based Disaster Management to ensure they know what needs to be done at the community level and how for preparedness, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, besides their knowledge with respect to convergence of DM Plans with Development Plans to ensure mitigation measures are taken care of, coordination and linkages to be formed for effective preparedness and response and other preventive measures that need to be taken up.

A five-day module is under preparation under the GoI-DRM programme by NIRD, Hyderabad. It may be referred to and may I also suggest we refer to the Consolidated Reply of the query from Parimita Routray, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bhubaneswar on the Solution Exchange some time back that highlights good practices, references and resources to be included for developing a tool kit for PRIs in disaster management. Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/cr-se-drm-decn-18110701.pdf> (PDF, Size: KB)

### **G. Gandhi, Ex. Faculty National Insurance Academy, Pune**

It's a good attempt to involve the local administration in disaster management. Major tasks in any post disaster is relief and rehabilitation measures, but in pre-disaster risk prevention and risk transfer mechanisms.

In disaster, loss of human life is not replicable but loss of assets/properties etc. are certainly containable financially. About these mechanisms, probably the Zilla parishad level functionaries

are not at all aware or may be limited since financial tools for post disaster mitigation are available in the form of flood pools, EQ pools and so on. Hence, it would be proper on your part to involve the concerned authorities handling these pooling arrangements in the General Insurance Sector apart from imparting them a basic knowledge about all Insurance Arrangements on group basis available to the poorer communities, which are most vulnerable e.g. fishermen communities and policies for them against accidental death/disablements and health risks.

Hope your agenda would take care of this aspect.

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**Amit Srivastava, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Jabalpur**

In the present time, we have seen that there is large number of natural calamities affecting different parts of the world. In the context of India the floods is the major cause of worry for the policy makers because of the wide scale suffering of men and material. Under these circumstances, local bodies can play a very effective role in the disaster mitigation and prevention.

Since these bodies consist of people associated with the grass root people we may try following strategy to reach up to the people:

1. Sensitization programme involving NGO and Zila Parisad members.
  2. Giving high level training to selected group of young and enthusiastic members who can in long term act as a source of information dissemination to the other people.
  3. Formation of the Disaster management committee as village level with the help of elected representatives/teachers/health functionaries so as to enhance the participation of the community.
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**G. Uma, Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu**

The Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies with the help of Action Aid India carried out the study on the 'Role of panchayats in Disaster Preparedness and Management' the team members are:

Dr. G. Palanithurai, Research Coordinator  
Dr. G. Uma, Research Officer  
Dr. P. Natarajamurthy, Research Associate  
Ms. Sivagama Sundari, Research Associate  
Ms. Elizabeth Mathew, Research Associate

The study brought out many issues. Many Gram panchayat presidents actively involved in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities during the Tsunami earthquake and flood. Dr. G. Palanithurai widely studied the involvement of the Gram panchayat representatives in disaster management and preparedness. He is the good resource person in the above said areas.

Based on the study report, myself presented a paper in Lal Bhagadur Shastri National Academy for Administration, Musoori. Dr. G. Palanithurai also prepared a paper based on the gram panchayat president's involvement in disaster management during the Tsunami 2004. The study report was published by the concept publishing company, New Delhi.

I am herewith enclosing two papers in this area. To read the paper on "Role of Panchayats in Natural Disaster Management: A Case Analysis of Tsunami in Tamil Nadu" click <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010901.doc> and to read the paper on

“Strengthening of Local Self-Governments in Disaster Preparedness and Management” click <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010902.doc>

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**P. P. Balan, Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh**

The initiative taken by National Disaster Management Authority for the involvement of Zilla Parishad is worth commendable. Disaster Management strategies are most effective when implemented in a decentralized manner through Local Self Governments. If the ZP is empowered enough, it can play a pertinent role reducing natural disasters and averting, as far as possible man-made ones.

The proposed workshop can discuss issues such as:

- Preparation of Training Manual encompassing of situation analysis of disasters, preventive and risk reduction measures, resources and other vital information in order to provide capacity building to the manpower and representatives of local bodies/civil societies and other stakeholders
  - Co-ordination, knowledge networking of various agencies, researchers, academics and NGOs
  - Effective implementation of building bye-laws and prudent land use in support to the State Government efforts
  - Implementation of Welfare schemes for disaster effected people
  - Creating a culture of volunteerism, to promote volunteers at all levels of PRIs for assisting during emergencies in disaster management
  - Micro financing for the poor in order to reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards and recovery from disasters
  - Organizing of specific training programmes for artisans, masons and engineers about earthquake resistant measures to propagate the principles of earthquake resistant design buildings
  - Creating awareness and sensitization regarding risk, hazard, disaster mitigation and management among the community. The activities of lower level PRIs shall be coordinated and monitored
  - Best practices pertaining disaster mitigation and management should be documented properly and disseminated to the community especially among the schoolchildren
  - Establish cooperation with the media to increase disaster knowledge and awareness among the people
  - Emergency management, when disaster strikes and generation of single minded system
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**Himadri Maitra, Department of Disaster Management, Kolkata (response 1)**

It is essential to merge the traditional panchayats (community) with constitutional panchayats and apply CBDM in PRI system. It can generate political will to combat disaster at grassroots level. In West Bengal, the Disaster Management Department implements DRMP, a GoI-UNDP programme with the help of PRI bodies its own departmental officers who are posted in blocks, sub-divisions and districts.

A sense of ownership is necessary among the govt. officials and in this case departmental officers do this programme treating it as a departmental programme. It becomes easier for them in advocating the issues to the PRI bodies. So, a dedicated department is essential which can cooperate with Zilla Parishad to integrate Disaster Management into Development plan.

To know more on the role of panchayats in Disaster Management please click <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010903.doc>.

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**[Santosh Passi](#), Duke University, Dehradun**

In Zilla Panchayat, there are members who represent a geographical area. Each member should work out a plan for their area. They need to identify vulnerability status and preparedness required. The preparedness component should get into their developmental agenda for their region. They can chalk out a plan with priorities and given the resources they get for their region or those they are able to harness from different sources, work can be undertaken.

Along with this, they should know the search and rescue team they have in their area. In case of any disaster they are contacted by affected public and they should know whom to contact and get them to work.

Zila Parishad plan will be a compilation of plan of all its members. This way it will be easier to manage things and making them accountable.

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**[Ashok Kumar Pathak](#), GoI-UN Joint Convergence Programme, Uttar Pradesh**

Involving Zila Panchayats in Disaster management is a good idea, as the members belong to every corners of the district. Zila Panchayat is an apex body of decision making at the district level. Keeping in view that there are untied funds available with many departments in the districts, Zila Panchayat can really act upon to help in using the funds in an efficient manner. Because there will be the scope of innovations also. Zila panchayat, being the apex body, can also help in convergence of various departments and programmes. This will generate a sense of leadership and ownership among them.

The biggest challenge is sensitizing Zila Panchayat members towards Disaster management and also to make the standing committees formed at the three-tiers of Panchayati Raj system more proactive. Backward region Grant Fund can be utilized for capacity building of Panchayat representatives so that they may become more proactive. Eleventh plan approach paper also emphasizes the role of PRIs in decentralized planning. So, involving and facilitating in provision of leadership to the Zila Panchayats in Disaster management will certainly help a lot.

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**[Kanta Singh](#), Women Power Connect, New Delhi**

I would just like to add on to what [Abha](#) has listed. It is really important to involve local government authorities in Disaster Management and to begin with, gender sensitisation of the elected representatives at village, block and Zila Parishad level will help them in identification of separate roles and needs of men, women, boys and girls while preparing or managing disasters.

Recently, Women Power Connect documented some good practices of gender mainstreaming in DRM for UNDP from across the country and quite a few of these case studies have demonstrated that increased role of women in generating awareness, planning and implementing in DRM has led to better results. The Zila Parishads cannot only build capacities of its women members but can also reach out to women in the community through workshops and mass awareness campaigns.

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**[Rudra Prasanna Rath](#), Orissa State Disaster Management Authority, Jajpur, Orissa**

The PRI's do play a vital role in Managing Disasters at local level. Leveraging resources, coordinating with local government set up as well as linking people with post disaster response

and rehabilitation activities are the main activity they do on regular occasions. But their potentials have been realised late and efforts are being taken at all end. Government of Orissa and UNDP is coming out with a toolkit for mainstreaming the PRI's with that of Disaster Management activities.

Similarly, it has also allotted separate funds for training to the PRIs under DRM programme. In most of the districts such trainings have been completed and it has helped to generate mobilisation of manpower to carry out DRM activity further

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**[Prasad Sankpal](#), Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of Maharashtra, Kolhapur**

I like to add in this that this is proved no one can manage the disaster's without the community participation. If we need the community in the DM then the only way is to tie up with PRI's. Only PRI's can make the peoples ready to be the part of your programme. In my district I have conducted two training programme for PRI members and sensitized them to be a part of DM initiatives.

In the workshop the focus should be given on the

- Maximum participation of members
  - Maximum participation of women members
  - Use local resources for the workshop, media, art, drama, exhibition,
  - Group activities
  - Participatory Risk Appraisal
  - Interactive
- 

**[Rajpal](#), PRIA, Jharkhand**

Zila Parishad is the supreme body to plan, implement and monitor the rural development and social security programs in a district. ZP also has important role in District Planning. So one of the important ZP need to play is to prepare short and long-term plan for disaster risk mitigation. Disaster management should not be just to respond to the flood or drought whatever it is in an area. But actually plan needs be how to minimise the risk. That needs the realistic planning which can only be done through involvement of local bodies.

If we take example of NREGA, in its permissible works emphasis have been given to the works of water conservation related to both flood control and drought proofing. And PRIs have central role in planning for NREGA, so that is one opportunity to be used. Using gram sabha as a platform to take suggestion from people will be helpful in creating pool of resources especially human to act at the time of any natural calamity. So in nutshell it can be done in following manner:

Ensuring Panchayats involvement:

- Planning for Mitigation
- Urban rural convergence through district planning
- Creating pool of resources at GP, block and ULB level

The above agenda can be discussed in great detail.

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**[Mahesh Arora](#), Anubhooti Society, Jaipur**

Looking to the crucial role Zilla Parishads and other Panchayati Raj Institutions can play in effective management of disasters at the grass root level the proposed workshop should focus on some of the following areas:

- Sensitizing them about concept and various aspects of disasters
- How to make a disaster management plan of their area stress upon involving all stake holders
- Importance of coordination, adaptability, flexibility, being resourceful & innovative
- Focus on prevention, preparedness, mitigation & regular mock drill etc.
- Grill them into their mind, to rise above petty politics, do not discriminate for vested reasons, be fair to all and take special care of the vulnerable population
- Train them to make an assessment of impact and to make a list of short and long term needs to be conveyed to local authorities and to the visiting official assessment team.

Duration of the program should not be more than three days and due use of audio visual aids (films on recent mega disasters, community based disaster management plan) simulation exercises.

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**M. P. Sajnani, Independent Consultant, New Delhi**

I am a Disaster Management Consultant with previous experience of having worked in Ministry of Home Affairs, United Nations Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center.

My compliments to NDMA for throwing open the issue for obtaining suggestions from DM Community. It is a rare combination of transparency, e-governance and participatory approach. I hope the Department of Administrative Reforms will take note of it and disseminate it to other government departments for similar approach, which falls within the present policy of the government.

As for the Agenda for the proposed Conference, my suggestions are as follows:

- A brief presentation or overview by an officer from the Ministry of PRIs to explain the objectives of local self-government and the background in which the Constitution (73rd Amendment) was made. Let us start with a "feel-good" expression for chairpersons, zila Parishads. (30 minutes)
- An overview of the role of PRIs in DM. Please stress on the role of local authorities (section 41 of the DM Act) and the rationale for putting Chairpersons, zilla parishads as co-chairpersons of DDMA's. Let them know what is their statutory responsibility. It won't hurt if this session covers the relevant provisions of penalties and offences for any act of omission or commission. (60 minutes)
- Functions of PRIs in the context of DM (60 minutes)
- Coordination with District Administration and District Disaster Management Authorities-complementary and not confrontational; but bringing out why the main responsibility shall remain with District Magistrate. (60 minutes including interaction)
- Role of zila parishads in facilitating preparation of below-district plans in line with district plan; need for vulnerability and risk assessment (90 minutes including interaction)
- Need for micro-level planning at village/ block level ( 60 minutes)

- Training of PRIs; gram sabha as well as intermediate level and members of zila parishads (60 minutes)
- Monitoring of DM Programs at below district level (60 minutes)
- Interaction/exchange of views (60 minutes)
- Conclusions/Recommendations (60 minutes)

This time frame indicates a workshop for two days. It would be better if it can be restricted to one and half days so that they can make their travel arrangements accordingly, without the need to stay back for the night on second day. If planned imaginatively and extended to dinner on the first day evening, it can be accommodated. Informal interaction is normally the best over lunch/ dinner.

NDMA will need extremely good 3 to 4 resource persons who circulate during informal interaction and work through the night to give their summary before the start of next day's program to a designated officer in NDMA.

I hope it is helpful. We should always keep in mind to be flexible and include changes in the program, if desired by several participants.

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**[Pradosh Ranjan Jena](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Nuapada**

Involvement of Zilla Parishad in Disaster Management is a welcoming step. I think they should play a major role in relief work also.

As there is more harassment and corruption faced by the victims during disaster time it is necessary to conduct social audit with the involvement of PRI members. So that corruption can be checked to some extent

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**[Ranjan Praharaj](#), Focus Humanitarian Assistance India, Gujarat**

Involving Zila Panchayats in Disaster management is a fantastic idea. This will generate a sense of leadership and ownership among the grass root level leaders of the self-governance system. It will capacitate the community organizations (PRIs) and the local community to become the effective first responders in case of any emergencies.

Besides capacity building of Panchayat representatives, the Zila Panchayat members should be involved in vulnerability mapping and risk reduction planning process of their respective area. Existing data of different Govt. and Non-Govt. agencies should be provided to the Zilla Panchayat so that a complete database of the local trained task forces, volunteers and support service providers can be maintained at the Zilla panchayat level. Zila

Panchayat members should be properly trained to identify and analyze the cross cutting issues in Disaster management and to mainstream these through the developmental programmes at their level. Most of the activities under Disaster Management can be well integrated and executed under the developmental programmes of Zila Panchayat. But the of Zila Panchayat members should be well trained and equipped with reference materials on how to integrate the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation into the developmental programmes under their purview of work keeping in view the local hazards.



Vulnerability mapping of the area and pre-identified hazard specific mitigation plans at the micro level will support the Panchayat members to place the same at the palli sava and the gram Sava in the community level planning platform.

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**M. K. Teotia, Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh**

It is very timely initiative. Although more crucial suggestions will come forward during Consultation workshop from the representatives of Zila Parishads, but some of crucial issues for discussion may be:

- The poor capacity of ZPs is most crucial issue. How capacity of ZPs can be improved to tackle this multidimensional crucial unseen problem should be discussed thoroughly.
- The institutional, organizational, legal, financial and human resources related aspects vis-à-vis role of ZPs may be discussed to have clarity of roles, expectations and fast decision making in pre and post disaster situations.
- Spatial dimensions also need specific focus as nature of disasters vary in different regions.
- How ZPs can effectively involve technical, managerial and civil society organizations to cope with the situation and reduce damage to the people, environment and society as a whole affected in the process. Convergence of institutions, programmes under ZPs umbrella needs to explored to strengthen the functional domain of ZPs.
- Past experiences of local institutions in high disaster prone areas in the world need to be documented and need to be adopted after modifications to suit the local conditions/ needs.
- ZPs also have certain limitations/constraints and therefore to make their level of involvement effective it is necessary to first understand those constraints and start their involvement in various phases.

The duration of the workshop may be discussed with the reps. of ZPs to suit their maximum availability. Generally short duration course (2-3 days) is more effective. Some practical exercises and field visits create lot of interests among participants. The structure of the Consultation workshop may be finalized after discussing the same with the reps of ZPs, concerned departments and expert organizations.

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**Snigdha Chakraborty, Catholic Relief Services, Bangladesh**

Role of Panchayat has been discussed at great length at all levels – govt., NGOs and Pvt Sectors. Disaster Management has been a sector identified in the Panchayat Dept in all most all the states. Zila Parishad is not an independent body from PRI as a whole. So, I don't see the justification behind discussing role Of Zila Parishad separately then discussing role of PRI in each state as whole.

However, what I want to bring focus of every one is:

- Empower the PRI financially and technically. The institution needs to become more self - sufficient then what it is now – an implementing body/mechanism for all the programs. The members need more technically skilled and equipped with resources and decision making power.

- How Zila Parishad can work hand in hand in decision making and resource allocation process with the local District Authority needs to be discussed. How the planning process can become bottom up in *TRUE SENSE*.
- A strong political will needs to be emerged from the government department and PRI together to integrate DM into other departments and vis-à-vis. A strong example could have been created by integrating NREGA program/activities at the State level by addressing the disaster mitigation aspects but we failed to do so.

There are some best practices of PRI in DRM program across country and my suggestion would be to bring them into your discussion and explore the replication possibilities.

I also suggest contacting state level Disaster Management department to get the key resource persons/professionals into your discussions. Workshop should bring in some key steps for following up.

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**Kalika Mohapatra, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bhubaneswar**

As suggested earlier ZP members should be involved in all phases of the disaster management starting from preparedness, response and mitigation. As per the West Bengal Panchayati Raj Act all ZP and PRI members are the standing committee members for the Planning and Coordination, where risk reduction towards natural disaster is one of the priorities areas in development planning process.

As per the Orissa governments, instruction disaster mitigation plan has to be integrated into development plan at all levels and all PRIs members have to be part of the preparedness process and response period.

Orissa State Disaster Management Authority has two days training programme of PRIs on disaster management concept, DM Act and Orissa Relief Code and Role of PRIs in all three phases of Disaster Management. OSDMA has an agreement with SIRD, Orissa to have one day training on Disaster Management in all training programmes conducted by SIRD.

NIRD and SIRD of all the states are responsible for the capacity building of the PRI members and most of them are involved by the state nodal agencies for DM for capacity building and duration should be two days class room session and one-day field visit or practices.

I hope the information will be useful for proposed workshop in Assam.

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**Harish Nayak, Disaster Management Team, Orissa**

Being a part of the Disaster Management initiative, it is pertinent to address the issues do come to the front. Inherently, Zilla Parisads hold the people centric positions and point out many traipses to the district authorities and it is applied in legislative outfit for appropriate disaster management at the grass root level.

The key for mass sensitization of People's representatives lies with the Zilla Parisads who entail systematically for their good field before the mass. The Natural Calamity Committee forward many solutions to undertake critically defined restoration work by the active involvement of the PRIs.

It is definite to quote that the role of Zilla Parisad in Disaster management is absolutely community centric and prolific. The real picture of disaster management should be reciprocal

without any hesitation. Zilla Parisads can ventilate the need assessment of the disaster management structure. Fine, people can trust upon their representatives to whom they elected by casting their vote of conscience.

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**[Sunil Chauhan](#), Indian Navy/Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (USI), New Delhi**

Some interesting comments have come up in this discussion, especially by [Sajnani](#), and I fully resonate her proposed structure for the workshop. While we go about the business of DM with new found activism and zeal we must not get in to the trap, which we all get into- of ignoring extant laws and mechanisms and trying to devise new issues, strategies and framework.

The DM field is full of examples where in people forget (or are actually unaware) about things as they are and the ***institutional mechanisms that already exist with preventive laws in place*** as provided by the Constitution of India, but are never put to use and practice. And then we end up formulating new issues, laws, acts, provisions, charters etc, without bothering to implement warranted issues (constitutionally and otherwise), and leverage the tools which already exist.

Most workshops usually start and end with glossies, plenty of documentation, and may be some good ideas, and later the outcomes gather dust, mainly because the principal existing issues and instruments provided by the foundation of our country, the Constitution itself, do not get addressed/used to the full extent they can be used to.

If the provisions of the Constitution itself are not addressed/put to use what else can be? So my first comment would be, for the intended workshop, to not focus on drawing newer issues/frameworks, but to first discuss the existing constitutionally mandated issues/mechanisms for disaster management and see why they have failed or do not meet the requirements. If there are gaps, we need to identify them and then only think of new frameworks.

To that extent we first need to clearly and objectively understand the 73<sup>rd</sup> (and the 74<sup>th</sup> as well; for urban local bodies, viz municipalities etc) Constitutional Amendment which added Part IX to the constitution and its provisions to obtain a clear perspective of the ***powers and responsibilities of the local bodies/PRI's*** which can be leveraged for DM, which has rightly been proposed by Sajnani too.

Article 243 W of the Constitution specifically underscores the powers, authority and responsibility of the local bodies/PRI's for: -

- (i) *the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;*
- (ii) *the performance of functions and the implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Twelfth Schedule;*

The role of PRI's for disaster management and preparedness essentially stems from the above Article, which lays down clear responsibility of the local bodies/PRI's in '*the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice*' and '*the performance of functions and the implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Twelfth Schedule*'.

The Twelfth Schedule lays down virtually all matters relevant to disaster preparedness as responsibilities of the local bodies/PRI's.(e.g.:- Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation, water management and watershed development, rural housing, drinking water, roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and

other means of communication, rural electrification, including distribution of electricity, non conventional sources of energy, poverty alleviation programme, education, technical training, health and sanitation, women and child development etc... )

Besides 'plans for economic development and social justice' (Article 243 W), the Clauses of the Twelfth Schedule, as above are directly and obviously related to disaster preparedness. As for the **financial mechanisms**, in discharge of these duties the local bodies/PRI's are assigned state taxes, duties, fees and tolls regularly. They also get grants-in-aid from respective states and are also empowered to collect necessary taxes, duties, tolls and fees etc.

Thus these bodies are adequately empowered and endowed for their task. Why then the necessity of indentifying "*Specific issues regarding involving Zilla Parishads in disaster management*", as enunciated by Shri HS Brahma in the leading mail? Are we trying to break and re build an existing pillar? Article 243 very objectively indentifies issues for all local bodies/PRI's and if each of the issue as listed in the Clauses are addressed with effective intervention efforts we would be well above our requirements and objectives in disaster management. The best intellectual capacity of the country have already helped us by put their knowledge, experience and wisdom in these Articles. Do we need to challenge them?

All we need to do is to analyze why the local bodies/PRI's still fail to deliver even while there are strong preventive laws and financial mechanisms in place provided by the Constitution. Few random thoughts on these, which could be developed upon:-

- **Organisation.** These bodies are not so well organised as to effectuate an effective and consistent long term planning required for disaster management
- **Expertise and Resource Capability.** Lack of expertise and modern intellectual resources and tools to effectively manage the disasters
- **Financial Planning.** Financial planning and resource generation is usually poor. While they have mandated legal methods of finance generation these are not consistent and are limited in scope
- **Reliability?** The local bodies/PRI's may be the first responders in ALL KINDS of disasters but may not be relied upon to manage all kinds of disasters consistently and effectively
- **Lack of Trust.** Generally strong distrust between the community and the local bodies/PRI's prevail in many instances. The common people see them more as opportunistic/corrupt regulators civic regulations enjoying officialdom than as facilitators or the institutions of local self-government
- **Political Interference.** Political interference and traditional bureaucratic psyche acts as wedge between people and the local bodies
- **Present Functional Paradigms.** Except some stray stories of success, local bodies are notoriously known for their failures in managing civic affairs. Local bodies are already constitutionally empowered, and now with DM Act 2005, have been mandated for disaster prevention, mitigation, relief, and rehabilitation and reconstruction activities.

As a direct outcome of the new DM Act 2005 local bodies at all levels would be directly involved in the planning process for disaster preparedness and management. Thus the pillars, preventive laws, core issues to be addressed for involvement of local bodies/PRI's in DM have already been built up upon by the Constitution and the DM Act 2005.

We only need to devise better strategies in governance and implementation. Some specific steps they could now take, as many respondents have said already in this discussion, put differently, are:-

- Development of Disaster Risk Management and Response Plans

- Constitutions of Disaster Management Teams (DMTs) and Committees with adequate representation. These teams have to be formed essentially from the local body reps, and the community.
  - Capacity building of DMTs at all levels. Special training in first aid, shelter management, water and sanitation, rescue and evacuation, etc.
  - Capacity building in cyclone and earthquake resistant features for houses in disaster-prone districts, training in retrofitting, and construction of technology demonstration units.
    - Integration of disaster management plans with development plans of local self-governments. Some prelim comments and it would be great to discuss these or clarify points separately with anyone on line or offline.
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**Asha Hans, Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre, Bhubaneswar**

I thank one session should be for marginalized groups who despite there being a law are not represented in the PRI activities such as persons with disabilities. People might come up with other excluded groups.

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**C. M. Muralidharan, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Consultant, Chennai**

There is no doubt on the important role of Panchayati Raj System in DRR. The Zilla parishad and the village panchayats have their roles. The important challenge would be in clear assigned roles to different institutions and departments in DRR and integrating them, right from the preparation and updating of village contingency plans, selecting capacitating and effective periodical renewal of village disaster preparedness committees, availability of standardized information at different levels etc.

In many cases there could be contingency plans /committees formed/promoted by NGO a, b and c and departments x ,y and z. When it comes to real action during a disaster there could be lot of confusion So the primary role of panchayats at village level and Zilla Parishad at district level would be to strengthen (in many cases these initiatives would not be comprehensive and complete enough) and integrate the existing initiatives if any by NGOs or Government departments and have a well accepted single village contingency plan, and active preparedness team/committee well known to all at the time of need. If not, promote and develop activate and manage the same. The panchayat members from local areas have a major role.

Panchayats being responsible for local infrastructure and resources, it has a major role in tank rejuvenation, flood control measures at village level and maintenance and management of infrastructures like cyclone shelter, water tanks, village pool of cooking utensils etc—all these with peoples participation in the true sense.

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**Himadri Maitra, Department Of Disaster Management, Kolkata (response 2)**

I am attaching Rule 153 of W.B. Panchayat act, which speaks for itself. This Rule may be replicated in terms of Disaster Management. To view the act click: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res05010904.doc>

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**P. Rajarethinam, Development Consultant, JORA Development Support Services, Chennai**

I wish to inform that in Cuba, which had extensive losses and damages due to floods and different natural disasters were contained by involving the local Govt. officials and people bodies in a systematic way.

An interesting project of Save the Children-UK had involved the local Govt. authorities and people's bodies through well planned/designed child-based disaster reduction and coping strategies. This has proved that by linking the local bodies and the children could minimise human losses and economic damage. This linkage could establish lasting changes in the lives of the children and the vulnerable families.

Save the Children has trained/exposed many of their staff in such disaster reduction strategies. You could get lot of resources and IEC materials including good films on Cuba experiments.

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### **Jos Chathukulam, Centre for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam**

It is necessary to look the present role of Zilla Parishad in the post tsunami development activities of the tsunami affected districts in different states. Today (12 January 2009), I could interview the District Panchayat President of Kollam, Kerala to respond the query. Kollam is the one of the districts in Kerala where heavy loss had occurred during the tsunami devastation in 2004 and the post tsunami activities are in operation in the district.

The president Mr. K. Soma Prasad says, "role of the District Panchayat in the post tsunami activities are restricted only to the implementation and monitoring of the construction activities of the buildings and infrastructure of high schools and higher secondary schools." If this is the state of affair of the District Panchayat in a state, which is ranked number one in devolution index in the country, what will be the case of the district panchayats in other states?

Therefore, my suggestions are the following for conducting the proposed consultation workshop.

- One has to procure the provisions in the Eleventh Schedule of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act and elaborate it in to detailed activity map.
- To see the provisions in regard to disasters in the Panchayat Raj Act in the state (here the state of Assam)
- In case of disaster, try to understand the sources of funding and its mobilization to Zilla Parishad.
- Discuss the involvement of Zilla Parishad in planning, implementation and community involvement

However, two aspects are very important (1) Provisions, to address this matter, should be in the Panchayat Raj Act of Assam. If it is not there, it should be incorporated. And (2), there should be separate fund allocation to meet such situations. All the funds should be channeled through Zilla Parishad. Planning, implementation and monitoring should be done at the Zilla Parishad level with support of local officials. The capability of Zilla Parishad with the active involvement of other sub district level governments is enormous to mobilize local citizen participation to mitigate disasters.

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### **Sarat Panda, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi**

First of all I would like to congratulate NDMA and the Govt. of Assam for initiating the consultation to promote the Zilla Parishad in DM activities. This workshop bears significance because it might bring forth not only the much needed role clarity to the PRI members in DM both at the District and sub-district level in the Assam state; but also help laying down operational guidelines for effective involvement of PRI members across levels in DM activities.

The organizers should keep in mind the psychology of a PRI member; their interest, priorities and need before designing the structure, content and schedule of the consultation workshop

Some major issues which the workshop needs to emphasize upon could be as follow:

- Clarifying the role of PRIs as per the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment
- Role of PRIs in DM activities and mainstreaming DM into local development plans
- Sharing of experiences and good practices by the Zilla Parishad participants; It would be all the more effective, if one can get any local PRI 'Champion' doing advocacy for preparedness and community safety and so on
- Disseminating ' the compilation of case studies on role of PRI members during emergency and early recovery'- if any available at the state level would be a very effective way of acknowledging their contribution, reassuring them and getting their involvement
- Lot of audio-visuals may be used for keeping their interest going in the workshop
- Efforts should be on making the workshop more participatory; individual participants/groups may be given chance to share their views.

So far the duration of the workshop is concerned, one full day should be adequate. Local factors should be taken into account before deciding the duration and timing of the workshop.

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**Shakeb Nabi, CARE India - Tsunami Response Program, Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

Based on my experience, I feel that the three-tier Panchayati system can certainly strive to manage disasters efficiently because of its proximity and participation of the local community.

The government of India had constituted a high powered committee for preparation of Disaster Management Plans in 1999. The committee recommended that Disaster Management needs a dedicated political commitment at all levels of national and local government. It also recommended that Disaster Management should be seen as a part of Good Governance.

Since community is the one, which is affected by a disaster, and it is the first responder also I see a great role of the Panchayats in Community Mobilization leading to greater motivation, community level coordination action. For effective implementation of the disaster mitigation strategies it is highly recommended that, the 3-tier panchayat should be trained and are able to function efficiently should a disaster strike. Under the Disaster Management Act 2005, the Act envisages creation of the District Disaster Management Authority with chairperson of the Zilla Parishad as the co-chairperson. There has to be clear dilatation of roles and responsibilities between the chairperson and the co-chairperson.

As far as the workshop is concerned, it is recommended that it should incorporate some of the basic things like orienting the Zila Parishad members on participatory approach to Disaster Management, incorporating and prioritizing disaster management issues into development planning, good understanding on the trigger mechanism and its utility, carrying out the damage assessment exercise in the event of a disaster, relief coordination and good understanding of the incidence command systems and the roles that they are expected to play.

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**Anuradha Vidyasankar, Freelance Development Professional, Chennai**

I was earlier working with the Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre in Chennai during the post tsunami and had opportunities to get a good exposure to a variety of post disaster programmes including DM programmes by the civil society, the Government and other players. Based on my observations of the same I want to highlight a few things, as most points have been covered by our other valuable members.

First and foremost, I believe that the PRI's including the ZP's should be deeply convinced of the need for DM programmes so that they get motivated and take it forward to others with a process of ripple effect to sustain the enthusiasm.

The conviction should be through a process where they are empowered as well as made aware of their important role in the entire scheme of things. Therefore, special efforts should be made to kindle their spirit and enthuse them to prioritise DM amongst many other immediate needs.

The above should go hand in hand with the building of their capacities as rightly suggested by the other members so that people's confidence in them is built. It has been often found that there has been a very poor awareness of the DM Act and other crucial aspects of DM among the government functionaries and the PRIs.

In particular their capacity for vulnerability assessment, gender sensitive planning based on local needs and data to overcome the same in case of specific disasters, post disaster assessment of damages should be valuable.

Last but not the least the capacity building should be continuous and cannot be just a one time event as it needs to be fresh in their minds and they need to get back with their experiences after initiating a few measures and share with others. Cases of success of other PRIs as suggested by other members with actual testimonies and exposure visits will help to motivate them for action.

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**[Parimita Routray](#), Sphere India, New Delhi**

In response to your mail in the DM community of solutions exchange, I have certain experience to share.

Considering the target audience i.e. Chairpersons of Zilla Parishad and the limited time, **topics/specific issues for discussion during the workshop** may be concentrated on –

- Role of Zilla Parishad members during all phases of Disaster Management (a broad overview) with special focus on
- integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into development planning, their roles advocating for bringing in amendments to the relief code, Relief & Rehabilitation packages, DM policy for the state, etc. ; their role in advocating for institutionalizing Disaster response at all levels starting from State – Village level ;
- Provision in the national DM Act 2005 and their roles as PRI in making in implementing it.
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation of the DRR measures/initiatives by involving all stake holders especially community at the grassroots.

Later on short training programmes may be planned based on the availability of funds. NDMA may pursue with Assam govt. for inclusion of DM as a special topic in the training programmes conducted for PRIs by State Institute of Rural Development.

- **References of Development Practitioners/ Organizations who could be invited to participate in the Workshop and**

Mr. Saroj Dash of SIRD, Orissa would be one of the best resource persons, who can contribute substantially to the said workshop. Mr. Dash has extensively contributed in the formulation of **Project Dakshayata** which is currently implementational in Orissa. A joint endeavour of Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Orissa and UNDP, Project Dakshayata aims at capacity



building of PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) – the local elected government - in Orissa. For more information please refer to [http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=513&Itemid=690](http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=513&Itemid=690) or <http://orissapanchayat.gov.in/English/sltdlt.asp>

- **Duration and structure of the workshop**

Duration:

From my personal experiences at UNDP in Orissa where, workshops and training sessions for legislators of Orissa Legislative Assembly (OLA) under UN's LFHD programme, I have a view, that the elected representatives are occupied with other various works, as a result they fail to devote sufficient time for a quality discussion in such workshops, despite their interest. So the workshop should be limited to 3 hours (maximum). So, you may target for a short duration.

Structure:

The workshop if presided by the Chief Minister or some influential member of the Assam Legislative Assembly can ensure better attendance and participation to certain extent. It will always be advisable, if the Chief Minister/special guest be requested to be present through out the workshop, so that members come to workshop on time and don't leave the session mid way.

Literature/reference materials focusing on 'Zilla Parishads in disaster management' be made available in the information kit, that would be supplied to the Zila Parishad members during the workshop. The reference materials if made in local language, as most of them are not well acquainted with english language. Materials in local language ensures that it is atleast read and referred later on.

There must be a Legislators Forum for Human Development (LFHD) in Assam, and the participants may be informed about the forum and its activities. From time to time, under LFHD training programmes are conducted concerning development issues. So some programmes may be designed with a focus on DRR theme.

Presentations by resource persons should be very focused, and citing local disaster related issues and integrating them with their roles can make the ZP members get involved in the workshop. Theories on DRR should be avoided.

I hope, this information would be useful for the workshop.

Thanks and regards,

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***Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!***

*If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community in India at [se-drm@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-drm@solutionexchange-un.net.in) and/or Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community in India [se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in) [se-drm][se-decn] Query: Involving Zilla Parishads in Disaster Management – Referrals; Advice. Additional Reply."*

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