

**TWENTY - SIXTH REPORT
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 16 March, 2017)



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March 2017/Phalguna, 1938 (*Saka*)

CPB. NO. 1 Vol. _____

Price: Rs.....

**(c) 2017 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business
in Lok Sabha (Sixteenth Edition) and printed by the Manager, Government of
India Press, Minto Road, New Delhi- 110002**

CONTENTS

	PAGES
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS:	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(v)
REPORT	
Representation received from Shri Vijender Rawat forwarded by Smt. Mala Rajya Lakshmi Shah, M.P., Lok Sabha regarding deployment of rural/local youths in the Disaster Management Team in Uttarakhand.	1
ANNEXURES	
(i) Representation of Shri Vijender Rawat.	19
(ii) Minutes of the 32nd sitting of the Committee held on 14 March, 2017.	24

(i)

**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(2016-2017)**

Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari - *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

2. Shri Suresh C. Angadi
3. Shri Om Birla
4. Shri Jitendra Chaudhury
5. Shri Ram Tahal Choudhary
6. Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi
7. Dr. K. Gopal
8. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh
9. Shri Chhedi Paswan
10. Shri Kamlesh Paswan
11. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
12. Shri Dinesh Trivedi
13. Shri Rajan Vichare
14. Shri Dharmendra Yadav
15. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Shri Shiv Kumar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri Raju Srivastava | - | Additional Director |
| 3. Shri Harish Kumar Sethi | - | Senior Executive Assistant |

(iii)

TWENTY SIXTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on Petitions, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty Sixth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee to the House on the representation received from Shri Vijender Rawat forwarded by Smt. Mala Rajya Lakshmi Shah, M.P., Lok Sabha regarding deployment of rural/local youths in the Disaster Management Team in Uttarakhand.

2. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Twenty Sixth Report at their sitting held on 14 March, 2017.

3. The observations/recommendations of the Committee on the above matters have been included in the Report.

NEW DELHI;

14 March, 2017
23 Phalguna, 1938 (Saka)

BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI
Chairperson,
Committee on Petitions

(v)

REPORT

REPRESENTATION RECEIVED FROM SHRI VIJENDER RAWAT FORWARDED BY SMT. MALA RAJYA LAXMI SHAH, M.P., LOK SABHA REGARDING DEPLOYMENT OF RURAL/LOCAL YOUTHS IN THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT TEAM IN UTTARAKHAND.

Shri Vijender Rawat, Patron of Social and Environmental Welfare Association (SEWA), Uttarkashi (Uttarakhand) submitted before the Committee of Petitions, a Representation regarding induction of rural/local youths in Disaster Management Team in Uttarakhand (Annexure-I).

2. The representationist, in his Representation, *inter alia* stated that natural calamities in the State of Uttarakhand have caused untold devastation and agony to the people and they have been forced to migrate at other places, thereby, leaving their homes and vocations behind. Shri Vijender Rawat had, therefore, requested that rural youths be inducted into Disaster Management Team so that they could provide immediate relief to the victims and needy whenever any natural calamity recur. He had further stated that the arrangement of deploying rural/local youths in the Disaster Management Team would not only provide employment to the local population but also pave way for the preservation of Himalayas. He had also proposed certain suggestions for the constitution of Disaster Management Task Force along with the economic benefits that would accrue by implementing the said proposal.

3. The Committee on Petitions took up the Representation for examination under Direction 95 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha. Accordingly, the Representation was forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs for furnishing their comments on the issues raised in the Representation. In response thereto, the Ministry of Home Affairs, *vide* their communication dated 10 August, 2015, in a written reply, *inter alia*, informed that since the community involvement in the Disaster Management is primarily dealt with at the State level, thus, the Representation was also forwarded by the Committee to the Uttarakhand Government for having their comments in the matter, as well.

4. However, when the Committee have a brief background of the issues raised by the representationist. The Ministry of Home Affairs submitted:-

"In the context of federal set-up of India, the responsibility to formulate the Government response to a natural calamity is essentially that of a State Government. However, the Central Government with its resources - physical and financial - provide the needed help and assistance to buttress relief efforts in the wake of major natural disasters.

The State Government of Uttarakhand run capacity building programmes for people and form local teams for relief and rescue measures. Besides, the Department of Disaster Management, Government of Uttarakhand is conducting 10 day's disaster management course for community people at Nyaya Panchayat level. This course includes training in disaster awareness, first aid and search & rescue. Further, 25 youths from each Nyaya Panchayat are selected for the training and trained for ten days. Till date, around 10500 youths from rural areas of the State have been trained in 422 Nyaya Panchayats. In addition to this, during Monsoon (June-September), local Search and Rescue Teams comprising of 5 members per team are placed at various locations to help the local police and administration in search and rescue. These Search and Rescue Teams are formed from the pool of village volunteers trained by the Department. Apart from this, the youths of the area can also register themselves with the local Civil Defence Unit of the District, wherein, they can provide services on voluntary basis as and when needed by the District Administration."

5. On being specifically enquired by the Committee about the Disaster Management Infrastructure created by the Government for the purpose of responding promptly and effectively to any threatening disaster situation, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written note, submitted:-

"National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) have been created at the Central and State/ District level Under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been created by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to supplement efforts of the State Governments for specialized operations. During disaster, rescue operations are coordinated by National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), headed by the Cabinet Secretary and National

Executive Council (NEC), headed by the Home Secretary. Similarly, at the State level, the State Executive Council headed by Chief Secretary coordinates the disaster management works.

To provide policy guidelines for handling disasters in an effective manner, State Governments have been asked to create State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). Till date most of the States have created SDRF for quick and timely response to disaster."

6. On being informed that personnel from various Central Armed Police Forces are deployed in the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Committee wanted to know the modalities for selection and deployment of these personnel. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written note, submitted:-

"The personnel from Central Armed Police Forces like BSF, ITBP, CRPF, CISF and SSB having skills, capabilities, qualifications and experience of handling disaster and their management and such other technical qualifications as prescribed by the Central Government are deputed to the NDRF for the purpose of disaster management. The Disaster Management (National Disaster Response Force) Rules, 2008 provide that in the case of non-availability of personnel with the required technical qualifications and experience, the Central Government may appoint such personnel through deputation from other organizations or on contract basis."

7. Thereafter, the Committee desired to have the Guidelines for imparting education in the Disaster Management Plans to educate the local youths/population for facing the Natural Calamity situations, the Ministry of Home Affairs submitted:-

"The Guidelines for preparation of Disaster Management Plans (DMP) have been issued by NDMA for the State Governments and the Central Ministries. One of the specified objectives of DMP is to promote a productive partnership with the media to create awareness and contributing towards capacity development. Under this objective, the concerned agencies may impart education to local youth/population for facing Natural calamity situations."

8. The Committee, then, categorically wanted to know as to whether the Government has formulated any policy to induct local residents of the area for disaster management. To this, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written reply, submitted:-

"In 2009, the Civil Defence Act was amended to include Disaster Management as additional role for the CD volunteers. The powers to raise, equip. and train Civil Defence Volunteer Force rests with the respective State Government. The Central Government, on its part, reimburses part of this cost to the State Government."

9. The Committee further desired to know about the proposal mooted Smt Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, M.P., for inducting local residents of the area in the disaster management team. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written reply, submitted:-

"The Ministry of Home Affairs fully endorses the proposal noted by Hon'ble Member. Community participation is an essential feature of the disaster management. The State Government, on its part, carries out training of local youth on all aspects of disasters, i.e., disaster awareness, first-aid and search and rescue etc. The rural/local youth may also register themselves with local Civil Defence Unit of the District, wherein, they provide services on voluntary basis as and when needed by the respective District Administration."

10. The Committee, thereafter, specifically desired to know the functional/administrative problems for inducting local youths in the Disaster Management Team(s), on permanent basis, as it would serve two purposes, namely, easy availability of local manpower who are proficient in local/regional diversities, and providing employment opportunities to the youths. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written reply, informed the Committee:-

"The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been constituted at the Central Governmental and the State Government levels with personnel drawn from Central Armed Police Forces having skills, capabilities experience, etc., of handling disasters. They are also given specialized training in dealing with various types of disasters. At present local youth are given training in disaster management by the respective State Government and their induction on permanent basis may be dealt with at State Government level."

11. On being asked by the Committee about the feasibility of deploying rural/local youths in certain Programmes/Schemes of the Government, viz., National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), National School Safety Programme, National Disaster Management Services Pilot Scheme, Decision Support System for offsite nuclear emergencies, National

Earthquake Risk Mitigation Project (NERMP), scheme on preparedness to handle radiological hazards through Mobile Radiation Detection System (MRDS) in States/ UTs, Capacity Building and Training initiatives by NDMA, strengthening of the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), the Ministry of Home Affairs, in a written reply, submitted:-

"It is our endeavour to engage and deploy rural/ local youth in the implementation of programmes/schemes since community participation is an essential feature of successful disaster management. The scheme wise details are as follows:-

(i) National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP).

The project aims at minimizing the vulnerability to cyclones and making the people disaster resilient in the coastal States affected by cyclones. The broad objectives of the project are to upgrade cyclone forecasting, tracking and warning systems, capacity building in multi-hazard risk management and to undertake structural and non-structural mitigation measures.

The most important component of the project is creation of multipurpose cyclone shelters, roads, bridges and saline embankments, etc. The implementing agencies undertake construction work with the involvement of the local youths. Even the multipurpose cyclone shelters are managed by the community with their active participation.

(ii) National School Safety Programme

In order to make schools more resilient and better prepared for disasters and also to usher in a culture of disaster preparedness, National School Safety Program was undertaken as a Centrally Sponsored program. The project covered 8600 schools in 43 Districts spread over 22 States/UTs of the country falling in seismic zone IV and V.

The program involved undertaking a range of activities for making schools safe such as preparation of training modules on school safety, training of teachers, development of Information, Education and Communication materials, preparation of school disaster management plans, conduct of mock drills, undertaking demonstrative retrofitting of schools and a host of non-structural measures. In this scheme students and teachers are directly involved and so the thrust of the programme is to involve local communities.

(iii) National Disaster Management Services Pilot Scheme

This scheme has not been executed.

(iv) Decision Support System for Offsite Nuclear Emergencies

This programme/scheme comes under the purview of Department of Atomic Energy.

(v) National Earthquake Risk Mitigation Project (NERMP) (Preparatory Phase)

NERMP was approved with an outlay of Rs.24.87 crore. in April, 2013. It was envisaged that BIS codes would be placed in the public domain and revision of these codes would be taken. The Scheme was to be implemented in 21 States/ UTs that lie in the seismic zones IV and V for improvement of Techno-legal regime in the country. NDMA, later on, sought revision to the cost and time schedule of the project in February, 2015. Subsequently, w.e.f., 2015-16 all the Central Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) have been subsumed into State Plan funds and thus the scheme is not being executed.

(vi) Scheme on preparedness to handle Radiological hazards through Mobile Radiation Detection System (MRDS) in States/ UTs

The handling of radiological hazards require specific knowledge and technical expertise and cannot be handled without imparting specialized training. The subject is not under the purview of Ministry of Home Affairs.

(vii) Capacity Building and Training initiatives by NDMA.

A Pilot project on capacity building is being organised through IGNOU. Under this project, face to face training programme (FTTPs) in State Administrative Training Institute (ATIs) and 432 FTTPs in IGNOU study centres of 54 selected Districts (8 in each District) will be organized. In each District, 300 people will be trained under the project of which 75 will be Government officials and 225 will be representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). In all, 16200 Government officials and representatives of PRIs/ULBs are aimed to be trained in Disaster Management, under this project. The scheme will directly impact rural/local youth employed in the Government.

(viii) Strengthening of the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs)

The National Disaster Management Authority is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme - "Strengthening of State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs)" at a cost of Rs. 42.50 crore for providing human resources to the SDMAs and DDMAs for technical support towards disaster preparedness and mitigation activities. In the financial year 2015-16, amount to the tune of Rs. 5 crore have been issued to several States/UTs. The Central Government finances the cost of employing highly skilled youth in the SDMAs/DDMAs."

12. On the issue, the Committee also undertook a Study Visit to Dehradun on 15 February, 2016 to have a realistic and on-the-spot assessment of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) during natural calamities as well as the aspect of inducting rural/local youths in Disaster Management Team in Uttarakhand.

13. During the study visit, the Committee also invited the representationist, namely, Shri Vijender Rawat to present his views on the subject. The representationist submitted before the Committee that -

- (1) *A number of seminars on various themes including the one related to environment and its impact on Himalaya has been organised by him. He further stated that he proposes to link environment with the employment of local population, thereby, solving both the problems. He illustrated this by citing an instance during the recent disaster in Uttarakhand by citing an example that a 60 year old local lady from Bakarwal community had helped the personnel deployed in the rescue and relief operations by showing them the short-cut route to reach Joshimath. Like her, other local people, untrained in the disaster rescue and relief operations, know the alternate routes of the area and the terrain and, therefore, they could help in the rescue operations in an effective and prompt manner. He contended that the professional rescue teams who were stationed at cities like Dehradun, would generally take more time to reach the place of disaster vis-a-vis the local population. Even in the case of sudden forest fire, the local population would be of immense help if they are deployed in all such rescue operations.*

- (2) *Even if a meager amount of Rs.5000/- per month is paid to the local youths and included in the disaster management team, they could not only save the environmental damage caused due to forest fires but also conveniently undertake various activities like plantation, etc.*
- (3) *The Para-Military personnel of BSF, ITBP, SSB, etc., or the Army personnel could be invited to impart training to the local youths so that on occurrence of any natural calamity in the Himalayan Range, they can be deployed in the rescue operations.*
- (4) *Tehri Project which is producing 1400 MW of power, has not undertaken any plantation, till date. He suggested that 2% of the total project cost could be utilized for undertaking various environment-friendly activities like plantation, etc.*

14. Thereafter, the Committee desired to know the details of institutional mechanism both at the National and the State levels for the effective management of natural disasters. The representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs submitted before the Committee as under:-

"The Disaster Management is a multi-disciplinary subject which requires coordinated and holistic approach from all Ministries/Departments at the Central and State levels. There are institutional mechanisms, both at the National and State levels, for the effective management of natural disasters. Improvement of Disaster Management system is a continuous and evolving process of Governance. The Government of India will continue to extend all possible support to the State Governments in their endeavour.

15. The Committee, then, wanted to know about the functional/administrative problems for inducting local youths in the Disaster Management Team(s) on permanent basis, as it would serve two purposes, namely, easy availability of local manpower who are proficient in local/regional diversities, and providing employment opportunities to the youths. The representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs submitted:-

"The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been constituted at the Central Government and State Government levels with personnel drawn from Central Armed Police Forces having skills,

capabilities, experience, etc of handling disasters. They have also been given specialised training in dealing with various types of disasters. At present, local youths are given training in disaster management by the respective State Government and their induction on permanent basis may be dealt with at the State Government level. With a view to deploying rural/ local youths for the successful disaster management, there are various schemes/programmes as under:-

- (1) *National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP)*
- (2) *National School Safety Programme*
- (3) *National Disaster Management Services Pilot Scheme*
- (4) *Decision Support System for Offsite Nuclear Emergencies*
- (5) *National Earthquake Risk Mitigation Project (NERMP)*
- (6) *Scheme on preparedness to handle radiological hazards through Mobile Radiation Detection System (MRDS) in States/ UTs*
- (7) *Capacity Building and Training initiatives by NDMA*
- (8) *Strengthening of the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs)*

16. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has also prepared a comprehensive National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) which *inter alia* aims at making the country resilient. The Plan also helps to maximise the ability of the country to cope with disasters at all levels by integrating risk reduction into development and by increasing the preparedness to respond to all kinds of disasters. On the aspect of capacity development Local Bodies - Rural and Urban, the NDMP provides as follows:-

(I) Capacity Development of Local Bodies - Rural and Urban

The capacity of Panchayats and ULBs have to be developed in the sphere of disaster management. Without adequate capacity development, the local bodies cannot contribute effectively to disaster management or in ensuring the proper implementation of DM plans. Capacity development is also necessary for true empowerment of the bodies of local self-governance. The

elected leaders and officials of Panchayats and ULBs should be trained to competently handle different types of crises, contribute to disaster preparedness, make proper use of available warnings, organise operations such as search, rescue, relief, medical assistance, and carry out damage assessment. They should also have sound understanding of the needs of proper post-disaster rehabilitation. The local leadership can play a big role in disaster management in all stages and in DM planning. Capacity development must aim at increasing the competence of local bodies in all aspects of disaster management, mainstreaming DRR, and in promoting a culture of disaster prevention and DRR. The capabilities of the local bodies have to be developed in financial, technical, and managerial spheres. The State level training Institutes (ATI, SIDM and others) will develop need-based training programs for the capacity development of rural and urban local bodies.

II. Training Communities

Enhancing the capacity of communities, as they are the first responders to disasters, is a significant part of the capacity development process. The Sandai Framework notes the need to build the knowledge of civil society, communities, and volunteers on disaster risk reduction. Capacity building has to include awareness, sensitisation, orientation, and developing skills of communities and community leaders. Assistance from NDRF, Civil Defence, civil society organisations, local community based organisations, and Self-Help Groups will be encouraged. The overall responsibility to give impetus to leadership and motivation will rest with local authorities. PRIs and ULBs under the overall guidance of State and District authorities.

Observations/ Recommendations

Disaster Management in India

17. India, due to its geographical locations and geological formations, happens to be a highly disaster prone country. Its long coastline, snow-clad high peaks, dense forest cover, especially the rivers in the north - all these factors at times result into major disasters. India, which has only two percent of the total geographical area, has to support 16 percent of world's total population. As a consequence thereof, there is a tremendous pressure on the natural resources, which directly or indirectly lead to occurrence of disasters, like, ravaging floods, dismal drought situations, frequent landslides, major earthquakes, ravaging Tsunamis and devastating forest fires.

18. Over a period and even speaking of recent times only, the country has to grapple with a number of disasters, ranging from flood, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis, droughts and landslides at high altitudes. A few recent disasters faced by the country include earthquakes in Uttarkashi, Maharashtra and Gujarat, super cyclone in Odisha, Tsunami in Mumbai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

19. The Committee note that in the context of federal set-up of India, the responsibility to formulate the Government response to a natural calamity is essentially that of a State Government. The Union Government has so far been playing only a facilitating role, i.e., proper co-ordination with various Ministries, to extend all required support and help to the States - namely, provision of defence services, air dropping of rescue teams and articles, helping in search operations, transportation of relief goods, to help in the availability of rail and ferry services, provision of health personnel and medical support, etc. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for all matters concerning disaster management.

20. The Committee also note that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs), District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) have been created at the Central and State/District level under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. Besides, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been created by the Ministry of Home Affairs to supplement efforts of the State Governments for specialized operations. During disaster, the rescue operations are co-ordinated by the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), headed by the Cabinet Secretary and National Executive Council (NEC), headed by the Home Secretary. Similarly, at the State level, the State Executive Council headed by the Chief Secretary co-ordinates the disaster management works.

21. The Committee further note that the Ministries/Departments/Organisations of the Government of India, which get engaged in the discharge of primary and secondary functions relating to management of disasters, include - India Meteorological Department, Central Water Commission, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Urban Development, Department of Communications, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Railways, etc.

22. Though the Committee fully acknowledge with great appreciation the initiatives taken by the Union Government for formulating a mechanism of co-ordination with various Ministries/ Department/Organisations to extend all the required support and help to the States for efficient disaster management, yet the Committee feel that our country lacks a composite 'Master Plan' for the management of disaster management including full-proof prediction and warning system, mitigation and the technical preparedness relating thereto. The Committee have observed that whenever any

natural calamity strikes, there have been instances of unspecified responsible Government Authority, unclear line of command, ineffective collaboration among Institutions/Organisations at different levels, lack of encouragement for participation of local population, and lack of information management or database system. Since the natural disaster response activity needs to be viewed holistically in the context of disaster management that ideally should start well before the response system is activated, the Committee earnestly desire that an integrated approach - which includes both pro-active and reactive strategies between various Ministries/Departments/Organisations of the Union Government - on the one side - and the State Government(s) - on the other - should be in place for managing the natural disasters successfully. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the possibility of setting up of a separate Department of Disaster Management in the Government of India should be explored by the Union Government. The Committee would like the Government to take necessary steps in this direction and apprise the Committee accordingly and for the purpose, if necessary, the action should be initiated at the highest level.

Deployment of rural/local youths as 'Volunteers' in Disaster Management

23. The Committee note that while forwarding the Representation of Shri Vijender Rawat, Smt Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, M.P., had *inter alia* suggested that rural/local youths should also be inducted into disaster management teams so that they could provide immediate relief to the victims and the needy.

24. The Ministry of Home Affairs had also endorsed the proposal for community participation in the disaster management. As a sequel to this, the Committee have also been informed by the Ministry that the State Government(s), on its part, carries out training of local youths on all the aspects of disaster management, i.e., disaster

awareness, first-aid and search & rescue operations, etc. Besides, with a view to encouraging the rural/local youths in the disaster management, the Civil Defence Act was also amended in the year 2009 to include the 'Disaster Management' as additional role for Civil Defence (CD) volunteers. However since, the powers to raise, equip. and train the Civil Defence Volunteer Force rests with the respective State Government, the Central Government, as a facilitator, reimburses a part of expenditure to the State Government. The rural/local youths have the option to register themselves with the Civil Defence Unit of the District for providing their services, on voluntary basis, as and when needed by the respective District Administration.

25. On this aspect, the Committee recognize that whenever any disaster strikes, the local people are the first to respond, before any other outside Agencies arrive to assist in the rescue and recovery efforts. The fact remains that many of these 'first responders', who struggle to save lives with limited resources and skills - at their disposal - are energetic young people. The Committee, therefore, feel that a comprehensive disaster management and emergency preparedness should be based on the concept of 'active participation' of youths in all phases of the disaster cycle. Rather than seeing the 'disaster-affected youths' as victims or passive recipients of outside assistance, a responsive disaster management should recognize the value of including these rural/local youths in the entire process of disaster management. The Committee are, therefore, of a considered opinion that there can be no other better resource in a community, than the young people. It could be easier to obtain funding for projects and related disaster preparedness programmes, but without sufficient community resources in place, the objectives of disaster preparedness and risk reduction would remain a distant possibility. The Committee, therefore, recommend that not only the Government Agencies and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) but also the local communities, especially the rural/local youths - in the form of

'Volunteers' - should be actively involved in the rescue and relief operations whenever any disaster occurs. All such Volunteers should also be rewarded for their contribution in the disaster management work - monetarily or otherwise by way of promoting their contribution through media, organizing award-giving ceremonies, giving certificates to them, sending them to other countries to share their experience in such situations, etc. The Committee would like to be apprised of the outcome of renewed strategy worked out by the Ministry of Home Affairs to sufficiently assist the State Governments to encourage more and more deployment of rural/local youths in the disaster management activities.

Environmental concerns leading to Natural Disasters

26. The Committee note from the submissions made by the representationist that the Tehri Project which is producing 1400 MW of power in Uttarakhand has not taken up any notable plantation exercise in the area leading to a major threat to the environment in the form of recurrence of landslides. Although, the Union Government and the State Governments have laid down various structural and non-structural measures to contain various natural disasters, but these have failed to specifically outline the mandatory implementation of various non-structural measures.

27. The Committee strongly feel that non-structural measures, viz., plantation of trees could serve as a long-term solution for reducing the recurrence of natural calamities, especially, the frequent landslides in the mountains. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Ministry of Home Affairs to advise the State Governments to establish a mechanism, where the local inhabitants are involved in the activity of plantation of trees. For this purpose, the Government could also consider the convergence of this activity with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in a more extensive manner. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken by the Government in the matter.

Capacity Building

28. The Committee note that adequate capacity building is a *sine quo non* for effective disaster management, especially, in view of the fact that natural disasters in the country have increased - both in terms of frequency and intensity. Taking a cue from the recent disaster that struck the Himalayan region, the Committee wish to emphasize that the entire mechanism of capacity building should not be limited to the involvement of professionals and personnel in the disaster management but should also focus on building the awareness, capacity and the requisite skills of the community to cope with the effects of disasters.

29. In view of the foregoing, the Committee feel that the capacity building for effective disaster management should invariably be linked to the community and the local level responders on the one hand and also to the Institutional Mechanism of the Union and the State Governments, on the other. The Committee, therefore, desire that all out efforts should be made to caution the communities about rapidly changing weather conditions and the rampant man-made construction activities in the mountain - regions, thereby leading to substantially destroying the local vegetation and geographical formations to enable them to save the lives and property - in the event of any natural calamity. Further, the satellite imagery has become an important tool for the Authorities concerned for receiving alerts about the imminent disasters and also in assessing the preparedness in regard thereto. As a matter of fact, these technological advancements need further refinement and intensification to enable the Authorities at various levels to take appropriate and timely decisions. The Committee,

therefore, recommend the Ministry of Home Affairs to coordinate with the Departments/Organizations concerned to formulate a comprehensive capacity building mechanism for dissemination of advance and effective information on disasters to the Authorities and the local youths/CD volunteers to mitigate the effects of any natural disaster. The Committee would like the Ministry of Home Affairs to take necessary action and apprise the Committee accordingly within three months of presentation of this Report to the House.

Developing infrastructure for Disaster Risk Reduction

30. The Committee observe that with a view to bolstering the community resilience and also ensuring their active participation in the risk reduction activities, the Union Government has initiated some dedicated schemes related to Civil Defence, School Safety, Flood Management, Earthquake and Cyclone Risk Mitigation, Early Warning Systems, etc. Some of the major social protection programmes where mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction has been initiated are Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY), National Health Mission (NHM), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day Meal, etc. These programmes are not only contributing to the risk mitigation but are also enhancing the inbuilt capacity of the community to minimize the risk and manage the adverse impact of any disaster.

31. The Committee observe that mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning should also be a priority concern for the State Governments. The ultimate objective of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction should be to ensure that risks emanating from natural calamities are factored into development policy and

an effective ingredient in designing of all development projects and programmes in disaster-prone areas.

32. The Committee, therefore urge that a small portion of the funds allocated to various flagship schemes of the Union Government should be dedicated towards raising infrastructure for Disaster Risk Reduction by means of awareness drives, community participation in local projects such as plantation of trees in and around the areas of Tehri Dam and its other power projects, maintenance of roads and bridges over small rivers and streams, etc. The Committee would like to be apprised of the initiatives taken by the Government in this regard.
