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COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

FORTY-SECOND REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

October, 2017/Asvina, 1939 (Saka)

FORTY-SECOND REPORT
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(DISASTER MANAGEMENT DIVISION)

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 22.12.2017)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
October, 2017/Asvina, 1939 (Saka)

Price: ₹ 40.00

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Fifteenth Edition) and printed by the Manager, Government of India Press, Minto Road, New Delhi-110 002.

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(2017-18)

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. Dr. K. Gopal
7. Shri C. P. Joshi
8. Shri Chhedi Paswan
9. Shri Kamlesh Paswan
10. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
11. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh
12. Shri Dinesh Trivedi
13. Shri Rajan Vichare
14. Shri Dharmendra Yadav
15. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

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2. Shri Raju Srivastava — *Additional Director*
3. Shri G.C. Dobhal — *Deputy Secretary*
4. Shri Anand Kumar Hansda — *Executive Assistant*

FORTY-SECOND 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 Forty-Second Action Taken Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee to the House on the Action Taken on the recommendations of the Committee on Petitions made in their Twenty-Sixth Report (16th Lok Sabha) on the representation of 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 Forty-Second Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 11 October, 2017.

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

NEW DELHI;
11 October, 2017
19 Asvina, 1939 (Saka)

BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI,
Chairperson,
Committee on Petitions.

REPORT

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS
MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)
IN THEIR TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT (16TH LOK SABHA) 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

The Committee on Petitions in their Twenty-Sixth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) presented to Lok Sabha on 16 March, 2016 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 had made certain observations/recommendations in the matter and the Ministry of Home Affairs was asked to implement the recommendations and furnish their action taken notes thereon for consideration of the Committee.

3. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) in respect of all the recommendations contained in the Report. The recommendations made by the Committee and the replies furnished thereto by the Ministry of Home Affairs are detailed in the succeeding paragraphs.

4. In paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:—

"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 per cent of the total geographical area has to support 16 per cent of world's total population. As a consequence there of, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 18 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.”

5. In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) has stated as under:—

"This Ministry would beg to differ from the observation that there is lack of 'Master Plan' for disaster management and lack of co-ordination mechanism among different agencies involved in disaster management.

In this regard, it may be noted that the Government of India has enacted the Disaster Management Act, 2005. Institutions like National Executive Committee and State Executive Committee have been constituted in the National and State levels respectively as per the provision of the Act. As per section 10(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the National Executive Committee headed by the Union Home Secretary is the co-ordinating and monitoring body for disaster management and co-ordinates response in the event of any threatening disaster situation or disaster. Similarly, clause (g) under sub-section 22(2) provides that the State Executive Committee constituted by the State Government under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary would co-ordinate response in the event of any threatening disaster situation or disaster. Further, at the National level, there is National Crisis Management Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary, which co-ordinate the response actions of different organizations after a severe disaster or crisis. Therefore, there is no lack of co-ordination in disaster management and there are existing institutions to take care of co-ordination issues after a disaster strikes.

Besides, National Disaster Management Plan of our country has been released in 2016. This is the first National Plan in the world, which is in line with the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30.

Regarding the observation of the Committee on creation of separate Disaster Management Department, it may be noted that NDMA has already been constituted as the Apex Body for disaster management in the country under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. NDMA is statutory organization under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and has the mandate to lay down policies, guidelines and regulations for effective disaster

management. Therefore, creation of a separate department for Disaster Management may not be required at this stage."

6. In paragraphs 23, 24 and 25 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:—

"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.

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 19 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.

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 (NGO 5) but also the local communities, especially the rural/local youths—in the form of 20 '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."

7. In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) has stated as under:—

"The recommendation of the Committee is noted. The recommendation is ongoing in nature. Few major initiatives of this Ministry in this regard are given below:—

- The National Disaster Management Plan has been released in May, 2016. The Plan has clearly spelt out the role of communities in various phases of Disaster Management cycle and also in mobilizing youth of the local community for disaster response as well as risk reduction.
- NDMA has drafted the guidelines on "Community Based Disaster Management". The draft guidelines envision spelling put the role of communities in all phases of DM and in strengthening the existing mechanisms for community organizations and involvement including mobilization and capacity development of local youths for disaster preparedness and response. The draft guidelines are under review at the moment.
- Civil Defence Act was also amended in the year 2009 to include the 'Disaster Management' as additional role for Civil Defence (CD) volunteers. 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.
- NDRF has so far imparted training to 2,99,984 local volunteers including youth in the country.
- NDMA is implementing a project on sustainable reduction in disaster risk in 10 most multi-hazard vulnerable districts, 2 each in the States of Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand which is focused on strengthening community and local self-governments preparedness and response to disasters.
- NDMA has recently approved a Centrally Sponsored Schemes for training community volunteers including local youth in disaster response in selected 30 most flood prone districts of India ("Aapda Mitra") focussing on training of 6000 volunteers during 2016-18.

- With respect to State of Uttarakhand, NDMA has conducted 17 Mock Exercises on various disasters at district level in Uttarakhand and in addition, two Mock Exercises at State level covering the entire state have been conducted by NDMA. Last State Level Mock Exercise on Earthquake Disaster was conducted on 21-28 Feb., 2017 & 2nd March, 2017 in Uttarakhand covering all the 13 districts in which all stakeholders took part as per the Incident Response System (IRS). The stakeholders included representation from CAPFs (1TBP), Indian Army, NDRF, Civil Defence Volunteers and the local community.”

8 In paragraphs 26,27,28,29,30,31 and 32 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:—

“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.

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.

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.

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.

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 (MGNREGS), 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.

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.

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."

9. In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) has stated as under:—

The suggestion of the Committee is noted. As advised by the Committee, this Ministry *vide* Letter No. 43-1/2017-NDM-I/AD dated 15th June, 2017 has advised the Government of Uttarakhand and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to take appropriate measure in this regard including establishing a mechanism for involving the local inhabitants in the activity of plantation of trees. Further, this Ministry *vide* letter dated 6th July, 2017 has advised the Ministry of Rural Development to consider the recommendation of the Committee on convergence of the aforesaid activity with MGNREGS.

Community is at the centre of all our disaster management efforts. Various sections of National Policy on Disaster Management issued in 2009 emphasized the role of community in disaster preparedness and mitigation and the need for empowering them to manage disasters by providing training and building awareness. Similarly, Section 7.5 of National Disaster Management Plan released in May, 2016 acknowledges that "Enhancing the capacity of communities, as they are the first responders to disasters, is a significant part of the capacity development process. The Sendai Framework notes the need to build the knowledge of civil society, communities, and volunteers on disaster risk reduction. Capacity building has to include awareness, sensitization, orientation, and developing skills of communities and community leaders. Assistance from NDRF, Civil Defence, civil society organisations, local community-based organizations, 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.

As community engagement are largely done through State/District/Local administrations, all the States/UTs Governments have been advised to encourage community engagement and equipping them with training and awareness building *vide* this Ministry's Letter No. 43-1/2017-NDM-I/AD dated 15th June, 2017.

Some of the major initiatives taken by Government of India towards capacity building of communities/local youth and authorities for disaster management are:—

- Forecasting agency like IMD sends emergency alerts to Community through various means which includes SMS, Siren, TV/FM Radio also.
- During the non-disaster period, NDRF teams sensitizes communities in disaster resilience and in disaster risk reduction. In 2017, NDRF conducted 483 Community Awareness Programmes (CAP) and 280 School Safety Programmes (SSP), in which 299984 persons and 140410 school children and staff has been benefited respectively.
- Civil Defence Act was amended in the year 2009 to include the 'Disaster Management' as additional role for Civil Defence (CD) volunteers. 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.

- NDMA has undertaken 550 Mock Exercises across the country to build the local capacity and sensitize people.
- Further, under the "National School Safety Programme (NSSP), 8600 schools (with 200 schools in 43 districts in 22 States/UTs falling seismic zones IV and V) have been provided for providing training on school safety and disaster preparedness.
- The 'Aapda Mitra' Scheme of NDMA has provision for training 6000 community volunteers in disaster response in 30 most flood prone districts (200 volunteers per district) in 25 States.
- The project on sustainable reduction in disaster risk of NDMA will help to strengthen community and local self governments preparedness and response to disasters in 10 most multi- hazard vulnerable districts in Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand.
- Recently during National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR-2) meeting held on 15th & 16th May, 2017 at New Delhi, NRSC, ISRO has launched National Disaster Emergency Portal (NDEM) Version-3. NDEM is a GIS based repository of data to support disaster/emergency management in the Central Government, State Governments, NDRF and various stakeholders. The database enables development of decision support system in the form of customized user interfaces with necessary security mechanism. This portal is extensively used by State Governments for taking appropriate and timely decisions before and after any disaster.

The Committee's observation that mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into development planning should also be a priority concern for the State Governments has been noted. In this regard, all the State/UT Governments had already been advised *vide* this Ministry's Letter No.31-3/2013/DM-III dated 26th March, 2015 on specific entry points for mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in their development Schemes. Further, concerned Ministries were also advised for incorporation of DRR in the development planning process *vide* Letter No.31- 3/2013/DM-III dated 6th January, 2015. Further, in pursuance with Committee's observation, all the States/UTs Governments have been once again requested to take appropriate action for mainstreaming DRR *vide* this Ministry's Letter No. 43-1/2017- NDM-1/AD dated 15th June, 2017.

In this regard, Union Ministry of Finance *vide* their guidelines dated 6th January, 2014 has introduced Flexi Fund component within Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). As per the Flexi-Fund scheme, Central Ministries shall keep at least 10% of their plan budget for each CSS as flexi funds, except for Schemes which emanate from a legislation or where the whole or

a substantial proportion of the budgetary allocation is flexible. This Flexi Fund can be *inter alia* used to undertake mitigation/restoration activities in case of natural calamities in the sector covered by the CSS. Union Ministry of Finance *vide* their guidelines dated 6th September, 2016 has increased the flexi fund allocation from the level of 10% to 25% for States and 30% for Union Territories, of the overall annual allocation under each scheme. This Flexi Fund has been designed to meet local needs of the States and would provide support to State/UTs to take up various mitigation activities as proposed by the Committee.

Further, this Ministry *vide* Letter No. 46-6/2017-DM-111 dated 31st March, 2017 has advised the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoH&UPA), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD) to take action on the recommendations of the Committee for the flexi schemes under implementation of their Ministries.”

Observations/Recommendations

Separate Department of Disaster Management

10. While appreciating the initiatives taken by the Union Government for formulating a mechanism of co-ordination with various Ministries/Departments/Organisations to extend all the required support and help to the States for efficient disaster management, the Committee had pointed out that since the natural disaster response activity needs to be viewed holistically in the broader context of disaster management that ideally should start well in place before the response system is activated. The Committee had, therefore, recommended 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 Governments on the other side should be in place for managing the natural disasters successfully for which the possibility of setting up of a separate Department of Disaster Management in the Government of India should be explored.

11. The Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division), in their action taken reply has *inter alia* informed that the Government of India has enacted the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and institutions like National Executive Committee and State Executive Committees have been constituted in the National and State levels respectively. The Ministry has also stated that since NDMA has already been constituted as the Apex Body for disaster Management in the country under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, creation of a separate Department for Disaster Management is not required at this stage.

12. The Committee while acknowledging the clarification given by the Ministry wish to reiterate that since various Ministries/Departments/Organisations of the Government of India, *viz.*, 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., are being engaged in the discharge of primary and secondary functions relating to management of disasters, on occurrence of any natural calamity, there had been instances of unspecified responsible Government Authority, unclear line of command, ineffective collaboration among Institutions/Organisations at different levels. Nevertheless, since National Disaster Management Plan of our country, which is in line with the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30, has been released in 2016, the Committee trust that the Ministry, with all its capacity, would effectively deal with all matters concerning disaster Management in a composite manner with appropriate calibration with the State Government concerned.

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

13. On the aspect of involving the local communities, especially the rural/local youths in the form of 'Volunteers' in the rescue and relief operations whenever any disaster occurs and also rewarding them 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 experiences in such situations, etc., the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division), in their action taken reply, has spelled out the major initiatives taken by them as follows:—

- The National Disaster Management Plan has been released in May, 2016. The Plan has clearly spelt out the role of communities in various phases of Disaster Management cycle and also in mobilizing youth of the local community for disaster response as well as risk reduction.
- NDMA has drafted the guidelines on "Community Based Disaster Management". The draft guidelines envision spelling put the role of communities in all phases of DM and in strengthening the existing mechanisms for community organizations and involvement including mobilization and capacity development of local youths for disaster preparedness and response. The draft guidelines are under review at the moment.
- Civil Defence Act was also amended in the year 2009 to include the 'Disaster Management' as additional role for Civil Defence (CD) volunteers. 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.
- NDRF has so far imparted training to 2,99,984 local volunteers including youth in the country.
- NDMA is implementing a project on sustainable reduction in disaster risk in 10 most multi-hazard vulnerable districts, 2 each in the States of Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and

Uttarakhand which is focused on strengthening community and local self-governments preparedness and response to disasters.

- NDMA has recently approved a Centrally Sponsored Schemes for training community volunteers including local youth in disaster response in selected 30 most flood prone districts of India ("Aapda Mitra") focussing on training of 6000 volunteers during 2016-18.
- With respect to State of Uttarakhand, NDMA has conducted 17 Mock Exercises on various disasters at district level in Uttarakhand and in addition, two Mock Exercises at State level covering the entire State have been conducted by NDMA. Last State Level Mock Exercise on Earthquake Disaster was conducted on 21-28 Feb., 2017 & 2nd March, 2017 in Uttarakhand covering all the 13 Districts in which all stakeholders took part as per the Incident Response System (IRS). The stakeholders included representation from CAPFs (ITBP), Indian Army, NDRF, Civil Defence Volunteers and the local community.

14. The Committee are constrained to express their view that the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) has not taken their recommendation in its right perspective and conveniently skipped the aspect of actively involving the local communities, especially the rural/local youths and also appropriately rewarding them monetarily or otherwise for their contribution in the rescue and relief operations whenever any disaster occurs. Now that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has been constituted as the Apex Body for disaster management in the country under the Chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the NDMA has been mandated to lay down policies, guidelines and regulations for effective disaster management, the Committee expect that their recommendation for co-opting rural/local youths by way of appropriately rewarding them monetarily or otherwise for undertaking rescue and relief operations would be taken up with all seriousness and in a result-oriented manner. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

Environmental concerns leading to Natural Disasters

15. The Committee had pointed out that Tehri Project which is producing 1400 MW of power in Uttarakhand had not taken up any non-structural measures in the form of plantation exercise in the area leading to a major threat to the environment in the form of recurrence of landslides. The Committee had, therefore, emphasised that non-structural measures, viz., plantation of trees could serve as a long-term solution for reducing the recurrence of natural calamities and recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) should advise the State Governments to establish a mechanism, where the local inhabitants are involved in the activity of plantation of trees. The Committee had also recommended to explore the possibility of converging the activity of plantation of trees with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

16. The Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division), in their action taken reply, has informed that the Government of Uttarakhand and the

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has already been advised to take appropriate measure for convergence of the activity of plantation of trees with the MGNREGS including establishing a mechanism for involving the local inhabitants in the activity of plantation of trees.

17. The Committee are satisfied with the various initiatives taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) for not only formulating an appropriate mechanism for involving local inhabitants in the activity of plantation of trees but also convergence of plantation activity with the MGNREGS. However since the subject-matter 'Forests' is in the Concurrent List, the mechanism for involving local inhabitants in the activity of plantation of trees needs to be established by the Government of Uttarakhand, whereas, the convergence of this activity with the MGNREGS is to be looked after by the Union Government, the Committee desire that the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) should effectively liaise with the Ministry of Rural Development as well as the Government of Uttarakhand to implement this project at the earliest. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

NEW DELHI;
11 October, 2017

19 Asvina, 1939 (Saka)

BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI,
Chairperson,
Committee on Petitions.

7. After discussing the Draft Action Taken Reports in detail, the Committee adopted the same without any modification(s). The Committee also authorised the Chairperson to finalize the Draft Action Taken Reports and present the same to the House during the ensuing Session.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

*** Not relevant.

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