



JNNURM - Recommendations for DRR Linkage

Integrating Disaster Management with programmes and policies of Urban Sector

Introduction:

Currently India is witnessing an exponential growth of urban centres and urbanization trend will further intensify scale migration to urban centers in search of employment and livelihood. It is estimated that the number of cities with more than one million population will rise to 75 by 2021 as compared to 35 in 2001 and nearly 37.1% of the total population will be living in urban areas by then. This coupled with the vulnerability of the urban infrastructure and our housing stock, with nearly 50% of existing housing units consisting of clay, adobe or stone walls and nearly 35% having burnt brick walls – both highly susceptible to seismic forces – makes for a grim scenario. The emerging urban risks are likely to pose populations in a relatively small geographical area, unplanned and haphazard expansion of urban horizons, unsafe construction patterns, lack of preparedness at either the community or administration level, an inadequate capacity to meet the gargantuan proportions of the catastrophic post-disaster situation in urban areas etc. The experience of past few years in many urban centres like Mumbai, Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, Shimla etc. is being viewed as a foretaste of things to come and makes a strong and urgent case for integration of risk reduction concerns through the development programmes like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The experts are also of the same opinion that JNNURM provides an excellent vehicle to address urban disaster related risks.

Integration:

The National Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction (NADRR) was formed in 2007 with an aim to bring together regional, national and local stakeholders in order to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) concerns into mainstream development planning and actions on the ground. As part of alliance activities, a grassroots campaign has taken up titled, “Demystifying DRR”, where in the alliance with its constituent members would learn, share, guide, advocate and partner to promote disaster resilient programmes and policies that enhance capacities of vulnerable communities. In view of this NADRR has initiated the Action Group on “Collaborative Efforts for Disaster Risk Reduction: Demystifying DRR” with Disaster Management Community of Solution Exchange. Among other activities planned, NADRR generated discussion on possibilities of integrating DRR with current programmes of Government of India. In this regard, the Alliance started a discussion on integrating DRR with Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) being carried out by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. It encourages reforms and fast track planned development of certain identified cities. The entire discussion was facilitated by Disaster Management (DM) Community Resource Team of UNDP Solution Exchange. And a query was floated across the entire DM and Education communities (having more than 2000 experts).

JNNURM covers in total 63 cities, many of which are fall under Earthquake prone zones. As part of the mission, the Integrated Housing & Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) proposes a healthy and enabling urban environment through adequate shelter and basic infrastructure to the urban poor. However programme is silent on the aspects of safety such as Earthquake safe construction, flooding etc.

The alliance (NADRR) requested members to share experiences on urban initiatives where risk reduction and safety aspects have been integrated as part of implementation.

In relation to this, an overwhelming response was received by the members of DM community. And in parallel to this, the NADRR Secretariat also carried out an in depth study of concerned features of JNNURM program and possible linkages with the current management structure, for program institutionalization.

Based on the feedback received from members, and the research work of Secretariat, the Alliance prepared a set of recommendations, to put forth for consideration to the Government of India. Please find recommendations on the next page.

Recommendations on integration of DRR components with JNNURM

Following are the key components, which need special attention in relation to the integration of DRR components with Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

- Strengthening and streamlining institutional mechanism,
- Compliance to Safe construction practices (GDCR)
- Comprehensive City Disaster Management Plan,
- Public private partnership.

Strengthening and streamlining institutional mechanism,

a) The programme's institutional mechanism has to be strengthened further. Presently it has limited reach. Actually it should be looked for long term future strategy in alignment with concerned departments and nodal agencies.

b) Preparing a roadmap, in terms of in-situ urbanization for DRR, instead of selecting few cities, which of course should also be taken up as a component of overall urbanization issues.

c) National Steering Group should ensure the Techno Legal regime in cities, under its fold that promises a safe built environment.

d) The state level steering committees and Urban local bodies should pursue the respective tasks in line with disaster risk reduction initiatives and disaster management committees activities at state & district level.

e) Provisions under Disaster Management Act 2005 at district level, should be integrated with future plans for cities, through integration between development plan and disaster management plan.

2. Compliance to Safe construction practices (GDCR),

a) Government should make a condition for the cities to amend first their existing GNDR (General Development Control Regulations) for accessing funds from JNNURM. It will motivate the city administrations to amend their GDCR prior to executing the physical projects under the programme

b) Adhere safe construction practices; follow Building Bye laws, Town and Country Planning Acts. Safe construction should be a made a mandatory reform, not an optional reform.

c) Aiming at reducing risks in urban areas, all the concerned persons related to construction domain, should be trained, including masons, rod benders, supervisors, engineers, architects, contractors and local builders as well.

d) The old system embedded in construction practices need to be kept alive to promote the DRR through seismic resistant architecture. The traditional building architecture and construction practices have proved to be very safe and especially highly seismic resistant. Ex. Uttarakhand.

e) Housing for the poor should look at the locally available materials and technologies that are more appropriate for a particular area than importing new technologies that is not ecologically viable.

3. Contribution towards preparing a comprehensive City Disaster Management Plan:

- a) While preparing City disaster management plan, all the vulnerable factors to be analyzed in detail and the probable risks to assessed, with future projections of urban population and development works.
- b) All the basic infrastructural facilities,(including sewage, rail & road transport network, water, gas & petrol piping, power & telecom) should be taken into account, while preparing an integrated city disaster management plan (DM plan).
- c) The nodal agencies of the programme should actively involve the local community in the making of city Disaster management plan, as it is being done for them and they know their environment best. In our country, it is a fact majority of urban poor live in slums, situated in vulnerable areas such as river embankments, under flyovers without any land record. This aspect should not be missed out.
- d) There is a need to create and adopt the different standard operating procedures of DM plan, for handling disasters for “sites” already developed and “potential sites” under development. Here one of the ways to start is identifying the most vulnerable spots in the city, and then proceed for specific block disaster management plan.

4. Public Private Partnership (PPP):

- a) Public private partnership is the key for successful institutionalization of any development programme. For an effective integration of DRR in urban renewal, a proper Government-NGO-Community interface needs to be in place to ensure that the Government can lead from the front with policies and administrative support, with community mobilization, regular contacts and a good amount of problem solving to be left to the NGOs, while building community structures for sustainability of the process and program through participatory planning and monitoring.
- b) Urban local bodies (ULBs) are also a part of Public private partnership. In comparison, ULBs have the potential to become more accountable and accessible to citizens. And being one of the nodal agencies of renewal mission, the sustained micro level progress and periodic monitoring to be taken care by them.
- c) Community should be sensitized first towards the key programme objectives and concerned benefits, with reference to respective activities. Apart from the Government, If the local citizens, and private organizations, will be aware of the facts and figures then it will be quite easier to implement the programme (by abiding the required conditions), and the success will be multiplied through partnership.

At the outset it can be said that the schemes like JNNURM present wonderful opportunities to address risk reduction components and efforts must be made, to ensure that these flagship programmes are piggy-backed upon to carry forward the risk reduction agenda. However the fact remains that there is lot of scope under JNNURM programme to address risk reduction concerns holistically. At the moment the programme has its own issues and genuine concerns. The typical challenges of meeting targets set under such programme and dilution of the same with integration of DRR elements, apprehensions of cost escalation and the lethargy to avoid the trouble of re-designing the schemes and their implementation patterns has led to a mindset of neglect and stalling of efforts in this direction. A grave need is being felt to sensitize the policy and decision makers at various levels about the need to integrate DRR into various development programmes.

The opportunity provided by JNNURM must not be allowed to go untapped and it must be used further for DRR agenda. It is better to be pro-actively disaster safe today than tomorrow by hindsight.

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