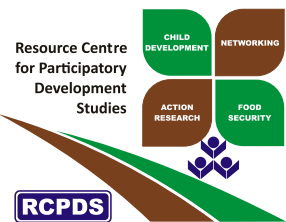


DISASTER POLICY GUIDELINES OF RCPDS - 2016



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Policy related to Disaster preparedness

The readiness to predict and, where possible, prevent disasters, reduce their impact as well as respond to and cope with their consequences at State and local levels is central to the work of RCPDS every individual field teams/federations. This work, key to development, essentially involves reducing the vulnerability of households and communities, especially women and children in disaster-prone areas and improving their ability to cope with the effects of disasters; strengthening the capacities of local federations, Panchayats in disaster preparedness and post-disaster response; determining a role and mandate in organisational/community plans; and establishing link to regional networks of NGOs/INGOs that will strengthen the Federation's (CBO) collective impact in disaster preparedness and response at the State and National level.

The General Body of RCPDS hereby establish 5 member Emergency Response Committee comprising of two representatives from the Board, two members from KARISANAM network and one member from the Federation (CBO). This committee will scrutinize and make situational analysis of any disaster preparedness, relief or rehabilitation proposal that may come from time to time, and make recommendations for necessary action to the call.

Scope

This policy establishes the basis of RCPDS action in disaster preparedness and response. It applies to all types of disaster preparedness and response activities at local, State levels whether carried out by the federations (CBOs) or field units or member of KARISANAM NETWORK.

Statement

The Board and Field Units of RCPDS Society shall:

1. Recognize disaster preparedness as one of the key development support activity of the society in all the field units and regard the same as the most effective way of reducing the impact of small and localized as well as large-scale disasters. The Board of the society has a role to play at the unit and community levels. These roles shall be complemented by the actions of the network (KARISANAM) at the State level.
2. Recognize disaster preparedness as an effective link between emergency response, rehabilitation and development programmes and strive to build disaster preparedness upon the ongoing development interventions of the society such as child rights protection, gender and development, HIV/AIDS health sector and community mobilization.
3. Recognize the role of RCPDS in disaster preparedness as complementary to government and thus will not replace state responsibilities. In addition, the Society should engage in debate with the government on the focus and nature of the Emergency Plan of the State/Districts and encourage the assignment of a clear role and responsibilities to the Society, supported by appropriate resolutions.

4. Advocate, where necessary, with government, donors, fellow NGOs and the public, the need for and effectiveness of disaster preparedness. District Units should contribute to raising awareness of hazards, levels of risks and coping mechanisms adopted by society and mitigation programmes, such as early warning systems, that may reduce the loss of lives and property when a disaster strikes.



5. Strengthen the organizational structures at Society's Head office, District support teams and local levels required for effective disaster preparedness. There need not be separate staff for this purpose, but the regular staff team be trained in disaster preparedness aspects and rescue operations. In particular, prioritize the strengthening of branches and the mobilization and training of extension volunteers, palar panchayat representatives in high-risk areas and the responsibility of the Board and Network secretariat to be part of the disaster response programming. Integrate or harmonize such activities with institutional development and other relevant programme areas.
6. Improve co-ordination and information base by promoting better co-operation and partnerships between the network, District administrations, grassroots CBOs and other disaster response agencies at local, national, regional and international levels
7. Identify those persons, communities and households most at risk to disaster through assessment and analysis of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities (Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment) as a basis for prioritising location and focus of programming activities.
8. Raise awareness of disaster hazards through public education, Shelf-help group forums, encouraging vulnerable people to take preventative and mitigating actions where possible before disaster strikes. Ensure that the knowledge from prediction and early warning systems can be accessed, understood and acted upon by local communities
9. Improve the ability of vulnerable communities to cope with disasters through community-based disaster preparedness strategies that build on existing structures, practices, skills and coping mechanisms. Recognizing that a community-based approach is the best guarantee that improvement in disaster preparedness will be realized and sustained, the assisted population must participate in the planning and preparation for disasters. All activities and programmes should be sensitive to issues of gender, generation and the needs of vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, children, aged and women.

10. Strive to provide the financial, material and human resources required to carry out appropriate and sustainable disaster preparedness activities by incorporating a small component of funding allocation within the training budget of all development intervention, as reserve fund. In particular, maximize the strategic advantage of the Network (KARISANAM) and CBO federation to mobilize all available resources and establish partnership with like minded NGOs/INGOs that will strengthen RCPDS's collective impact in disaster preparedness.

Responsibilities

- The Board, Head office team at Madurai and field units (Virudunagar, Nagai, Dindugul) in partnership with the Federation (CBO) have a responsibility to ensure that all disaster preparedness activities and programmes are carried out in compliance with this policy; that all staff and volunteers participating in such programmes are aware of the rationale and content of the policy; and that all relevant governmental, inter- agency and non-governmental partners who are out of the network are adequately informed of this policy.
- Primarily the disaster preparedness work will be restricted to the present work area of the KARISANAM network (i.e. eight Southern districts of Tamilnadu) and any intervention outside the present work area need to be placed as agenda to the emergency response committee established by the Board.

Policy related to Disaster Relief Intervention

- There will be a corpus reserve Disaster relief fund established primarily to provide emergency assistance for immediate response to victims of natural disasters such as flood, cyclone, earthquakes, etc and in fire accidents (only rescue operations and basic facilities such as water and food for a day or two and in moving to safer destinations).
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- The relief operations will be carried out within 24 hours of the incident but will not be carried out beyond one week.
- Our development partners - local, national and international - may be requested, on production of valid evidences of the recurring occurrence of disaster in the past one or two years, to support with 10 to 15 percent of overall development programme budget, as reserve fund for relief operations. On reaching consensus these funds may be retained either at RCPDS level or at the partner level, to be readily made available for such unforeseen emergencies within 24 hours.



- Disaster Relief funds are not available to man made calamities and where possible insurance cover could be made available.
- The Board of RCPDS, based on the recommendation of the Emergency Response Committee (ERC) shall be authorized to make inquiry with local authorities, appraise the situation, make documentations of the incident and release funds needed for immediate relief.



- Under normal circumstance the field unit heads are expected to make the request for assistance to the Board or head quarters of RCPDS. Upon receipt of application, inquiry the damage level and extent of support will be jointly assessed and decided by the Board, based on ERC recommendations.
- Once the assistance is agreed by the Board in concurrence with its partner organization, effort should be taken to ensure non duplication of relief activities by any other NGO or Government sources with the same target victims or sections of the victim community.
- However the extent of immediate relief to any individual should not exceed the value of Rs.1000/- per family. Of course additional support may be decided after making a detailed spot study and with external funds sought, if need be.

Policy related to disaster rehabilitation

- In principle RCPDS will involve itself in rehabilitation activities on a scarce basis, only within the working area of respective field units. This measure is taken mainly to retain its identity as development organization and not to incline more towards a disaster response agency. However any major disasters within its operational area that warrant rehabilitation after the relief phase will have to be thoroughly scrutinized, not only by the ERC but also by a specially appointed committee with expertise in participatory approaches and disaster management, before taking a decision.
- If decided to involve in rehabilitation activities, the prime focus of intervention should be in the area of rebuilding livelihood options, restoring child rights, strengthening women and the aged against their vulnerabilities.
- The rehabilitation intervention should not exceed 24 months under normal circumstances but with a provision for additional 12 months in exceptional cases given the remoteness and extend of damage that needs to be rebuilt.
- The level of involvement in rehabilitation is greatly dependent on identifying right partner organization to support the intervention. The reserve funds created will not be used for rehabilitation measures under normal circumstances. Necessary approvals should be taken from respective partner organization which supported the relief corpus, before making a decision.

- Policy related to Training and Capacity Building
- Training is an integral part of capacity building as trained personnel respond much better to different disasters and appreciate the need for preventive measures. The directions in this regard are:
- Capacity building should not be limited to professionals, staff members and personnel involved in disaster management but should also focus on building the knowledge, attitude and skills of a community to cope with the effects of disasters.
- Identification and training of volunteers from the community towards first response measures as well as mitigation measures is an urgent imperative. A programme of periodic drills should be introduced in vulnerable areas to enable prompt and appropriate community response in the event of a disaster, which can help save valuable lives.
- Capacity building for effective disaster management therefore needs to be grounded and linked to the community and local level responders on the one hand and also to the institutional mechanism of the organisation on the other.

Community Level Initiatives

The goal of any disaster management initiative is to build a disaster resistant/resilient community equipped with safer living and sustainable livelihoods to serve its own development purposes. The community is the first responder in any disaster situation, thereby emphasizing the need for community level initiatives in managing disasters. To encourage such initiatives, the added on to the policy frame work of the organisation:

following are included on to the policy frame work of the organisation:

(a) Creating awareness through disaster education and training and information dissemination among children and adults are necessary steps for empowering the community to cope with disasters.

(b) Community based approach should be incorporated in the disaster management system as an effective vehicle of community participation.

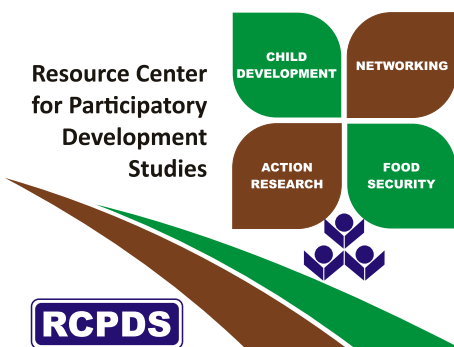
(c) Within a vulnerable community, there exist groups that are more vulnerable like women and children, aged and infirm and physically challenged people who need special care and attention especially during disaster situations. Awareness to be created among local groups/institutional set ups, such as SHGs, Parents Committee, Gram Sanga, Ward members, etc. for identifying such vulnerable groups and providing special assistance in terms of evacuation, relief, aid and medical attention to them in disaster situations.

This policy of RCPDS is put to use and will be made operational only from FY 2007 -08 onwards. The draft policy is circulated among stakeholders, Board members and support agencies for further refinement and final version made in the General Body meeting.



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Updated from earlier version of 2013



Please send your comments to
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These policy papers due for review during 2015

Designed by:

Documentation Division **SPEECH**