

## **WRITE UP ON DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DIDRR)**

### **Transformative journey towards a disability inclusive society**

India is exposed to multiple disasters, which jeopardize the quality of life of people. Disasters have created enormous challenges for vulnerable population such as persons with disabilities who are at a higher risk. The socio-economic and physical vulnerabilities make them very susceptible to disasters. Persons with disabilities are seldom considered as important actors in hazard prevention even though they are often more exposed during disasters.

Persons with disabilities cannot participate effectively in disaster risk management efforts unless they are given the support they need in advance as well as during decision-making processes. Without active and effective participation of persons with disabilities, DRR efforts are not inclusive.

### **Thrust on Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) by NDMA**

It is important for inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) to include the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities. The efforts are being undertaken, especially at the National level (by NDMA), and at State and District level, for making the DRR more inclusive.

NDMA has also addressed the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), 2019. NDMP emphasizes that DRR efforts should specifically address the vulnerabilities of Persons with Disabilities, amongst the affected population, rather than clubbing them with other vulnerabilities.

NDMA also released National Disaster Management Guidelines on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) in September 2019. The main aim was to provide directions to Departments, States and concerned stakeholders, to support implementation mechanism of Disability inclusive DRR. The Departments and States are in process of taking the Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction forward. Kerala State has taken significant steps to address disability inclusive DRR.

### **Practices by Kerala: A prime example of Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR)**

The strengthening of emergency response capabilities of the differently abled people can be best exemplified by the state-wide training programme conducted in Kerala, to elaborate the activities to support persons with disabilities and include them in mainstream society. To equip the persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction, Inter University Centre for Disability studies (IUCDS) associated with Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) for a training project titled '**Strengthening of Emergency Response Capabilities with Emphasis on Differently Abled people**' in 2016.

The main aim of project was to enhance and strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities, to be more resilient to disasters. Apart from it, the thrust was on to create awareness among teachers, parents, caregivers about disability inclusive disaster risk management across State. The trainings were focused on building disaster management capabilities among persons with disabilities, aimed at equipping them to get aware about risks around them and help them to prepare for hazards.

## The Training Project

A total of 2667 persons with various disabilities including caregivers, attended the training programmes across the State. The participants were divided into four categories, namely, visually impaired, speech and hearing impaired, physically disabled, and persons with intellectual disabilities. The disability friendly training materials were developed for trainees, so that they comprehend the lessons being taught to them. Following were the three stages of programme:-

<b>First Stage</b>	<b>Second Stage</b>	<b>Third Stage</b>
Empanelling of experts in the field of disabilities and disaster management as resource persons	Conducting training programmes for persons with disabilities and their caregivers in 14 districts of Kerala.	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The training programmes included brainstorming sessions, lectures, discussions, sharing of lessons, good practices, experiences, simulation games, self analysis and case studies. Training materials were made in Braille sign language videos to cater to the needs of volunteers. KSDMA published the following books in Braille for use of visually impaired:-

- (i) First aid skills
- (ii) Safe School for all
- (iii) Sunstroke
- (iv) Fire
- (v) Lightning
- (vi) Flood
- (vii) Earthquake
- (viii) Drought
- (ix) Handbook on Disability & DRR (in Braille and English)

KSDMA disseminated the training module and related materials to all the Districts of the State through DDMA's by conducting training, workshops and consultations with all stakeholders, persons with disabilities and caregivers.

### Transforming learning into action

The volunteers of Thanal Palliative and Paraplegic Care Centre, Ernakulam attended Training of trainers (TOT) training programme conducted by Kerala State Disaster Management (KSDMA). With the training received, the volunteers were able to actively participate in rescue operations and were able to rescue all persons with disabilities in the district during the devastating floods of Kerala in 2018.

The project brought together persons with disabilities and disaster experts to the community level and government officials to learn new knowledge and skills and contributed to changing attitudes in disaster management.

The training programmes conducted in Kerala promote the good practices of capacity building of disability inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR), and also share the concrete practical examples of how the persons with disabilities can be the active participants in disaster risk reduction activities.

Such good practices may be considered by other States/UTs; to enhance the capacities of stakeholders engaged with disability and disaster management, towards disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.

For more details on the project, one can log on the link below:-

<https://sdma.kerala.gov.in>