

# Role of Teachers in Disaster Management

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**Abstract:** *Developing countries like India suffer major losses due to disasters. Reducing disaster losses is a fundamental goal for most governments. Teachers play a crucial role in class especially in aspects of disaster education. School teachers must be aware of disasters and its consequences to tackle the disasters at school. Teachers with dissimilar backgrounds need to be taught different materials in the same course in order to reach the same level of disaster preparedness and the required related knowledge. In this regard, the paper discusses regarding the impact of disaster on education and schools, role and need of teachers in disaster management, the training methods and contents of disaster management training of teachers.*

**Keywords:** Disaster management, teachers, education, training

## 1. Introduction

A disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins. Disaster management does not avert or eliminate the threats; instead, it focuses on creating plans to decrease the effect of disasters. Failure to create a plan could lead to damage to assets, human mortality, and lost revenue. Disaster management is a collective term encompassing all aspects of planning for and responding to emergencies and disasters, including both pre- and post-event activities. It refers to the management of both the risk and the consequences of an event. Disaster Management can be defined as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies, in particular, preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters.

Goals of disaster management

- Proactive plans to mitigate various business risks
- Minimizing loss via more effective preparedness and response.
- Creating more effective and durable recovery

### 1.1 Impact of natural disasters on Education

Education is a human right, universal and inalienable. Education is especially important in enabling people to reach their full potential and exercise other rights. This right does not disappear or get suspended because of disasters and emergencies. When education is interrupted or limited, students drop out, with negative and permanent economic and social impact for students, their families, and their communities. Natural hazards are part of the context for educational planning. School safety and educational continuity require a dynamic, continuous process initiated by management and involving workers, students, parents, and the local community.

### 1.2 Impacts of Disasters on School

The impacts of disaster are in the area of physical, educational, economic as well as psychological. The slogan for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reductions (2006) global campaign "Disaster Reduction Begins at School" is a very accurate and pertinent one. Basic education and disaster prevention go hand in hand. The methods for recognizing and assessing the future impact of hazards, vulnerabilities, risks and identifying strengths and capacities happen to contain the fundamentals of scientific thinking as well as the basics of good citizenship and participatory governance. The values, attitudes and technologies needed for physical protection; informed planning, environmental stewardship disaster-resilient design and construction, are the same as those fundamental to sustainable development and livelihood security. The skills and provisions for disaster response are empowering and confer safety in everyday life. Disaster resiliency is built upon a foundation of analytical and problem-solving skills and draws from the development of personal and inter-personal intelligences (Petal, 2008)

### 1.3 Role of teachers in disaster management

Teachers play a crucial role in class especially in aspects of disaster education. In educational planning, the role of human resources is of great importance. Teachers as human sources play an important role in educational planning and their knowledge and skills should be evaluated regularly.

In teacher training, there are different kinds of teaching: -

- -Training before service: This kind of training is usually undertaken in short or long teaching period and offers general expertise to the personnel.
- Training at the time of starting the service: It is to familiarize teachers with the environment and the facilities that will be offered to them.
- In-service training: This kind of training is of high importance. It consists of a combination of teachings which familiarize the teachers with new and updated knowledge and information.

#### 1.4 Theories of suggesting the role of teachers in disaster management

Several theories in the field of psychology show the connection between the need of teacher to act as a provider of safety for students. The first theory is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. One of the most basic needs is the assurance of safety; students need to feel safe in their classrooms. According to Maslow's theory, deficiencies in fulfilment of other needs will occur if the physiological and safety needs of an individual are not met first (Huit, 2004). Teachers and students perform at optimum levels when their safety and other needs are fulfilled. One way that teachers can achieve self-actualization is through helping students reach their potential. The second theory is that of Alderfer (1972); his theory is similar to Maslow's. Again, students and teachers need to feel connectedness and security (which is the first stage in Alderfer's theory) in order to excel in school.

The third theory is Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. "Self-efficacy is synonymous with an individual's belief that he/she is competent and can succeed in a particular task..Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" is illustrated in a pyramid of human needs; the lowest tier includes the foundational needs. The foundational tier encompasses safety needs and physiological needs. The safety requirements include feeling safe, secure, and free from danger. In order for students to be able to progress naturally and effectively through the steps outlined in the pyramid, the basic need of safety must be fulfilled (Newman & Newman, 2003). Teachers also function at optimum levels when their needs are fulfilled. Teachers' desire to help others is part of striving for self-actualization. Helping students in crises demonstrates self-actualization.

#### 1.5 Disaster management in school

School Disaster Management is the process of assessment and planning, physical protection and response capacity development designed to: 1. Protect students and the staff from physical harm; 2. Minimize disruption and ensure the continuity of education for all children; 3. Develop and maintain a culture of safety.

#### 1.6 Training teacher for disaster management

It is crucial to choose the most appropriate group of teachers for training. Special attention should be paid to selecting those teachers with outstanding experience in teaching lessons related to disaster issues. Spending adequate preparation time and utilizing all available resources before a disaster occurs, is of high importance. Teachers should be prepared to allocate a certain period of their routine work to be trained on disaster issues.

#### 1.7 Training Methods

Among the various methods which are used for training, the interactive ones seem to be more appropriate for teacher training. A list and brief description of these methods is provided as follows (Ghoorchian 2006, Ratiani et al. 2011):

**Group discussion:** A discussion is used to review different approaches, ideas and problems within a group and is an effective method for developing a number of different skills. These skills include logic, active listening, the formulation of arguments and the ability to listen and respect a differing opinion.

**Demonstration:** This method is based on observation. People usually learn their special skills through observation. Demonstration has got four main steps: preparedness, explanations, demonstration and assessment.

**Conference:** This method is different to lecturing. In lecturing, the trainer provides the trainees with the information, but in the conference, information is gathered by trainees themselves. In this method, an active situation is created for the trainees. In this learning process, all trainees can be active and present and share their ideas and experience to the others. In this method, experiences, ideas and thoughts are focused on a specific subject. The trainer's role in this method is guidance, management, control and discussion. For conference, following issues need to be prepared: facilitator, facilities, group, time schedule, and resources related to the subject.

**Excursions:** A group visit to an institution or an organization in order to learn about its function is normally called excursion. During an excursion or a site visit, trainees will be provided with an opportunity to observe work processes in its real environment and to receive first-hand information about its characteristic features.

**Role Playing:** Role play is accompanied with performing. This method can be used in individual and group teaching. During role play, trainees stage a real situation, act-out certain roles and thus receive theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Role play is an active form of teaching, during which the trainees can be both mentally and physically active.

**Learning While Doing:** This is a practical method during which trainees receive not just information, but the exact instructions necessary for the experiment or simulation. The goal is for trainees to carry out actions that will develop their knowledge or skills. During the practical work, the teacher must intensively use feedback in order to ensure its effectiveness.

#### 1.8 Training Content

In general, the training contents can be divided into four main categories including: the causes and effects of disasters, what to do before and finally what to do after the disaster as effective emergency response. With regard to the teacher's background, teachers of geology and geography can be taught on the causes of disasters. The science teachers can be taught on the damages to the built environment. Preventive measures and correct sheltering can be taught to skills teachers. Emergency response activities including first-aid also can be taught to the related groups of teachers such as biology and health science teachers. The training materials should provide useful information on the definitions, assessment, and classifications of several types

of hazards, with references as well as a general index, figures and graphs. To create more incentives in trainees, it would be very useful to start the training with referring to cases of disasters in which people have survived and have saved others due to considering and applying safety measures. In addition, various disaster scenarios should be prepared and introduced to the teachers in order to familiarize them with the situation.

## 2. Conclusion

Teachers and media play a prominent role in efficient disaster management system which is vital for a suitable future of life on earth. That is the significance of holistic approach for disaster management. Isolated thoughts, preparation, awareness programmes, attitude and other activities should be co-operatively integrated with the participation of all section of the community, for the community, and by the community. The educational institution mostly schools and teacher education institutions are the most effective source to inculcate the awareness by educating the students about disaster management.

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