



## **Corporate social responsibility in disaster management: Initiatives and Possibilities**

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### **Abstract**

Disaster Management is in the priority list of every government these days. It is crucial to face disaster and its impact on human life and surrounding. All over the years, there are many experiences of minimising the damage of it, however there is lack of comprehensive efforts. Despite the development of technology for combating disaster there is lack of proper education and awareness. Moreover the common approach regarding disaster management is misapprehended. As the nature of disaster is changed over the period of time from natural to manmade, from atmospheric to industrial and from geological to health related, etc. the approach of fighting against disaster should also change. The responsibility of disaster management should be shared commonly across society. In this view the disaster management can be done on various grounds with the help of government, local support and private sector. Corporate sector can play a vital role in disaster management with the stipulated provision of Corporate Social Responsibility. There is large scope as creating infrastructure, developing research in disaster management, training programmes for the disaster response team, etc. Both corporate sector and administration of government can create upgraded infrastructure and fulfil the prerequisites of disaster management. This can be encouraged under the corporate social responsibility which is a mandatory work for private sector as per the CSR act passed by government of India.

**Keywords:** disaster management, social responsibility

### **Introduction**

'Disaster Management is an exclusive responsibility of government and it has to be executed by its machinery', this is the most common understanding of the society which is erroneous attitude of civilians and must be changed. However it has to be dealt by every stakeholder of society. Government, NGOs, Private firms and individuals all are equally responsible to respond and act according to disasters. There are many forms of disasters like floods, storms, volcano, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, fire, and other natural disasters moreover there are several human made disasters which are causing harms to human society like fire, accidents, oil spills, gas and chemical explosion, open disposal of chemicals and other hazards etc. The volume and scale is always unpredictable and can't be anticipated by humans, however science has made remarkable progress defining and analyzing disasters and in some cases to predict to some extent. World has taken initial steps in disaster preparedness to minimize the damage in various cases. The precaution and planning for the disaster management is varied from place to place and even country to country. Developed country has made huge progress in the planning for before and after the potential damage can be caused by any disaster. Third world countries are still lagging behind in preparedness efforts to identify and stop or minimize the damage of natural and human made disasters.-

Basically disaster management is an act in response to an unexpected event which may occur at anytime, anywhere. There are several distinctions between the disasters in nature, some are regular, some often take place and few are unique and incomparable. Disaster management can be done in three

ways i.e. preparedness, response and rehabilitation. Worldwide experiences have given too much information related to various disasters. Scientists and other stakeholders are doing their bit to prepare, respond and measure for the disaster management. Every society has to be responsive or to develop the mechanism to respond for every event that occurs in their way, so they can exist. The measures can be short and long term and to revise every time as per the situation. Apart from these human made disasters are creating a challenge every day to the world. Biological imbalance has created a lot of dangerous situations for the environment. To counter this each country has to be vigilant and alert to face an unexpected event that is ultimately disasters. Moreover, this has not remained the question of a country's own boundaries, what is happening around the world can also cause disasters; increasing carbon emission is an appropriate example of this. These days international collaboration has become essential for sharing information to prepare, respond and overcome disasters. For example almost all countries have set up essential laboratories on the boundaries to know the seismographic and underwater threat of earthquake and tsunami. A very basic need to counter disasters is to identify the possible threats, location, time and expected damage.

### **Nature of disaster and impact**

Disaster needs urgent response and management because unless you respond in a correct manner it will turn into a huge loss of property and even casualties. However there is a need of common effort to overcome it. Incorrect planning and lack of sincere efforts of stakeholders can make loss double in terms of property and casualties. It is very common that after a

failure everyone started blaming each other. Natural disasters mainly happen because of sudden change in atmosphere. Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Snow avalanches, tsunamis, huge floods, Hurricanes and landslides are the common disasters which occurred at all over world. However manmade disasters are also equally dangerous to the society. Accidents, chemical and oil spill, nuclear accident, fire incidents and terrorism attacks are now turning as disasters. Space disaster, epidemics, heavy rain, drought, stampede, civil wars, evacuation, etc are also emerging as disasters to the society. World is facing trouble by all these disasters, India's 25 states are disaster prone among 35 and different incidents are taking place all the time. As per the world Disaster Report 2015 due the various disasters total number of people affected during the year 2015-2016 is 1935585 thousand is a huge number. In India alone the number of affected people in different disasters during 2005-2014 is 144142 thousand.

Disasters not only huge casualties but create huge impact on national wealth and individual losses. In various disasters the loss is evident, public and private property is destroyed, crop and livestock devastated, everything flown away, buildings collapsed, etc. in short disasters can impact on each and every

unit of the society. Disaster not only damage the current infrastructure but it impacted for longer time. The future development is next challenge for particular government. Earthquake triggered in Japan in 2012 destroyed everything in coastal areas, still in 2016 there is restructuring going on.

In terms of disaster loss and vulnerability India is always on stake. Earthquake in Latur and Kutch of Gujarat has warned that there are several areas in India are earthquake prone. India has so gigantic land, floods and draughts can be seen at the same time in different parts of country. Every year number of accidents took place and claim life in significant numbers. Population of India is increasing and today it is near around 1.28 Billion, so large amount of displacement and migration always going on is major cause of disasters. Stampede on different places is regular feature of the populated places or religious events like Kumbhmela. Floods in north India always remain a cause of concern for the administration. Every year the floods are taking life on innocent people. In reference to this India has 68% earthquake prone land, 12% flood prone, 8% cyclone prone area and moreover in recent times Tsunamis has hit Indian shore in number of times and impacted in huge loss.

**Table 1:** Types of disasters

Atmosphere	Cyclones Hurricanes, Cloud Burst, Heat Wave and Cold Wave, Snow Avalanches, Droughts, Sea Erosion, Thunder, Lightning, Floods, etc
Geology	Landslides and Mudflows, Earthquakes, Dam Failures Dam Bursts and Mine Fires
Industrial	Gas leak, Explosion, Poison
Accidental	Forest Fires, Urban Fires, Mines Flooding Oil Spill, Major Building Collapse, Festival related disasters, Electrical disasters and Fires, Air, Road and Rail Accidents,
Health related	Epidemics, Pest Attacks, Cattle epidemics and Food poisoning.
Civil War	Bomb Blast, Fire, Building collapse, Arial Attack, etc

### Disaster management mechanism

While countering the disaster preparedness, sufficient response and planning is important. Over the years there has been substantial research in the sector of disaster management. Use of technology and ICT is being done to assume and anticipate the volume of disaster and preparedness. In developed country plenty of things have been done to counter disasters and its impact. Various agencies are formed and lot of work has been done at the level of preparedness, counter and prevention. If we analyze the Disaster Report of world 2015, developing country has succeeded to reduce the number of casualties and property loss. But Indian experience is far different for the international one in terms of disaster management. It is a federal structure and there are different roles are assigned to the central government and state government and further at district and block level. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMA) are working for the effective function of Disaster Management. These committees are the apex bodies working under the government of India to lay the law and enforcement of the guidelines for the disaster management. There is a exclusive provision of funds to response the national disasters. Several programmes have been implemented for the training and awareness purpose regarding the disaster management.

Apart for the Governmental machinery there are other important parts of society which are crucial for the disaster

management. Non-governmental organization is one of them. Worldwide and in India too NGOs are working in different areas of development, so as in disaster management. NGOs have their network of volunteers and even they manage their financial aspects, so it is very decisive factor in responding the disasters impact. NGOs can help people in evacuation, rescue operation and in rehabilitation process. Role of local people and local administration is also important in response, counter and prevention of disaster management. In India statutory local bodies are installed and fully authorized to take their decisions according with state and centre. The last and major component of the mechanism for disaster management is society or community. Whole process of disaster management system is to prepare community in terms of training, making aware of and using them as a effective factor in fighting disasters. Government of India has made a strong framework to fight with disasters and lay down the law and regulation in the shape of national disaster management act 2005. The specific things have been formulated for the disaster management. National crisis management committee, crisis management group, emergency relief mechanism, contingency plan, state relief manuals, etc.

### Private sector and disaster management

Having all the set up above mentioned an emerging factor is proved important role in reducing disaster risk and minimising the damage i.e. Private Sector. Disaster always directly affects

the economy of particular society which is dangerous thing to private sector which is affecting the most in such conditions. Private sectors have their own interest in maintaining the appropriate conditions for their business all the time. Private sector can counter disaster impact in many ways like organizing training, running awareness camps, research on disaster management, providing machinery, working with government, association with NGOs, etc. internationally it is recognized that private sector can help and take active part in disaster management. In India the government is willing to work with the private sector and looking for the possibilities in disaster management. UNO has played a important role to connect the private sector and disaster management. There are many ways where private sector can do collaborative work with government and other stakeholders. In the past it has been seen that many private payers has helped community in direct ways. Providing food and clothes to the affected people is primary work done by the private sector. However there are many incidents where private sector is equally contributing with the government machinery. Thus private sector can minimize the financial damage which is potential risk and they can work to the community responsibility. Role of Private business entity can be defined under corporate social responsibility.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Social Responsibility of industry, business personal and private firms this concept is taken from the west and developed countries. But in the history of India there are many private firms and business persons has worked for the betterment of society. Earlier the business units were doing their activity for commercial purpose only. Over the period of time the scale and volume of business is spreading all over the world. Mean time the business firms has be in touch with the community for better transition of the business and this leads to the sentiment of responsibility towards community. Discharging business is not remained an economic activity. The business firms have to go to community for land, and skill/unskilled labour and cooperation. The firms also have to go to state machinery for business related work. During this course business firms and society develops a relation which is ultimately in favour of both. Corporate Social Responsibility can be defined as the 'ethical behaviour of business.'

We have seen internationally firms like Microsoft and walmart are doing huge community work under the Corporate Social Responsibility. It has to be understood that these companies are getting huge profit through their business. In India also Reliance and TATA and many others are earning huge profit. The government has given every possible helps to these firms. Water, electricity and land is provided by the government which is ultimately the representative of society. In response to that these big companies has to define their role towards society. Many firms and industries are polluting the society with chemical waste and oil, these companies has to be making sensitive about their duty towards society under Corporate Social Responsibly. It is also a gesture by which, company can show to society that it is caring for the society. Community people always a thought in mind that this business firms are making huge profit which is quite correct in most of the time, should spend few on the welfare of society. This

whole exercise is emerging as a bonding affair between society and business firms.

Private business firms have huge potential to be diverted in social welfare schemes. A particular work of business firm done as corporate social responsibility will change the reputation of the company. It is also helpful to change its own working style and concepts regarding social issues. A business firm doing work of plantation, water conservation or waste management will learn lesson so such vital issues and it reflects in her won campus and working area. CSR also help to make an brand image among society. For example Skoda India Limited started a school in Shendra MIDC area of Aruangabad district of Maharashtra state has become an example and company's image is improved. Now a day's customers are more vigilant and aware about the working patter and reputation of the company. A company working in environment friendly campus and promoting environmental protection and conservation ultimately get attention of the customers. Many companies make appeals to work for the national integration and patriotism by organizing various programmes related patriotism. For example Patanjali Ltd has emerged as a brand by promoting nationality and patriotism in its product. Today Panajali limited simultaneously working in various programmes promoting nationality. A famous company of Hand wash 'Lifeboy' got a massive sale increase when it promoted the importance of sanitation in the period of epidemic of flue. Companies working in rural area in various products prefer to do various social activities under the head of Corporate Social Responsibility. A survey shows that a company engaged in CSR are successfully retained its employers in long term period of time. On the other side business firms has to protect their business form the effect of disasters. Huge financial loss is always eyed in the view of natural and manmade disasters. Community and the government are working to prevent and to reduce the potential loss of the disaster. Common people suffered at the most in disasters but as far as financial loss is consult the big corporate houses and companies are one of the most vulnerable stake holders of unexpected events. Business continuity is very much important for business houses to ensure the disaster risk reduction

### **CSR act in India**

Eventually Corporate Social Responsibility must be volunteer activity however to make compulsory for all the business firms many nations across the world has enacted laws for the implementation of CSR policy. CSR laws compel the business firms to focus upon the CSR activates while running the business activities. As per the companies act 2013, Corporate Social Responsibility is new provision under which companies has to rake the care of society. The sentiment behind this provision is that, the business firms take all raw materials for the society and it has to be paid off in form of Corporate Social Responsibility. Ministry of Corporate Affairs of India notified section 135 and Schedule VII of the companies act an as per the provisions of CSR policy that each business firms has to enforced the CSR programmes and this rule is applicable to foreign firms. The business firms must have Corporate Social Response committee and shall be recommend various activities to the board of directors. The

board shall take into the account the suggestions and approve the programmes. As per the guidelines the activities that can be done by the company to achieve its CSR obligations include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, promotion of education, gender equality, women Empowerment, reducing child mortality rate, and issue of maternal health, fighting human immune deficiency virus, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, employment enhancing vocational skills, social business projects, contributions to PMs national relief fund or any other fund set up by the central government or state governments of socio economic development and funds for weaker sections.

As per the act the preference should be given to local areas and the areas where the company operates. Company may also choose to associate with two more companies for fulfilling the CSR activities provided that they are able to report individually. The CSR committee shall also prepare the CSR policy in which it includes the projects and programme which is to be undertake. The company can also make the annual report of activities in which they mention the average net profit of the there financial year and also prescribed CSR expenditure but if the company is unable to spend the minimum required expenditure the company has to give the reasons in the form of report. These norms are mandatory to companies with at least Rs 5 c net profit or Rs 1000 cr turnover or Rs 500 cr net worth. These companies has to spend at lest two percent of their net profit on Corporate Social Responsibility. Under above activitives disaster management can be included as it is most beneficial for society and business firms

### **CSR and participation in disaster management**

Recently various disasters have been countered by the community government and private sector jointly. But this was not as Corporate Social Responsibility as such. As earlier mention Corporate Social Responsibility is a planned agenda of a business firm to contribute in social cause. So if business firms have to be incorporated in reduction of risk it should be planned and implemented as a joint venture of private firms and government or society. There are many areas where CSR can be implemented to reduce the damage of disasters. Companies can participate or organize individually or can run nonprofit organization working in the sector of community welfare programmes

Prevention is more important for the business firms as far as disasters are concern. Due to various disasters private company has to face huge losses. The most important part of the disaster management is to create infrastructure for the preparedness for disaster. For example emergency control room or center is essential for the disaster management. Big business houses can contribute in the construction of the emergency control room which may be equipped with the latest technology to communicate and to respond the possible disasters. The private firms can also create an coordination center in central government, state and local administration. This type of centre can be setup in earthquake prone area or in the big cities where manmade disaster can take place.

In modern days technology is important to combat with disaster. Creation and transfer of technology is important part of disaster management. Earthquake, cyclone and tsunamis

can be known before they occurred by the technology. The communication is crucial factor in disasters this role can be play by private firms. The creation of different communication center can be done with the help of private firms. The expensive technology as early warning of disasters can be set up by the corporate houses.

The sustainable way to fight with disaster is the promotion of disaster education. With the help of corporate houses disaster education can be promote in school and colleges. Special disaster management module can be created and taught to the civilians also. specially in villages the people are unaware what is happing and what should be done into response of disasters, in this case awareness prorgarammes can be organized by the private firms. Many times the equipment and machinery is provided by the government but local administration and civilians don't know the proper use of it. These training are also essential for the battle of disasters. Corporate houses can be organize training program for the civilians and volunteers

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

It is true that corporate social Responsibility is new concept for a wide country like India but if private business firms play their role honestly, the reduction of risk will be achieved. Business houses and private firms are always running after profit, not considering social problems moreover polluting the society and creating problems. To change this picture CSR objectives are very important. It can be change present scenario of Private firm's motive of making profit all the time. At the same time private firms can get opportunity to get closer of the society and involve in community development programmes. Both ways it is important because companies can build their image which may help to improve its branding value.

- Awareness programme for the common people to prepare for the disasters
- Creation of display boards and indicator alerting for disasters
- Mock drills and specific demonstration for the civilians
- Safety programme for the workers an civilians
- Awareness progrmme for chemical and explosive hazardous
- Exchange of equipments and recourse for risk reduction
- Awareness generation initiatives for safety habits
- Establishing relation between private sector and society

International experience has to be followed that how a huge disasters management can be handled jointly by the government, society and private firms. Companies can jointly conduct CSR activities for the reduction of the risk. However as per researchers claimed that it should be adopted principally as a objective. As per the UNO reports disasters are major threats to the sustainable development. It is irony that most of the successful experiments in terms of CSR for disaster management have been seen in western countries. India is lagging behind. After 2014, there are many discussions has been happing in India on CSR for Disaster management but practically it has to be proven yet. The most important objective 'preparedness for disaster' can be achieved with the help of corroborates. Government has to be

act proactively in this regard. Concrete proposals have to be forward by the government to the corporate houses and jointly initiatives must be undertaken. As mention earlier it is new concept for India still has to be imbibe in government private partnership for sustainable development.

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