

SESSION D5: ROLE OF ARMED AND PARA-MILITARY FORCES

Chairperson:

ABSTRACTS

**POLICE AS FIRST RESPONDER: EXPERIENCES EXTRACTED
FROM TSUNAMI IN THE ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS**

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The onslaught of the unsparing Tsunami on December 26, 2004 was unprecedented and unimaginable, catching us unawares in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This was a classic case where the police personnel were themselves sufferers of the Tsunami yet had to cast away tremors of the horrific spell from their minds and take over the role as first responders to manage the Disaster. The experience has brought about a paradigm shift in the role of Police, adding yet another important dimension of Disaster Management apart from law and order maintenance and prevention and detection of crime.

Police Wireless, the solitary life-line to the Southern Group of Islands, suffered badly and communication links to several Islands were snapped. The experience has brought about newer insights into the need to upgrade our communication systems to overcome the geographical constraints in the form of isolated and dispersed islands. Maintaining basic

resources at all locations with regular training and rehearsals to carry out search & rescue operations to save the injured and to dispose of the dead bodies to prevent spread of epidemics, mapping of vulnerable areas and escape routes, building mechanisms of early warning, educating the public in safety measures, etc. are added components to the Police functioning. The paper also discusses some critical gaps and coordination issues with other agencies.

The paper puts forth some basic questions that need to be addressed to create a system whereby Disaster Management becomes an integral part of training of the Police Forces integrated with the community-based disaster management and closely coordinated with other agencies. The role of Police becomes very eminent as a law and order interface vis-à-vis the social welfare assistance to the community with a human face. The psyche of the members of the Police Force is to be fine tuned to the needs during such times. Case studies of Policemen who lost everything yet showed courage to save others are also discussed.

Based on the first-hand experience of the author during operations after Tsunami at Car Nicobar, the paper brings out the paradigm shift in the role of Police Force as first responders, and the lessons learnt can be applied elsewhere.

ENVISAGED ROLE OF IAF IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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The underlying fact associated with each disaster, the country has suffered, is the extensive use of Air Power for relief and rehabilitation. But for the intervention of Indian Air Force, the death toll in each disaster would have been much higher.

The role played by IAF during a spate of disasters affecting the Northern States in particular and the country in general is commendable. The details of airlift of essential life sustaining commodities, and evacuation of personnel & civilians airlifted by Transport and Helicopter fleet of IAF during few of the disasters which struck the country is enumerated below

Sl no	Disaster	Date/s	Total Persons	Load
1.	J&K Snow Avalanche	Jan To Mar 05	46904	896.83 tonnes+144KL oil+141 Barrels+1 Empty tanker
2.	Banihal Pass	Feb 2005	41918	
3	Flash Flood in Jammu/ Udhampur	06 Jul 2005	164	
4	Floods in Himachal Pradesh	Jun 05	1028 Including 67 foreigners	6755 Tonnes

Importance & Role of IAF in Disaster Management

The military resources of any country are probably those best organized and managed to provide support to a full range of public services such as public works, communications, transport, health and emergency medical services, rescue and support activities. They can react quickly and respond rapidly in

a fully self contained, self sufficient and highly mobile fashion. Defence personnel are well trained in the individual skills necessary to perform their professional and functional activities and are practical in collaboration and coordinated action under an integrated/flexible management system. Thus there is enormous potential inherent in defence organizations to serve as an additional instrument for effective delivery of emergency assistance.

The rehabilitation effort at Urusa village near Uri which was done exclusively by IAF is an apt example of co-ordinated operation launched for rescue and rehabilitation of the earthquake victims.

Analysis and Capacity Building in IAF

Consequent to the enactment of the Disaster Management Act 2005, by the Parliament. The existing system of disaster management in the country is in the process of undergoing a transformation from a relief-oriented approach to a more comprehensive emphasis on disaster management. There has been a gradual process of evolution and growth and a determined effort to overcome the perceived weaknesses in the system. This has also been strengthened by the widespread concern at the devastation caused by disasters in recent years and the resolve to prevent it future.

The paper is a part of the above process of growth and aims at building up a holistic, coordinated and prompt response to any disaster situation. The objective of this study is to suggest ways to quicken the emergency responses and to increase the effectiveness of the machinery to meet a crisis situation and enhance crisis management.

Abstracts: Thematic Session – Role of Armed Forces

- (a) Constitutional and Legal Framework
- (b) Organizational Structures/Institutional Mechanisms
- (c) Funding and Infrastructure Support
- (d) Preparedness Measures

The paper also covers recommendations, tentative programmes and road ahead and SOPs for IAF for disaster response.

DISASTER RESPONSE AND ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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In disaster situations, relief, rescue and response operations have to be undertaken immediately and in the most appropriate manner. The development oriented civil administration is presently not well equipped for undertaking large scale disaster response activities in the event of major and wide spread disasters.

The Indian Armed Forces are one of the most dedicated, professional and modernized armed forces in the world. They have made rapid strides in technology development and are adequately equipped with the necessary technical competence, man power and material resources to undertake any major disaster rescue and response operations. The Armed Forces are always in a state of operational readiness to move quickly to any disaster affected area and their ability to work under adverse ground & climatic conditions is of immense help to any civil authority during disaster situations. So far in India, the role' played by the Armed Forces & other specialized forces during disaster rescue and response operations has been exemplary. In view of increased frequency of disasters, the Armed Forces will continue to play a major role in providing rescue and response operations in the disaster situations in the years to come.

Since the Government of India has decided to implement the Incident Command System (ICS) with in the Indian system of disaster management, there is a greater need for institutionalizing the Incident Command systems and strengthening professional approach towards disaster response activities

in the country in addition to emerging coordination and cooperation between various agencies and organizations. The Armed Forces and other specialized forces have to be mandated to play an important role in disaster rescue and response operations. This paper briefly discusses about the greater role that can be played by the Armed Forces & other Para-military forces during disaster response operations in which their services can be better utilized. It also indicates the necessary guidelines to the civil authorities while utilizing the services of the Armed Forces personnel and various measures to ensure greater co-ordination and enhance efficiency during disaster response operations.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BY THE
MILITARY

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The year 2005 saw a considerable increase in the involvement by the military in international relief assistance in natural disasters, in particular in the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami as well as the South Asia Earthquake. These two major disasters tested not only the international coordination system, but also the cooperation among nations in the region.

It is therefore necessary to achieve a clear understanding of key issues relevant to military assistance in support of humanitarian emergency operations and evolve plans and arrangements in support of the effort. For this it is necessary to identify the key issues affecting military assistance in support of humanitarian emergency operations.

The paper will cover the following:-

- (a) Methodology for nations to assist in emergencies.
- (b) The nature of emergencies.
- (c) Issues of coordination in extending assistance for emergencies.
- (d) Suggestions to improve emergency response.

**DISASTER RESPONSE AND ROLE OF ARMED FORCES,
PARA-MILITARY AND OTHER SPECIALIZED FORCES**

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Disaster Response Management is a Multi-Agency function coordinated at a nodal point for effective delivery of relief to the victims of a disaster.

The community is always the first responder to a disaster situation being proximate to disaster sites. However, devastations caused by disasters resulting in disruption of essential infrastructure and services limit the coping capacity of the community to the situation. The capability of an affected community is required to be reinforced by the Civil Administration who look for a cadre of specialists, trained, disciplined and dedicated personnel who can render relief and response services in best of the manner in worst of the situations. The armed forces and central paramilitary forces are found to be the most suited for such situations.

The devastating natural calamities cause situations of chaos and requires adept handling by the response agencies. The demanding tasks have to be performed in most difficult situations and therefore the need for assistance of armed and para military forces arise.

The Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces have traditionally been always respond to the need to render yeomen service to the affected communities.

In a country with enormous dimensions and a geographical variety like India, emergency/disaster situations and natural calamities calls for the Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces involved in rescue and relief work as these are spread all across the country and equipped with all wherewithal to meet the requirement.

The effectiveness of disaster response largely depends on the swift alacrity to which the response and relief measures are mounted. A trigger mechanism for response, which demands alertness and being active all times are considered to be the essential elements. Armed Forces and Central Para Military Forces who meet these requirements are called upon to assist the civil administration in evacuation and shifting of people to the safer places, rescue of stranded people, setting up of relief camps, distribution of essential commodities and providing other logistical support such as restoration of communication, road and bridges among other things.

The Central Government has invariably deployed the Air Force helicopter/Army boats, Army columns, Central Para Military Forces and Medical Teams from the Armed Forces to assist the affected States in rescue and relief operations. Military aircrafts have always been used in transportation of essential commodities from far of places in short span of time. The Government of India have also deployed Naval ships, military aircrafts, mobile hospitals etc. to render assistance to the neighbouring countries hit by natural calamities. Prompt mobilization of essential commodities and other resources for disaster response has been forte of Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces.

For the reasons stated above, whether it was devastating Bhuj earthquake of 26th January 2001 or Tsunami of December 26th, 2004, the Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces were the first one to respond to the situations and assist the civil administration in providing succor to the affected people.

Realizing the importance of service rendered by the Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces, the Government of India has decided to set up National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) consisting of 8 battalions of Central Police Forces. There will be a total of 144 specialist response teams consisting of 45 personnel each. 72 of these 144 specialist response teams will also be trained and equipped for responding to nuclear, biological and chemical related emergencies. One team in each battalion will also be trained in deep sea diving for the purpose of search and rescue during floods and cyclones. The process for training and equipping of NDRF is already under progress.