Role of Armed Forces

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In a country with enormous dimensions and a geographical variety like India, disaster situations and natural calamities keep engaged the Armed Forces/Central Para Military Forces in rescue and relief work more frequently than ever in the recent years.
Disaster Situation

- Overwhelming needs & competing priorities.
- Destroyed or damaged communication and other infrastructure.
- Highly stressed local civil administration.
- A state of chaos.
Disaster Response Management

- Swift Action
- Multitude of tasks
- Multiple Agencies
- Coordination
Who are Responders?

- The community is always the first responder. However, it may have limited coping capacity.
- Volunteers/ Voluntary Organizations/Self Help Groups
- Local Civil Administration, Police, Civil Defence, Homeguards
- Armed Forces, Central Para-military Forces
Role of Armed Forces

- Able to respond on a trigger mechanism
- Assist the civil administration
  - in evacuation and shifting of people to the safer places,
  - rescue of stranded people,
  - setting up of relief camps,
  - Air dropping of flood/water
  - distribution of food, water, medicine
  - providing logistical support
  - restoration of communication links, roads and bridges
- Providing support in maintaining peace/law and order.
The country has one of the largest, most disciplined and most efficient Armed Forces in the World.

Though calamity relief does not fall under the ambit of charter of duties of the Armed Forces, they have been providing invaluable assistance to the Civil Authorities in disaster relief operations.
Disaster Response and Strengths of Armed Forces

- Military assets form part of the Integrated Resources
- Vast Spread and huge organic resources
- Potential to meet challenges in adverse conditions
- Dedication and devotion
- Discipline and capability to deliver swiftly
- Quick mobilization of resources i.e. procurement, packaging, transportation, storage and distribution of relief materials
- Armed Forces exude confidence
In aid to Civil Authorities

- Primarily to supplement or complement the relief efforts of the Civil Administration.
- "Ten Commandments" issued by the Chief of the Army Staff in 1995
  
  "Willing to carry out civic action with innovation".
- ‘Core’ of the institutional arrangement for disaster response
In aid to Civil Authorities

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- Instrumental in immediate restoration of critical infrastructure Viz communication, road links, restoration of bridges and setting up of Health & Medical Facilities.

- Protection of people as well as assets.

- Assistance in maintaining peace and law & order.
  - when the Governments’ response is lackadaisical or inadequate.
  - Unruly mob, Looting of relief materials, theft looting of affected communities and such other activities
Role of Military in tackling disasters in the neighboring countries

- Armed Forces in rendering assistance to the neighboring countries
  - Naval ships, military aircrafts, mobile hospitals etc.

- Strategic importance under Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) of the US

- Increased military activities in its immediate neighborhood.

- A Credible alternative
The High Power Committee recommended that:

(i) The Armed Forces should have a dedicated component of personnel and equipment at the battalion level for disaster management.

(ii) The five army commands may have fully equipped centers in the five command regions at appropriate locations that may have heavy equipment necessary to carry out relief & rescue activities in the region at short notice.
(iii) Use of Territorial Army to be incorporated in disaster management plans. In highly disaster prone States, it could be considered raising specialized Disaster Management Battalions similar to Ecological Battalions.

(iv) Border Road Organization, where available be suitably incorporated in disaster management plan.

(v) A military coordinating officer should be part of the disaster management team at the national and state level.
(vi) The potential of ex-servicemen available throughout the country be tapped for disaster management. They should be employed for creating disaster task force at the local level.

(vii) Armed Forces should be resorted to in an appropriate manner. The employment of Armed Forces should be limited for short duration, about 15 days, with a provision of extending the period with approval of the Ministry of Defence.
Notwithstanding organic assets available with the Armed Forces, quick response to disasters by them demands the immediate availability, in adequate number of Relief Bricks of Stores and equipments.

Based on the recommendations of the Chief of Staff Committee, strategic locations to locate these bricks have been identified.

Bricks would enhance, the capacity of the Armed Forces.
Civil Defence and Home Guards are voluntary in nature.

- Operate at the grass-root level and form part of the community itself.

- The distinct advantage of these organizations are their spread throughout the country-right from the community level to national level.

- A key role in the disaster response as well as preparedness
Civil Defence and Home Guards

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- Particularly instrumental in
  - awareness generation
  - enlisting the support of the affected community
  - maintenance of hygiene and Sanitation, disposal of dead bodies/carcasses etc.

2. A comprehensive role for all these services should be formalized in a harmonized structure for disaster management.

3. All these services should be integrated into the State Disaster Management Plan.

4. These services can be specially trained for response to nuclear, biological and chemical disasters.
5. The State Governments may be permitted to accept donations for Civil Defence from Corporate Sectors.

6. The Chief Wardens of Civil Defence in every town should be accorded appropriate status in civil administration hierarchy especially with regard to their role and importance in disaster management.

7. Their services when utilized should be properly recognized.
The Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its 3rd Report submitted to the Government in September 2006 has recommended that:

(i) The Civil Defence Act should be amended as proposed so as to cover all types of disasters.

(ii) Civil Defence should be constituted in all districts which are vulnerable not only to hostile attacks but also to natural calamities. The goal of community participation should be pursued primarily through the instrumentality of Civil Defence especially in urban areas.
(iii) The objective should be to include 1% of the population within the fold of Civil Defence within five years. Efforts should be made to enlist para-medics as Civil Defence volunteers.

(iv) Budgetary allocation relating to Central Financial Assistance for Civil Defence should be increased substantially.

(v) Civil Defence set-ups at all levels should be permitted to accept donations.
(vi) The Civil Defence set up at the State level may be brought under the control of the Crisis/Disaster Management set up.

(vii) Policemen, Firemen and the Home Guards at the field level who are among the first responders should be adequately trained in handling crises/disasters. Such training should be specific to the types of crises envisaged in an area. More importantly, they should be fully involved in the preparation of the local Crisis/Disaster Management Plan and also be fully conversant with them.
(viii) The minimum qualification for entry to Home Guards may be revised to at least a pass in the 10\textsuperscript{th} class, given the increased responsibility and complexity of tasks to be entrusted to them.

(ix) A section of Home Guards should also be given para-medical training.

(x) Fire Services should more appropriately be renamed as Fire and Rescue Services with an enhanced role to respond to various types of crises.
(xi) While in the long run, it would be desirable to place the Fire Services under the control of all municipal bodies, as a first step, this may be done in bigger cities (population exceeding 2.5 million). In the remaining parts of the State, the Fire Services should be organized as a department but within a district, full operational control should be given to the District Crisis/Disaster Management Authority. Transfer of these services to municipal authorities should be accompanied by transfer of commensurate financial resources.
Civil Defence and Home Guards

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(xii) Only persons with expertise in crisis/disaster management should be inducted into the top management of the Fire (and Rescue) Services.

(xiii) Fire and Rescue Services should be brought under the control of the State Crisis/Disaster Management set up under the Disaster Management Law.

(xiv) The NDMA may be requested to suggest model provisions regarding these services for inclusion in the Disaster Management Act/s.
Setting up of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

NDRF comprises of 8 battalions of Central Para Military Forces

- The general superintendence, direction and control of the Force is with NDMA

- The command and supervision of the Force is vested with Director General, Civil Defence

- Each battalion consists of 1158 personnel organized in 18 teams

- Strategically stationed at 8 places across the country.
- Training is the driving force for operationalization of NDRF

- A three tier-training infrastructure comprising
  - a National level training institute,
  - 4 Regional Level Training Institutes
  - 8 Battalion level training institutes

- 15 Regional Response Centres (RRCs)

- (9) Disaster Mitigation Centres
The Armed Forces of the country have played a vital role during past disasters.

The Armed Forces have time and again proven themselves as one of the most efficient resources in disaster relief management.
The Second ARC in its 3rd Report submitted to the Government has rightly commented that

“Armed Forces have invariably played an important role in rescue and relief operations in all major disasters in the country. The constitution of specialized NDRF battalions would reduce the pressure on the Armed Forces, but with widespread presence, availability of highly trained, dedicated and well equipped human resources, and their capability to react with a short-time-frame, the Armed Forces would continue to play a vital role in rescue and relief during all major crises. “
Thanks