

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Being a student of disaster management, I have been visiting NIDM for past few years but I never thought I will be participating in a programme (Advance professional Programmed in Public Administration – 39) at IIPA, co-located with NIDM, New Delhi. Hence, on being nominated for the course, I had decided to take one of the topics of disaster response as my dissertation topic for APPPA 39. Just then, unfortunately the tragedy took place in Utrakhand in June 2013 when thousands of lives were lost in the floods. As reported in the media and learnt from both official / unofficial accounts, there were major gaps in the preparedness in the state. There were also reports of adhocism and chaos in disaster response in spite of lessons from so many earlier disasters in the state of Utrakhand.

Ever since 2005, Govt of India has been making conscious efforts in capacity building of disaster prone states and propagating Incident Command System/ Incident Response System yet the disaster response in the country has not been as good as it ought to be. Hence, I chose to find reasons that impede institutionalisation of Incident Response System (IRS) in disaster prone states and look for remedial measures. Fortunately for me, I found an excellent guide in Prof Vinod K Sharma, a very eminent and dedicated disaster management expert also in the faculty at IIPA. I must thank him for motivating me to take up this study and help refine the subject chosen. In fact, but for his continued guidance and valuable advice I would not have been able to do justice to this subject of my dissertation.

IRS being relatively new in India it was not easy to get inputs required to write dissertation on the subject. I must however place on record the whole hearted support provided by various experts in the field of disaster management as also numerous officials I had the opportunity to interact and learn from their experiences. I must express my deep-felt gratitude to Dr Satendra, Executive Director, NIDM for extending total support for this study. His dedication to the cause of preparedness is praiseworthy and was reflective in his very sincere efforts to make available requisite inputs for the study. I would like to thank him for providing 'Utrakhand Disaster Report' prepared by NIDM in 2013. I have no hesitation in mentioning that a large amount of inputs have been taken from this report for the Chapter on Utrakhand Case Study. In addition, I would like to place on record my indebtedness to Col.,Prabodh Pathak, Consultant, NIDM as

also my regimental officer for helping me at every stage of this study. Being an expert in IRS, his knowledge and inputs were of much value for the study.

My grateful thanks to Shri JK Sinha, Hon'ble Member NDMA (responsible for steering the effort of IRS institutionalisation) for, in spite of being so busy, he took time out to interact with me and give his valuable views on how to provide impetus to integration of IRS in Indian administrative system. I had met Maj Gen VK Datta, Senior Specialist in Disaster Management and Counter Terrorism, NDMA in an interaction in Nov 2013 where he guided me on how to go about the study. I like to thank him for the guidance. I would also like to thank Shri Shivaji Singh, Sr Consultant, NDMA in giving his insightful analysis of relief & response conducted in the wake of Uttarakhand disaster. Having been a key advisor from NDMA he had first-hand experience of how things moved on ground. I also like to thank Shri Vinay Kojla, Joint Advisor at 'Ops Division, NDMA' for his frank views and inputs on the subject.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is the apex body, the ministry responsible for driving the entire effort of disaster management including IRS across the country. Hence inputs and efforts of MHA are most authentic and valuable ^{L for} such a study. My sincere thanks to MHA officials Shri Gautam Ghosh Dy Director (DM I) and Shri Badola Dy Director (DM I) for cooperating and sharing inputs on institutionalisation efforts in the country and providing their suggestions on how can the process of integration of IRS be hastened.

I had planned a field visit to Rudrapur, worst hit district during Uttarakhand disaster in 2013, but owing to heavy rains on 27 Feb 14, I had to cancel the trip after alighting at Haridwar Railway Station. Notwithstanding that, I was able to interview Shri Praveen Pawar, UN Disaster Management Team at Rudrapur and Mrs Meera Kuntura, Dy Director, District Disaster Management, Rudrapur on telephone and get an insight in to the tragedy and state's response in June 2013. Hence, I must thank both of them for sparing their time and speaking their mind on the issue. And to enable me to speak to them as also give his own field experiences, I like to thank Col Rajeev Mehta, Commanding Officer at Rudrapur. His unit played an important part in rescue and relief operations in the wake of Uttarakhand disaster last year.

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Shri Bhaskaranand, IAS Secretary Disaster Management, Uttrakhand Govt on the disaster response in the state. I have to also thank Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre (DMMC) of Uttrakhand Executive Director Dr Piyush Rautela and Maj Rahul Jugran for their experiences and recommendations to improve disaster response and institutionalise IRS in Indian context.

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Last but not the least, I must admit that it is the Internet and technology that made my job a bit simpler. While I tried to put in as much of original work as possible, I have not hesitated to pick up good work done by the others and use it extensively for this research report.

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