

CHAPTER-III
INTEGRATED AUDIT OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

3 INTEGRATED AUDIT OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Highlights

The Disaster Management Department was created with the responsibility of planning, mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and rehabilitation to deal with any disaster. The role of the Central Government is supportive in terms of physical and financial resources. Provision of a Calamity Relief Fund was made by the Government of India for financial support to the State. An integrated audit of the Disaster Management Department disclosed weak financial management, non-utilisation of funds, lack of coordination, shortage of staff, absence of training for capacity building and lack of monitoring as highlighted below:

Disaster Management Plans were not prepared and there were delays in creation of Disaster Management Authorities.

(Paragraph 3.6.1)

Financial management was deficient, as reconciliation of the Calamity Relief Fund account had not been completed since 1995.

(Paragraph 3.7.1)

Funds of Rs 131.20 crore were drawn during 2006-09 without immediate requirement and retained till May 2009.

(Paragraph 3.7.2)

A total of 519 Abstract Contingent Bills for Rs 627.20 crore pertaining to the period 2006-09 were pending for settlement.

(Paragraph 3.7.4)

Absence of co-ordination between the Disaster Management Department and line departments led to inadequate flood control measures to protect from flood.

(Paragraph 3.9.1)

Inadequate embankment safety measures contributed to the Kosi disaster, which affected 33.29 lakh people.

(Paragraph 3.9.1)

Irregular payment of Rs 7.51 crore was made to ineligible persons under the Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana.

(Paragraph 3.9.5)

Excess payment of Rs 5.37 crore was made under assistance for damaged houses.

(Paragraph 3.9.6)

Monitoring through proper co-ordination with line departments was not effective.

(Paragraph 3.11)

3.1 Introduction

Government of India (GOI) notified the Disaster Management Act (Act) in December 2005. Disaster management is a continuous and integrated process of planning, organising, conducting and implementing necessary measures to deal with an event of disaster. The State is prone to natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, droughts etc. Floods affected 11.57 lakh people of 14 districts in 2006-07, 244.42 lakh people of 22 districts in 2007-08 and 50.25 lakh people of 18 districts in 2008-09, causing substantial human and economic losses. In addition, 30 out of 38 districts of the State come under a high risk seismic zone while the southern part of Bihar is prone to droughts.

In pursuance of the national roadmap for disaster management the erstwhile Relief and Rehabilitation Department of the Government of Bihar was redesignated (March 2007) as the Disaster Management Department (DMD) with enhanced responsibilities. The DMD was to be responsible for prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and rehabilitation work in case of any disaster. It was required to plan and establish response and mitigation funds for taking measures to reduce the risk, impact and effects of disasters and develop an adequate monitoring and reporting system to keep a close watch over the execution of relief works. The DMD was also responsible for co-ordination with other line departments¹ of the State and GOI. These other line departments were required to mainstream disaster management Plans with their economic and social development Plans and allocate funds for implementing these Plans in their annual budgets.

Arrangements for meeting relief expenditure due to natural disasters were based on the recommendations of successive Finance Commissions. The main source for funding relief preparedness/operations was the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). The CRF was for meeting immediate expenditure for relief to victims of disasters. The NCCF provided funds required by the State Government in excess of the balances available in its CRF.

3.2 Organisational set-up

The DMD is headed by a Principal Secretary and assisted by a Special Secretary, an Additional Commissioner and two Deputy Secretaries. The Principal Secretary also functions as a Member of the State Calamity Relief Fund Committee (SCRFC)².

At the field level, the responsibility for disaster management activities, preparedness and relief work is vested in the District Magistrates (DMs) and

¹ *Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Building Construction, Energy, Health, Public Health Engineering, Road Construction, Rural Works and Water Resources, which play a supporting role in the management of disasters.*

² *A committee constituted on the recommendation of the Twelfth Finance Commission for operation and maintenance of Calamity relief fund, for the period 2005-10*

Additional District Magistrates (ADMs) and their subordinate offices at block/circle levels under the overall control of the DMD. The organisational chart of the department and details of disaster management authorities are given in **Appendices 3.1 and 3.2.**

3.3 Audit Objectives

The objectives of the integrated audit of the Disaster Management Department were to ascertain whether:

- the planning by the department was adequate;
- the budgetary controls were adequate to achieve the objectives of the department in an economic, efficient and effective manner;
- preparedness, prevention, mitigation, measures to deal with disasters are adequate and response ,relief/ rehabilitation works are effective;
- the manpower management was effective; and
- the monitoring was adequate and there was proper co-ordination among the departments, district authorities, line departments and concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.

3.4 Audit Criteria

The integrated audit of the department was conducted with reference to the following audit criteria:

- the Disaster Management Act, 2005;
- the guidelines of the Twelfth Finance Commission regarding Calamity Relief Fund and the National Calamity Contingency Fund;
- the norms of gratuitous relief prescribed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI;
- the guidelines of the Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana; and
- the Bihar Public Works Account Code, the Bihar Financial Rules, the Bihar Treasury Code and the Bihar Budget Manual.

3.5 Audit Coverage and Methodology

An integrated audit to assess the functioning of the DMD for the period 2006-09 was conducted between May and August 2009 by scrutiny of records of the department and the concerned line departments at the Secretariat level, eight³ out of 38 districts, 41 works divisions⁴ in these districts and 27⁵ out of 124

³ Araria, East Champaran, Madhepura, Patna, Purnia, Saharsa, Sitamarhi and Supaul.

⁴ Flood Control Division- 11; Building Construction Division- 8; Road Construction Division- 7; Rural Works Division- 9 and Public Health Division- 6; Total- 41.

⁵ Araria (Forbisganj and Narpatganj), East Champaran (Bangaria, Ghorasahan, Motihari Sadar, Sangrampur, Sugali and Turkoliya), Madhepura (Murliganj and Singheshwar), Patna (Danapur, Fatua and Patna Sadar), Purnia (Aamour, Banmankhi and Baisi), Saharsa (Patarghat, Simri Bakthiyarpur and Sonbarsa), Sitamarhi (Bathnaha, Dumra,

blocks/circles. Out of the eight districts covered, five⁶ out of 22 districts had faced unprecedented floods in the year 2008 and two⁷ districts were highly earthquake prone. Patna, being the headquarters of the department and prone to earthquakes and floods, was also covered.

The audit objectives including audit criteria and methodology were discussed with the Special Secretary and Additional Commissioner of the DMD and the Chief Engineer (CE), Water Resources Department (WRD) in an entry conference held in July 2009. The audit findings were discussed with the Principal Secretary and Special Secretary of the department along with the Chief Engineer (Monitoring), WRD in an exit conference in December 2009. The views expressed by the department as well as their replies to the audit observations have been appropriately incorporated in the report.

3.6 Planning

3.6.1 Non-preparation of Disaster Management Plans

Disaster Management Plans were not prepared at the State level or at the test-checked districts level

The Disaster Management Act envisaged the preparation of Disaster Management Plans (DMP) at the State and district levels. The Plans were to consider the vulnerability of the State to various kinds of disaster, the measures to be adopted for prevention and mitigation of disasters, the manner in which the mitigation measures were to be integrated with the development Plans, capacity building, preparedness measures to be taken and the roles and responsibilities of the line departments in responding to any disaster.

Scrutiny of records revealed that DMPs were not prepared at the State level and in any of the test-checked districts during 2006-09.

3.6.2 Delayed constitution of State and District Disaster Management Authorities

The Act stipulated the constitution of a State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) at the State level and a District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) in each district. The SDMA was responsible for laying down policies and Plans for disaster management in the State. The DDMA's were to act as planning, co-ordinating and implementing bodies in the districts in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the National Disaster Management Authority and the State Disaster Management Authority.

Scrutiny of the records revealed that though the Act came into effect from December 2005, the department notified the constitution of the SDMA in

Pupri, Riga and Runnisaipur), Supaul (Pratapganj, Saraigarh Bhaptiyahi and Supaul Sadar).

⁶ *Araria, Madhepura, Purnia, Saharsa and Supaul.*

⁷ *East Champaran and Sitamarhi.*

November 2007 and the State Executive Committee (SEC)⁸ and the DDMA in June 2008. Although, the SDMA was constituted in November 2007, it conducted its first meeting in August 2008 nine months after its constitution. As a result, the State and district level DMPs were not prepared and mainstreaming of these Plans in other line departments was not ensured (November 2009).

The department stated (December 2009) that these facts would be brought to the notice of SDMA. The reply was silent on delayed constitution of the authorities and non-preparation of the DMPs.

3.7 Financial Management

The budgetary allocations of the department mainly focused on relief measures such as cash doles, foodgrain supplies, evacuation of people, repairs and restoration of damaged roads/bridges and agriculture input subsidies for damaged crops. The expenditure was met through the CRF in accordance with the recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) for the period 2005-10. The contribution to CRF was to be shared between GOI and the State in the ratio of 75:25. In addition, the budgetary allocations also comprised funds for housing assistance under MMAY for flood-affected people of 22⁹ districts.

The Act envisaged that the State Government should, immediately after issue of notifications for constituting the SDMA and the DDMA, establish the following¹⁰ Funds:

- State Disaster Response Fund;
- State Disaster Mitigation Fund;
- District Disaster Response Fund;
- District Disaster Mitigation Fund.

All grants received from various sources were to be kept in these funds and were to be available to the SDMA, the State Executive Committee and the DDMA in order to facilitate immediate procurement of provisions or materials and application of resources for rescue or relief in the event of a disaster. These Funds were to be established to ensure the availability of funds at the local level.

Scrutiny revealed that these Funds had not been created either at the State level or at the district level (December 2009). The DMD stated (December 2009) that the Funds would be created by different line departments. The reply is not acceptable

⁸ State Executive Committee under the chairmanship the Chief Secretary of the State assists the State Disaster Management Authority in the performance of its function (Appendix- 3.2).

⁹ Phase-I: Araria, Begusarai, Darbhanga, Khagraia, Madhepura, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Supaul and West Champaran.
Phase-II: Bhagalpur, East Champaran, Gopalganj, Katihar, Madhubani, Nalanda, Patna, Purnia, Saharsa, Siwan and Vaishali.

¹⁰ Disaster Response Fund- Fund for meeting any threatening disaster situation or disaster, Disaster mitigation Fund- Fund for projects exclusively for the measures aimed at reducing the risk of a disaster.

Disaster Response and Disaster Mitigation Funds was not created as envisaged in the Act

as money was to be made available for disaster management only through the statutory Funds established by State/district authorities.

3.7.1 Budget allocation and expenditure

The budgetary allocations and expenditure of the department during 2006-09 including CRF and NCCF are given in **Table Nos. 1 and 2.**

Table No. 1
Budgetary allocation and Expenditure during 2006-09

(Rupees in crore)

Year	Budget Provision	Expenditure	(+) Excess/(-)Savings
2006-07	209.20	56.66	(-) 152.54
2007-08	2175.02	1220.11	(-) 954.91
2008-09	2951.59	1399.75	(-)1551.84
TOTAL	5335.81	2676.52	(-) 2659.29

(Source: Appropriation Accounts)

Table No. 2
Status of release and expenditure under CRF / NCCF

(Rupees in crore)

Year	Opening Balance	CRF Release		Interest	NCCF Release	Total	Expenditure	Closing Balance
		CS	SS					
2006-07	552.83	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	552.83	8.05	544.78
2007-08	544.78	289.08	96.36	6.26	Nil	936.48	436.30	500.18
2008-09	500.18	121.86	40.62	Nil	1000	1662.66	NIL ¹¹	1662.66
TOTAL		410.94	136.98	6.26	1000¹²		444.35	

(Source: Disaster Management Department)

Analysis of the figures in **Table Nos. 1 and 2** and scrutiny of the records in the department revealed the following:

Delayed credit of contributions to CRF

Four instalments of contribution amounting to Rs 310.98 crore¹³ to be credited to the States CRF pertaining to the years 2006-08 were credited on the last day of March 2008 against the norms of crediting the instalment on the first day of May and November in each financial year. The delayed credit of amounts to the CRF was attributed to late remittances of the GOI share due to delays in submission of utilisation certificates. The department, however, requested GOI (July 2007) to release further instalments from the CRF meant for 2006-08 even though utilisation certificates could not be sent as the State was reeling under floods.

¹¹ Expenditure was not approved by the CRF committee for the year 2008-09.

¹² GOI provided Rs 1000 crore in August 2008 under NCCF for flood relief in the Kosi region.

¹³ 2006-07: Rs 153.23 crore, 2007-08: Rs 157.75 crore

Diversion of funds

During 2008-09, Rs 15 lakh was diverted by the DM, Sitamarhi from the CRF to items not related to disasters, which was against the norms of CRF.

Discrepancy in opening balance of CRF

Closing balance of the Calamity Relief Fund at the end of 2004-05 was treated as State Plan Resources

As per the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, the accounts of the Fund and investments were to be maintained by the Accountant General (AG), Accounts and Entitlement (A&E) in the normal course. The State Calamity Relief Fund Committee (SCRFC) had to maintain subsidiary accounts in consultation with the AG. It was noticed that there was a discrepancy of Rs 405.06 crore in the figures of the department and the AG relating to the opening balance (2008-09) of the CRF as the State Government was treating the closing balance (Rs 478.37 crore) of the CRF at the end of 2004-05 as State Plan Resources citing Eleventh Finance Commission recommendations. However, as per a GOI directive (June 2009), the unspent balances under CRF (provided under the Eleventh Finance Commission period during 2000-05) were to be used for the CRF during the Twelfth Finance Commission period. The DMD stated (December 2009) that the matter had been taken up with GOI.

Non-reconciliation of expenditure

Calamity Relief Fund account was not reconciled since 1995

The account balance of the CRF since the Tenth Finance Commission (1995-2000) period to 2008-09 had, however, not been reconciled by the department with the books of the AG even though the AG had asked (August 2009) the DMD for submission of details in respect of the Central share and the State share under the CRF along with year-wise approvals of expenditure by the SCRFC for the above period. The DMD stated (December 2009) that partial reconciliation of the CRF from the year 2000 had been done and an exercise for debiting the expenditure to CRF from 1995-2000 had been started.

3.7.2 Drawal of funds without immediate requirement

An amount of Rs 131.20 crore were drawn without immediate requirement

Rule 300 of the Bihar Treasury Code provided that no money should be withdrawn from the treasury unless it is required for immediate payment. Scrutiny of records revealed that funds allotted to the test-checked districts were subsequently transfer to circles/blocks during 2006-09 as detailed in **Appendix 3.3**. However, it was noticed that in these districts Rs 81.43 crore (**Appendix 3.4**) relating to foodgrains, evacuation of people, agriculture input subsidies, restoration and repairs of damaged roads was drawn during 2006-09 without immediate requirement and retained till May 2009.

Further, DMs of four districts¹⁴ drew Rs 49.77 crore of MMAY funds in excess during 2007-09 of which, Rs 19.50 crore was retained upto May 2009 though the

¹⁴ Araria: Rs 0.03 crore, East Champaran: Rs 7.72 crore, Saharsa: Rs 5.12 crore and Sitamarhi: Rs 36.90 crore.

scheme had been closed in March 2009. The DM, Sitamarhi surrendered Rs 30.27 crore in March 2009.

The DMD stated (July 2009) that the amounts were drawn on the basis of the allotments received. The fact, however, remained that the amounts were drawn without immediate requirement.

3.7.3 Advances pending for adjustment

Rule 609 and 611 of Bihar Treasury Code envisaged that the advances made to different entities/ Government servants for departmental or allied purposes are to be adjusted by the end of the month following that in which the advance was drawn and before granting another advance to ensure that the money has been spent for the approved purposes. Unspent balances of advances are to be refunded immediately. However, advances given to Government officials, Panchayat Sewaks during 2006-09 for distribution of relief in the test-checked districts amounting to Rs 114.90 crore were lying unadjusted as of March 2009 (**Appendix 3.5**). No initiatives were taken by the Block Development Officers/Controlling Officers and the DMs concerned for adjustment of the advances, for which no reasons were on records.

The department stated (October 2009) that action for adjustment of the advances would be taken.

3.7.4 Non-adjustment of Abstract Contingent Bills

Detailed Contingent (DC) bills for money drawn on Abstract Contingent (AC) bills were to be submitted to the AG not later than the 25th of the next six months from the date of their drawal from the treasury, failing which no subsequent drawals on AC bills was permitted. Scrutiny of records revealed that 519 of AC bills for Rs 627.20 crore, pertaining to the period 2006-09 in the test-checked districts (**Appendix 3.6**) were pending for settlement by submission of DC bills to the AG.

3.7.5 Deficiencies in maintenance of accounts

- The Bihar Treasury Code provides that all monetary transactions should be entered in the cash book as soon as they occur and the head of the office should verify the cash balance in the cash book at the end of each month. It was observed that the cash book was not maintained in Sonbarsa circle (Saharsa) since August 2007 while transactions in the cash book of DDMA, Patna since February 2007 had not been verified (August 2009). The CO, Sonbarsa stated (August 2009) that the cash book was not maintained at Sonbarsa circle as the charge of the previous cash book had not been handed over, while the ADM, Patna stated (September 2009) that the cash book would be sent to the officer-in-charge for verification of the transactions in it.
- Further scrutiny of the records of the 27 test-checked circles/blocks revealed that bank reconciliation with cash books and advance registers had not been done since April 2006 till the date of audit (November 2009) in nine circles/blocks

Detailed Contingent bills of Rs 627.20 crore were not submitted to Accountant General

of four test-checked districts¹⁵ and cheque registers were not maintained since August 2007 till the date of audit. Hence, the actual status of funds as on March 2009 could not be ascertained. The respective circles/blocks stated (November 2009) that action would be taken for bank reconciliation.

3.7.6 Fraudulent Payment

In the circle office, Banmankhi in Purnia district, Rs 0.63 lakh was misappropriated by making payment of Rs 70348 from the CRF against a bill of Rs 7034.80 for purchase of petrol to run an army motor boat (September 2008).

The DMD stated (October 2009) that recovery of Rs 0.63 lakh had been made from the agency.

3.8 Programme Implementation

The DMD was responsible for taking measures to reduce the risk, impact and effects of disasters and ensure the effective execution of relief works. Scrutiny of records revealed the following:

3.8.1 Preparedness for management of disasters

Disaster preparedness activities like operation of control rooms; arrangements for foodgrains, polythene sheets, boats, medicines, mobile medical teams and veterinary camps; identification of places for relief camps with water supply etc. were taken up during 2006-09 by the department. WRD, one of the important line departments had established a Flood Management Information System Cell in March 2007 for better management, increasing the flood forecasting time from 24 hours to 72 hours, issuing daily flood bulletins during the monsoons and placing the information on the internet.

3.8.2 Programme to minimise the effects of earthquakes

As a part of the overall disaster management framework, the construction of buildings in seismic zones was to be done according to the code of the Bureau of Indian Standards. The Building Construction Department (BCD) was to constitute Hazard Safety Cells to impart training to engineers, architects, masons etc. for proper implementation of the building codes in the construction of Government buildings. Surveys of lifeline buildings like hospitals, schools, cinema halls, multi-storied buildings etc. were to be done for necessary retrofitting. It was, however, noticed that none of the above programmes were taken up by the BCD in any of the test-checked districts.

Hazard safety cells were not established.

Survey of lifeline buildings for necessary retrofitting was not done.

¹⁵ Araria (Narpatganj), East Champaran (Motihari and Sugauli), Madhepura (Kumarkhand, Murliganj and Nagar panchayat Murliganj), Saharsa (Mahesi, Salakhua and Sonbarsa).

The DMD stated (July 2009) that earthquake resistance technology had been adopted by the Bihar State Bridge Construction Corporation since 2006 and would be adopted in other departments in the near future.

3.8.3 Establishment of Emergency Operational Centre

The Emergency Operational Centre at Patna was not constructed and the same was not properly equipped.

As per the programme objective, a State level Emergency Operational Centre (EOC) and district level EOCs in all the 14 districts were to be constructed and equipped with communication facilities along with other tools and machineries e.g. searchlights, life boats, life jackets, first-aid kits etc. It was noticed that the State level EOC and district level EOCs in 13 districts (except at Patna) had been completed. However, the State level EOC was not equipped with the required facilities as of December 2009.

The department stated (December 2009) that the district level EOC at Patna would be completed and the State level EOC would be equipped at the earliest.

3.8.4 Early warning system

The DMD had formulated an advanced early warning system through satellite linked assessment/mobile phone support to disseminate information and had taken up (2009) a community preparedness programme to deal with disasters and minimise the loss of lives and property. It provided space to the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF¹⁶) (April 2009), which was equipped with boats and other resource materials for emergency response. The department also stated (December 2009) that land for the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) had been identified at Bihta in Patna district.

3.8.5 Community preparedness and training

In order to minimise loss of life and property, it was essential that the task of community preparedness to deal with any disaster should be taken up on priority basis. It was, however, noticed that no awareness and preparedness campaign regarding floods, earthquakes etc. were taken up in any of the test-checked districts during 2006-09. Although the department had arranged for training on search, rescue and first-aid for 101 volunteers in 14 districts between June and July 2009, the fact remained that the number of volunteers trained were minimal in view of the fact that the State had been facing disasters like floods on a regular basis.

¹⁶ NDRF/SDRF were to be constituted under the Act, 2005 for the purposes of specialised response to a threatening disaster situation or a disaster and function under the direction and control of National Disaster Management Authority and State Disaster Management Authority respectively.

3.8.6 Protection of identified vulnerable sites

As the State had been facing floods regularly, the DMD was required to ensure flood control measures in flood-prone areas in co-ordination with the WRD. Accordingly, the WRD had fixed a time schedule for execution of anti-erosion works as per the flood calendar¹⁷ and had been issuing directions to its Chief Engineers to identify all vulnerable sites before June every year. Simultaneously, the DMD had also issued directives to conduct joint verifications of vulnerable sites with the engineers of WRD before 30 June every year.

The officials of the DMD and WRD had jointly identified 19 places during 2007-08 in East Champaran and 13 places (seven in 2007-08 and six in 2008-09) in Purnia district as sites vulnerable to floods and communicated¹⁸ this information to the WRD headquarters through the concerned DMs. However, WRD did not execute the works recommended by the DM, Purnia. It was further observed that WRD had itself identified (2007-08) 48 vulnerable sites in East Champaran and 11 (eight in 2007-08 and three in 2008-09) in Purnia. However, WRD could execute only seven works in East Champaran before the onset of the monsoon in 2007. Due to non-completion of identified works within the time schedule, vulnerable sites in East Champaran remained unattended to.

The WRD stated (December 2009) that all preventive measures were being taken every year but the works at the identified sites could not be executed due to unavoidable reasons.

3.9 Response to disasters

Rescue and relief operations like distribution of essential commodities like foodgrains, kerosene oil, matchboxes and candles and arranging for temporary shelters/camps, drinking water etc. are important activities in response to disasters. The DMD authorities were also required to provide for maintenance of essential services like power, telecommunications and roads as well as keeping adequate stocks of life-saving drugs by seeking support from the concerned line departments.

The operational management activities of the department indicated the following deficiencies:

3.9.1 Flood Management

As a part of the flood management framework, the WRD had to prepare long-term plans for flood control and ensure their implementation by construction of barrages, desiltation of rivers, inter-linking of rivers etc. Further, short term

¹⁷ Flood calendar issued by the WRD is time frame for execution of flood protection work in different rivers of the State.

¹⁸ In respect of East Champaran in June 2007 and in respect of Purnia in June 2007 and June 2008.

measures like construction of embankments, rising and strengthening of embankments, anti-erosion works etc. were also to be undertaken. Audit analysis disclosed that long term measures were planned but not implemented by the WRD during 2006-09. Despite conducting joint verification every year during May/June, the WRD did not complete all the identified works as discussed in the following paragraphs:

- ***Breach of embankment at Kusaha across river Kosi***

The Water Resources Department did not resolve the site problems at 12.90 km in Kusaha, Nepal August 2008.

The Kosi region of Bihar comprising the districts of Araria, Madhepura, Purnia, Saharsa and Supaul faced a massive flood disaster (August 2008) due to a breach in the Eastern Kosi Afflux Bundh (EAB) at 12.90 km in Kusaha, Nepal. The Second Irrigation Commission, 1994 had suggested measures¹⁹ to minimise the siltation process in the Kosi river as siltation in this river was heavier than any other river in India.

Further, the Sub-divisional officer, Saharsa Sadar in a letter to the DM, Saharsa (February 2008) had apprehended that River Kosi might suddenly change its course due to heavy siltation and revert to its old course i.e. through Purnia or Saharsa division after a breach in the upstream of Kosi barrage. The DM, Saharsa intimated this apprehension to the Principal Secretary, DMD (March 2008). Action taken by the department either in view of the measures suggested by the Second Irrigation Commission or on the report of the DM, Saharsa was not on record. Rather, the WRD relied on short term measures like construction of embankments, execution of anti-erosion works and other structural means. This resulted in continuous accumulation of silt in the adjacent areas around Kosi barrage, causing a gradual change in the river's course.

Before the floods of 2008, the department had also curtailed (February 2008) the flood protection proposals (***Appendix 3.7***) of the Eastern Kosi Embankment division, Kusaha and the Headworks division, Birpur.

The records further indicated that erosion had started at 12.90 km spur of EAB from 5 August 2008 and the breach occurred on 18 August 2008. During the above period, the WRD neither sorted out the problem related to the dispute of the labour contractor, hindering the flood protection works nor protected the embankments. Besides, there was lack of co-ordination with the Nepalese authorities as a meeting of the joint committee of the Kosi Project for smooth execution of flood protection works was held after a delay of three years in June 2009 and a meeting of the local district administration and the Nepalese authorities on safety arrangements of Kosi embankment was held in July 2009.

¹⁹ *The Second Irrigation Commission's recommendations, inter alia, included - (i) all low-lying zones in the old Kosi dhar which may be filled with silt should be identified through a detailed survey. Such identified low-lying pockets should be embanked to receive flood water at a higher level and connect the river with link channels passing through low-lying alignments with a regulator at its head located in the existing flood embankment on the main river; (ii) soil conservation measures should be implemented effectively for maintenance and enhancement of the ecological balance along with land productivity.*

Thus, by not considering the long term measures, curtailing proposals of short term measures and holding joint committee/local administration meetings after delays indicated that embankment safety measures were not properly attended to either by the DMD or by the WRD, the main line department. The deficiencies pointed out above contributed to the Kosi disaster which affected 33.29 lakh people.

The report of the technical committee was pending for the last 22 months.

The WRD stated (October 2009) that the audit observations would be clarified on receipt of the report of the enquiry commission set up (September 2008) by the Government to enquire into the facts of the Kosi breach.

The WRD further stated (December 2009) that the proposals for anti-erosion works on EAB before flood 2008 were curtailed by the Kosi High Level Committee (KHLC) and the recommendations of KHLC were a pre-requisite as the works in Nepal portion were funded by GOI. They also stated that the task of co-ordinating several activities concerning flood management in Nepal vested in the Ganga Flood Commission²⁰, Patna. As regards long term measures, the WRD further stated that a report of the technical committee set up (February 2008) by State Government with concurrence of GOI was under active consideration.

The reply of the DMD was not justifiable as the proposals of the field divisions reflecting ground realities were not considered seriously by KHLC and the WRD also did not consider the recommendations of the report of the technical committee even after a lapse of 22 months (February 2008 to December 2009).

• ***Breach of embankment across river Bagmati***

The work of reconstruction²¹, raising and strengthening the embankment of Bagmati river in Sitamarhi district was given to an agency in December 2005. The work was to be completed by June 2008. The agency had to execute protection works also as per the requirement of site conditions. However, the embankment of Bagmati river breached (August 2009) at Tilaktajpur. Scrutiny of records of the work executed at 54.5 km in the right embankment of Bagmati river at Tilaktajpur disclosed that the agency had executed the work of raising and strengthening of embankment in 60 metre length up to 80 *per cent* only, for which Rs 30.97 crore was paid (June 2009). The breach had, however, occurred in the length of 68 metre at the same place i.e. in and around 54.5 km. However, the department did not initiate suitable action despite the breaches in the embankments and shortcomings in observing the time schedule in execution of the works.

²⁰ *The committee of experts consisting, Chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission as chairman, Director, Research Institute, Pune, Member (Flood), Central Water Commission, New Delhi, Engineer-in-Chief (North), Water Resources Department Bihar, Chief Engineer(CE), Darbhanga WRD, Chief Engineer (Research) WRD Khagaul, CE, Hydrology & Project Planning WRD Patna, Director Eastern Region, WRD, HMGN, Biratnagar, Deputy Director, Central Water Resources Department, HMGN, Kathmandu as members and CE, Birpur, WRD Patna as Member Secretary.*

²¹ *(1) left embankment from Runnisaidpur to Kalanjarghat- 54.88 km. (2) right embankment from Runnisaidpur to Kalanjarghat- 53.76 km.*

The WRD accepted (October 2009) the fact and stated that the average progress of work was upto 85 per cent only.

There was lack of co-ordination between Disaster Management Department and Water Resources Department.

The above facts indicated that flood control measures taken by the WRD were not adequate and 65.61 lakh people were affected by the floods during 2007 and 2008 with a total loss of Rs 260.56 crore²². Records furnished to Audit also did not indicate that the DMD had taken any initiative/co-ordinated for timely completion of the works at identified vulnerable sites. Thus, there was lack of co-ordination between the DMD and WRD.

3.9.2 Management of relief camps

During the Kosi floods of 2008, 329 relief camps were established in the districts of Kosi region under the guidelines (September 2008) of the department. The guidelines, *inter alia*, provided for norms of food distribution to each person and maintenance of daily registration registers for enrolment of flood victims in the relief camps. Although the establishment of camps served the purpose and provided immediate shelter to flood victims in general, the management of the relief camps was not as per the guidelines of the department.

- In two relief camps²³ in Supaul and Purnia districts, expenditure of Rs 57.79 lakh was incurred on food expenses, clothes, utensils etc. without entering the names and addresses of 3.35 lakh flood victims in the daily registration register during September-October 2008 and August-October 2008 respectively. In the absence of daily registration registers the authenticity of the reports on flood victims furnished by the district administrations was doubtful. The department stated (December 2009) that compliance would be made after receiving the views of the concerned District Magistrates.

- The DMD decided (September 2008) to provide sanitary napkins to women in relief camps in five districts²⁴ and instructed the Welfare Department to provide sanitary napkins in the relief camps. Accordingly, the Women Development Corporation under the Welfare Department intimated (October 2008) the concerned DMs that sanitary napkins would be provided within next three months in a phased manner. However, out of 2.73 lakh packets of sanitary napkins costing Rs 42.37 lakh, 2.48 lakh packets valuing Rs 38.49 lakh were supplied (November to December 2008) to the respective Civil Surgeon-cum-Chief Medical Officers (CS-cum-CMOs) after the camps were closed. Further, out of 1.15 lakh packets available with the CS-cum-CMOs of Madhepura and Saharsha, 80710 packets of sanitary napkins valuing Rs 12.51 lakh²⁵ were issued to Primary Health Centres (December to March 2009). The respective CS-cum-CMO accepted (August 2009) the audit observations. Thus, failure to ensure

²² East Champaran (People-37.08 lakh; Loss- Rs 131.00 crore), Purnia (People-0.14 lakh; Loss-Rs 0.07 crore), Sitamarhi (People- 28.39 lakh; Loss-129.49 crore).

²³ BSS College (Supaul): Rs 14.77 lakh; flood victims: 1.15 lakh and Moranga (Purnia): Rs 43.02 lakh; flood victims: 2.20 lakh.

²⁴ Araria, Madhepura, Purnia, Sitamarhi and Supaul.

²⁵ Madhepura: Rs 6.16 lakh, Saharsa: Rs 6.35 lakh.

timely supply of napkins led to avoidable expenditure of Rs 38.49 lakh and non-achieving of the intended objectives.

3.9.3 Restoration of road connectivity

As per CRF norms, the DMD was responsible for ensuring restoration of the connectivity of roads damaged during any disaster within 30 to 45 days. The department provided (June 2008 to March 2009) funds to the Road Construction Department (RCD) for restoration of road connectivity. It was noticed in two divisions²⁶ that the roads damaged (August 2008) during the Kosi disaster could be restored between January and March 2009 after incurring expenditure of Rs 11.79 crore due to delay in release of funds by RCD and in the tendering process (November 2008 to March 2009).

Thus, lack of monitoring by the department of the funds allotted to the line departments delayed the restoration of road connectivity in the affected areas.

3.9.4 Unfruitful expenditure on semi-permanent shelters

As decided (August 2008) by the DMD, semi-permanent shelters for flood victims of the Kosi region²⁷ were to be constructed through the Building Construction Department (BCD). The shelters were to be completed within one month from the date of issue of the work orders. The BCD had decided to construct 159 shelters. The construction was started (September 2008) for 92 shelters in three²⁸ districts by the concerned divisions of the BCD. Scrutiny of records revealed that 35 out of 92 shelters remained incomplete (August 2009). The remaining 57 shelters were completed after the flood period was over and the camps had been closed. Thus, the desired objective of providing shelter to flood victims was not achieved and expenditure of Rs 1.64 crore proved infructuous.

3.9.5 Implementation of Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana

The State Government launched the Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana (MMAY) to rehabilitate the people of 22 districts affected in floods during 2007 by providing *pucca* houses to those people whose *kutchha* houses and hutments²⁹ had been fully damaged. The scheme was to be completed by March 2009.

The guidelines of the scheme provided the norms for identification of beneficiaries included preparation of lists of beneficiaries consisting names of beneficiaries, father's/ husband's names, age, permanent addresses, surroundings of land and status of *kutchha* houses/hutments with dates of damage of houses. This was to be done by adopting house to house surveys and digital photography with date and finalisation of list of beneficiaries by the DM concerned up to 14 March 2008.

²⁶ RCD, Saharsa: Rs 8.97 crore, and RCD, Supaul: Rs 2.82 crore.

²⁷ Araria, Madhepura, Purnia, Saharsa, Supaul.

²⁸ Purnia-18, Saharsa-24 and Supaul- 50.

²⁹ Katcha houses are made of with bricks and mud whereas hutments are made of with bamboo and straw.

Funds were allotted to the concerned DMs by the department on the basis of the number of beneficiaries identified under the scheme with instructions to intimate the progress and submit utilisation certificates. However, only 1.51 lakh beneficiaries were provided Rs 363.19 crore during 2007-09 against 4.64 lakh selected beneficiaries and allotment of Rs 1070.83 crore. Of this, only 11249 (seven *per cent*) houses were completed as of August 2009.

Further scrutiny in the test-checked districts revealed the following:

Ineligible persons were paid Rs 7.51 crore

- The norms of selection under the scheme were not adhered to by the concerned DMs in the selection of 3131 out of 11257 selected beneficiaries (**Appendix 3.8**) in 20 blocks of the six test-checked districts³⁰. The norms which were not adhered to along with the number of beneficiaries selected beyond the norms are given in **Appendix 3.9**. Thus, the payment of Rs 7.51 crore was made to irregularly selected beneficiaries. The department stated (December 2009) that compliance would be made after obtaining the views of the DMs concerned.
- In Motihari Sadar circle, 138 out of 651 selected beneficiaries were deprived of assistance due to non-availability of digital photographs. Further, 93 beneficiaries were not benefited for want of cross-verification in respect of availing benefits by them under any other housing assistance programme. The funds for this purpose were surrendered in March 2009. Thus, the selected beneficiaries were deprived of assistance amounting to Rs 0.58 crore for construction of *pucca* houses.
- Against the target date of June 2008 for completion of the houses, in 74 blocks under eight districts, Rs 120.38 crore was distributed (April 2008 to March 2009) to 50025 selected beneficiaries to construct *pucca* houses during 2008-09 (**Appendix 3.10**). Out of that, only 6534 houses (13 *per cent*) were fully constructed (July 2009). In the Purnia, Sitamarhi and Supaul districts, no houses were completed as of June 2009. The department stated (July 2009) that suitable steps would be taken.

3.9.6 Excess payment of assistance for damaged houses

There was excess payment of Rs 3.71 crore towards assistance for damaged houses.

- In two circles of Saharsa district, 4642 hutments, fully damaged during the floods 2008, were surveyed in January 2009 and categorised for providing assistance at the rate of Rs 2,000 as per CRF norms but the category of these hutments was changed by the order (May 2009) of the DM as fully damaged '*kutchha*' houses for which assistance was payable at the rate of Rs 10,000. This resulted in excess payment of Rs 3.71 crore³¹. The CO concerned stated (August 2009) that it was done as per the instructions on video-conference held by the Principal Secretary DMD in January 2009.

³⁰ East Champaran, Madhepura, Patna, Purnia, Saharsa and Supaul

³¹ Simri Bakhtiyarpur (Rs 0.16 crore; Damaged hut-206), Sonbarsa (Rs 3.55 Crore; damaged hut 4436).

- In Sonbarsa block, payments for 1633 partially damaged *kutchha* houses and 111 partially damaged *pucca* houses were made at the rate of Rs 10,000 per house instead of Rs 1,500 and payments for 224 damage huts were made at the rate of Rs 10,000 instead of Rs 2,000 each against the CRF norms, which resulted in excess payment of Rs 1.66 crore. The department stated (December 2009) that the matter would be verified from the DMs concerned.

3.9.7 Irregular and excess payment of Agriculture Input Subsidy

In Ghorasahan block (East Champaran), the reported damaged crop area was 1426.40 hectare, but agriculture input subsidy³² amounting to Rs 67.81 lakh was distributed for 2178.64 hectares to 5368 beneficiaries. Thus, Rs 10.75 lakh³³ was paid in excess.

3.10 Human Resources Management

The overall performance of a department depends on the availability of adequate manpower.

Human Resources management of the department was deficient.

Scrutiny of records in DMD's headquarters revealed that the charge of apex level officers (Principal Secretary, Special Secretary, Additional Commissioner) of the department were held by the officials of other departments as additional charges. The offices of the department at the district level were being managed by skeleton staff in the districts of Darbhanga, Patna, Saharsa and Sitamarhi where 44 out of 106 and 29 out of 129 posts including posts of ADM (Relief) were vacant during 2007-08 and 2008-09 respectively (*Appendix 3.11*). In the rest of the districts, the department's activities were being managed by staff from other departments.

The department stated (November 2009) that a proposal for creating posts of ADM (Disaster Management) in 18 districts³⁴ was under consideration. It was also stated that there was a scarcity of officers and staff in the department headquarters which affected the running of the State control room and monitoring in the event of a disaster. This indicated that adequate attention to the staffing arrangements at the headquarters level as well as the district level was not being paid.

3.11 Monitoring

As per the Act, the responsibility for disaster management and monitoring of such activities at the State level was vested with the SDMA and at the district level with the DDMA. Since the department was the nodal department for disaster management in the State, it was important for it to ensure monitoring of the

³² Subsidy provided to farmers for damage of more than 50 per cent crops due to flood.

³³ Rs 67.81 lakh – Rs 57.06 lakh for 1426.40 hectare at the rate of Rs 4000 = Rs 10.75 lakh.

³⁴ Araria, Begusarai, East Champaran, Gopalganj, Katihar, Kishanganj, Madhepura, Madhubani, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Purnia, Samastipur, Saran, Sheohar, Siwan, Supaul, Vaishali and West Champaran.

implementation of Action Plans and policies decided at the State level. The district and block level monitoring committees under the DMs and BDOs/COs (*Appendix 3.12*) respectively were responsible for monitoring at the block/circle level.

It was found that monitoring by the department to ensure proper co-ordination with line departments and the concerned DMs was not effective.

The department stated (December 2009) that beneficiaries were given adequate relief and relief camps functioned in exemplary way during flood 2008.

3.12 Conclusion

As the State had been facing natural calamities regularly, the department was required to take urgent steps like preparation of the State Disaster Management Plan. The State Disaster Management Authority which was mandated to give overall guidance and monitoring of disaster management in the State had not been setup. The efforts of the department to ensure co-ordination with the line departments were also inadequate. The District Disaster Management Authorities, though created, were still to be fully functional as indicated from the non-preparation of District Management Plans.

The implementation of the GOI-UNDP sponsored Disaster Risk Management Programme displayed slow progress. Although the department had been able to provide rescue and relief to flood victims, the management of relief camps, distribution of relief materials and immediate restoration of services/roads etc. required further improvement. Acute shortage of manpower also affected the functioning and achievement of objectives of the department.

Thus, the objectives of initiating and activating its nodal responsibilities in prevention, mitigation and preparedness efforts were not entirely achieved by the department.

Recommendations

- The Disaster Response Fund and Disaster Mitigation Fund should be set up immediately.
- The Community preparedness programme should be taken up effectively on a large scale so that vulnerable communities are prepared for eventualities in cases of disasters.
- The department should evolve close co-ordination with line departments to ensure preparedness, timely relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.
- For better disaster management, adequate and well-trained manpower should be ensured.

- The monitoring system should be strengthened by holding periodical meetings of State Disaster Management Authority/District Disaster Management Authorities and by reviewing the implementation of Disaster Management Plans.

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