

# DRR Achievements in Himachal Pradesh

Reducing disaster risks in high altitudes is not an easy task but the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, ensconced in the Himalayas is taking commendable strides to reduce the risks faced by its citizens.

For instance, the formation of the Himachal Pradesh State Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in September 2016 established the multi sectoral mechanism to build partnership with all stakeholders. This is the first of its kind platform in the Himalayas. The platform is well placed for developing a Road Map for reducing key high altitude risks in this important State of India.

The Himachal Pradesh State Conclave in May 2017, in line with Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) priorities, developed Himachal Pradesh DRR Framework which is almost ready for finalization. It includes focus on reducing loss of lives, reducing loss and damage to properties, and directing investments to build resilience. The framework is useful to the local initiatives to reduce risk and accelerate development.

Himachal Pradesh is the only Himalayan State of India, which has conducted detailed Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessments (HVRA). This is a very useful tool in disaster risk management (DRM) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning as well in development planning. The economic growth and investments of the state can be better protected through such assessments. Its neighbouring state, Uttarakhand too has taken the help of HVRA to inform its development initiatives ranging from the building of roads, public buildings to expanding sustainable agriculture practices.

Himachal Pradesh is the first State of India to embed the landslide Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and warning system in its disaster risk reduction planning, as per the NDMA review. The SOP is finalized and is about to be shared with key stakeholders.

Committees constituted in the State, to integrate and implement SDGs and SFDRR priorities are unique in combining risk and development concerns in economic development.<sup>1</sup>

Government of India-UNDP DRR program is institutionalized in Himachal Pradesh, Preparation and finalization of SDMP is done. Over 12 DDMPs, Now Department DMPs are in progress. As a result local level risk reduction planning is taking place at a rapid pace.

One of the areas in need of more work is the urban sector. How best to plan and protect the rapidly growing towns and cities is Himachal Pradesh, in fact Himalayas? At high altitudes the urban hazards and urban vulnerabilities gain more complexity and ways are needed to be found to enlist local mitigation measures; community based city wide approaches; and pro-urban partnerships.

Well laid structure of mainstreaming DRR into ongoing development planning and programmes is a highlight of DRR achievements of Himachal Pradesh.<sup>2</sup>

With a range of initiatives and early achievements Himachal Pradesh needs more focus on monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives. Such M&E needs will support well laid out planning and look at the levels of participation and accountability.

Baseline data will help later to look at impact of evaluations and well crafted indicators of impact will generate impact data. The M&E findings can be most valuable inputs into the DRR achievements in Himachal Pradesh.<sup>2</sup>

Recently the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) of Himachal Pradesh has done capacity development strategy on DRR and CCA. This is an important step to promote as it strengthens linkages of DRR and CCA for development actions.

Based on the so far progress, the state is well on course to mainstreaming DRR and CCA in development actions, particularly in climate sensitive sectors such as health, urban development, education, agriculture, environment and forest, energy, tourism, energy production, and social welfare. The current plan of the state to initiate panchayat level DRR CCA action plans; disaster response and preparedness plans is well needed pilot actions for hilly areas.

Risk transfer through insurance (at least a pilot in 3 to 5 districts); measuring loss and damage due to climate change (study to measure the impact at community level); pilot with safe and trained schools to apply green school concept (at least in two urban sites); departmental DRR CCA integration plan especially for tourism, health, education, urban development, can take the state towards local implementation of the SFDRR and NDMP (2016). ■

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1 <http://www.hpsdma.nic.in/>

2 <http://www.hpsdma.nic.in/DisasterManagement/SDMP.html#>