

## BOOK REVIEW

**Disasters, Strengthening Community Mitigation & Preparedness** by B K Khanna & N Khanna (New India Publishing Agency, New Delhi) 2011, pp 283, Price ₹ 895.00, US \$ 39.95.

Disasters are both natural and manmade and cause widespread loss to living beings and property. To understand the causes of disasters and how to mitigate such eventualities is need of the hour. Current book with an objective of providing knowledge on disaster management in order to cope up natural and manmade disasters is welcome addition.

The book contains 15 chapters including one chapter on introduction, which defines hazard, risk and disaster and presents a brief account of disaster management.

Chapter 2 on types of disasters introduces disasters related to water & climate (flood, drought, cyclones, cloudburst etc.), geological (earthquakes, landslides, dam failure and mine fires), chemical/industrial/nuclear, accident (forest & urban fires, building collapse, surface & air accidents etc.), biological (epidemics, food poisoning etc.), and terrorist-based (bomb blast, hostages, riots, etc.). Chapter 3 presents causes and characteristics of floods and flood management, besides case studies on Assam Floods 2004 and Peerchu Lake disaster. Chapter 4 on drought accounts for drought and its management. Chapter 5 on earthquakes details on causes and types of earthquakes, history of earthquakes in India and how to mitigate an earthquake, besides case studies such as Bhuj Earthquake 2001 and Eyjafjallajökull (Iceland) Volcano – 2010). Chapter 6 on landslides enumerates causes of landslides and mitigatory measures. Chapter 7 on cyclones lists characteristics of cyclone and how to mitigate cyclones, besides a case study of Orissa Super Cyclone 1999. Chapter 8 on avalanches presents causes and preventive measures to counter such disasters. Chapter 9 on forest fires briefs causes of such fires and what to do and what not to do at such situations.

Chapter 10 defines tsunami, its effects, causes and characteristics, besides a case study of Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004. Chapter 11 presents disasters like rise in sea level, tropical cyclones, flooding, landslides and drought caused by global warming. Also included are

global and national level mitigation policies, recent steps taken and suggestions to reduce carbon during travel and at workplace and at home. Chapter 12 on chemical & industrial disasters is mainly based on fire and toxic chemicals based disasters caused by leakage and explosions. Also, presented are causes and mitigation ways, besides a case study of Bhopal Gas Tragedy 1984. Chapter 13 includes nuclear attacks, nuclear leakages and nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists, besides preventive measures.

Next two chapters deal with prevention of disasters at various places. Chapter 14 is on Mock Exercise and presents simulation of artificial disaster to assess level of preparedness, check response procedure and validate disaster management. This chapter further includes what are mock exercises, how mock exercises are conducted, and suggested roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Chapter 15 presents details of school disaster management including composition and roles of various teams to check disasters at school levels, besides a case study of Kumbakonam School Fire tragedy. Finally, the book is appended with glossary of terms related to disasters, colour plates and bibliography.

Overall, the book presents a good collection on different types of disasters, both natural and manmade. Though book is data-fed but presentation of data in an organized manner requires editing by professional editors. Colour plates and bibliography are appended in the last, but both these should have been given alongwith concerned chapters in order to facilitate readers to view specialized disasters at the place where they are described and also provide references below concerned chapter for further reading. In toto, book will be highly useful for those involved in disaster management and teachers & students on disaster studies, besides common man, who will gain enormous knowledge as how to deal with various types of disasters in day-to-day living.

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