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Build Back Better - Understanding Disaster Management with focus on Planning, Preparedness and Recovery of North Kashmir, J&K.

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Abstract:

Humans, as greatest of all resources with ability of continuous creativities, inventions and discoveries has brought the world to present state where one can hardly imagine the ways of life in the stone ages. Development in all sectors has changed the outlook, be it high rise skyscrapers, modern means of transport, robotics, etc. but the achievements, growth and progress netted after years of hardwork gets disrupted by disasters (National Policy on Disaster Management, 2009). The present study is an effort to understand the disaster management including risk profile, preparation and response of North Kashmir comprising of three (03) districts, Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora. Disaster management is a continuum with proactive and multi-disciplinary approach to build back better by putting in place frameworks like policies and plans supplemented by effective implementation by all the stakeholders so that the goals of safer nation is achieved (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction). The North Kashmir is highly vulnerable area to all forms of natural as well as human induced disastrous events that can cause massive casualties and economic losses. Thus, the aim is to build awareness and initiate the steps to make all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities so that the mission of overall vulnerability reduction is attained.

Keywords: Inventions, development, risk profile, preparation, nation, response, awareness.

Introduction:

Natural disasters have been an integral part of human experiences, with millions of people being affected by them worldwide annually. Because of its distinct terrain and delicate environment, the Himalayan region—especially North Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)—is

vulnerable to a number of natural calamities, including earthquakes, floods, landslides, and avalanches. The area is prone to disasters due to its rough terrain, steep slopes, and unstable geological formations, which can cause a great deal of property damage, community displacement, and fatalities. Disaster management is a critical concern in North Kashmir, which is prone to various natural disasters because of its geographical location. The region has witnessed some of the most devastating disasters in recent years, resulting in massive loss of life, property, and infrastructure. Effective disaster management is crucial to reduce the risk and impact of disasters on the community. This research paper tries to understand the current state of disaster management in North Kashmir with a focus on planning, preparedness, and recovery.

The impact of disasters in North Kashmir, J&K, is exacerbated by various factors, including climate change, deforestation, and unsustainable development practices. The region's disaster management framework, although well-intentioned, often falls short in addressing the unique needs and challenges of the region. The lack of effective planning, preparedness, and recovery mechanisms hinders the region's ability to respond to and recover from disasters.

The idea of "Build Back Better" (BBB) has received a lot of attention in the discourse around catastrophe management in recent years. BBB highlights the need of rebuilding and recovering after disasters in a way that fosters resilience and lessens vulnerability. This strategy acknowledges that disasters offer a chance to rebuild and redevelop communities in a way that is more resilient and sustainable. The purpose of this research article is to add to the body of knowledge already available on disaster management in North Kashmir, J&K, with an emphasis on preparation, recovery, and planning. The "Build Back Better" (BBB) concept, introduced by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), advocates for incorporating risk reduction measures during recovery and reconstruction. This study focuses on how BBB principles can be adapted and implemented effectively in North Kashmir to improve disaster planning, preparedness, and recovery. The following research questions are the focus of this paper's investigation:

- What disaster management systems does J&K's North Kashmir currently have in place?
- What is the level of preparedness among the people to response to any hazard?

Objective:

To study the level of awareness among the people of study area to cope up with any hazard.

Research Methodology:

Flick (1999) reports that good research often requires the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research was based on both primary and secondary data in order to evaluate the state of the Disaster Management Act, 2005's implementation in Northern part of Jammu & Kashmir. Journals, books, magazines, newspapers, government reports, census data, published data, the internet, relief manuals, and action plans were some of the sources from which

secondary data was gathered. Many of these resources were found on the internet. Techniques for observation, focus groups, and interviews were used to gather the primary data. Disaster Management Officials or employees of the District Disaster Management Authorities were interviewed.

The research used a simple random sampling technique, a multistage stratified purposive random sampling technique, to collect the necessary primary data. The sampling strategy was based on the two observations. First, every district in J&K's North Kashmir region is equally vulnerable to disasters. Consequently, it was simple to incorporate all three districts that are prone to disasters into the sampling frame. Second, the Disaster Management Act envisions the administration at various levels to play a crucial role in disaster management particularly preparedness, awareness and training programmes which form the basis of the disaster management cycle.

Accordingly, in order to achieve the objectives of the study and to assess disaster preparedness and awareness in North Kashmir, a total of 300 respondents were selected as the sample size, with an equal distribution of 100 participants from each of the three districts—Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora. This sampling approach ensures a balanced representation across the region, capturing the diverse perspectives, experiences, and preparedness levels of the population. The selection process aimed to include individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds, age groups, and educational levels to provide a comprehensive understanding of disaster management awareness. Structured interviews were conducted with these respondents to gather insights on their knowledge, preparedness practices, participation in training programs, and overall perception of public awareness initiatives in their respective districts. This systematic sampling strategy enabled the study to draw meaningful comparisons and identify localized gaps, ensuring a well-rounded analysis of disaster preparedness in North Kashmir.

Study Area:

The districts of Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora in North Kashmir are the areas under discussion of the study. These districts offer a thorough grasp of the needs for disaster management and are indicative of the region's many difficulties. Jammu and Kashmir's North Kashmir region is vulnerable to several geological and meteorological hazards. It is possible that climate change will make these risks even more severe. Furthermore, the Himalayan terrain's development activities are making landslides, floods, avalanches, and accidents involving both urban and forest fires more common. The area has seen a number of natural disasters in recent years, such as avalanches, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and flash floods, which have caused property damage and fatalities. The region also had some effects from the 2014 flood besides seismic zone V (very high seismic risk), covers a sizable chunk of Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora, whereas zone IV (high seismic risk) covers the remaining area.

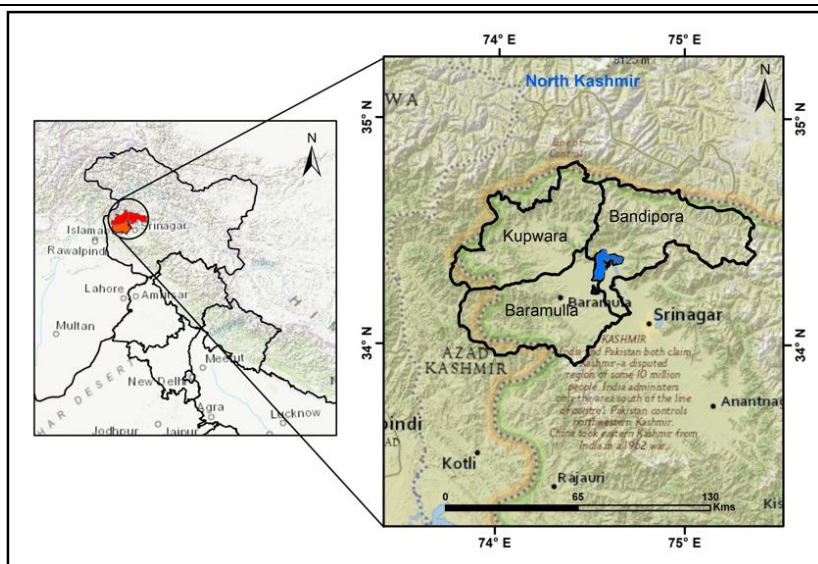


Figure 1: Location Map of the North Kashmir

Framework & Administration Aspect of Disaster Management:

The entire north Kashmir i.e., the districts Baramulla, Kupwara & Bandipora have been traditionally vulnerable to natural disasters as well as human induced disasters on account of its unique geoclimatic conditions. Avalanches, Landslides and Earthquake have been recurrent phenomena in this region.

In present scenario, disaster management is a pivotal aspect of public administration. The researcher analyzed the perception of Disaster Management Officials and other important stakeholders (local bodies, NGOs/CBOs, media, police, and armed forces) regarding the functioning of policy framework and institutional arrangement for disaster management in Jammu & Kashmir. The performance of these institutions directly affects the society in terms of development as well as protection of the lives of people.

The researcher gathered data with the help of structured interviews and systematically presented the data in the form of tables, pie charts and thereafter interpreted with a view to draw important findings from three selected Districts of North Kashmir i.e. Baramulla, Kupwara & Bandipora.

The legal framework in Jammu & Kashmir provides direction to government and all other stakeholders for Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The role, composition, and key decision-making bodies for disaster management at State/UT and district are in place. The extent of involvement of agencies at higher levels will depend on the type, scale, and administrative spread of the disaster. If the situation requires, the district administration shall request central State/UT government to provide necessary support. In India, the structure of Disaster Management system, from the national to local level is already in place. This institutional mechanism plays an important role in all activities from policy making to implementation across the entire disaster management cycle.

The Jammu & Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) and the Office of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation & Reconstruction are the major institutions in the UT that deal with all the phases of disaster management. All the major line departments of the UT Government, the Divisional Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners, other technical institutions, community at large, local self-governments, NGOs, CBOs, etc. are the stakeholders of the SDMA.

The role of the stakeholders has been prepared with an objective of making the concerned organizations understand their duties and responsibilities regarding disaster management at all levels and accomplishing them.

Stakeholders & their responsibilities:

At the District level, District Disaster Management Authority, with the District Magistrate designated as Chairperson and other line departments at District HQ are responsible to deal with all phases of disaster management within District. In collaboration with the Divisional Disaster Management Authority (Div. DMA), the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) serves as the planning, organizing, and executing body for disaster management at the district level, and takes all appropriate steps for disaster management in compliance with JKSDMA guidelines. The Headquarter Assistants have been appointed as District Disaster Management Officers to organize day-to-day disaster management operations at the District level. When necessary, the DDMA can form one or more advisory committees and other committees to help them carry out their duties effectively (J&K State Disaster Management Policy, 2017). The DDMA consists of following members:

S. No	Deputy Commissioner	Chairperson
1.	Addl. Dy. Com	Member/CEO
2.	District Superintendent of Police	Member
3.	Chief Medical Officer	Member
4.	Superintending Engineers R&B, PHE, IFC, EM&RE, MED	Member
5.	Asst. Director CAPD	Member
6.	Deputy Controller, Civil Defence	Member
7.	Asst. Director Fire & Emergency Services	Member
8.	District Disaster Management Officer/HQA to DC	Member Secretary

9.	Executive Officer Municipal Committee	Member
10.	Incharge SDRF Component	Member

Table 1: Structure of District Disaster Management Authority

The stakeholder's role has been established with the sole purpose of educating the relevant organisations about their obligations and responsibilities with regard to disaster management at all levels and helping them fulfill them.

DDMAs (Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora) coordinate and collaborate with the various stakeholders as shown in the figure 2 for all types of disaster management activities and exigencies:

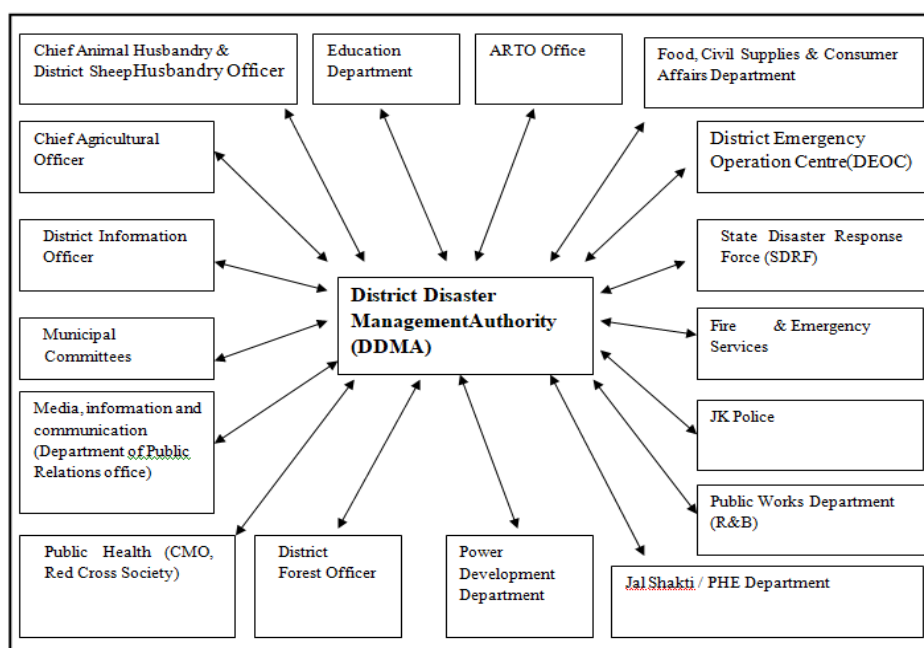


Figure 2: Departments/ Stakeholders related to Disaster Management

Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders:

- i. To conduct meetings on disaster management.
- ii. Managing all the resources at district level in consultation with their respective State level directorates/offices.
- iii. Coordinating with stakeholders and liaising with the district as well as state offices.
- iv. Enable local authorities to establish contact with the state Authorities and other departments.
- v. Coordinate planning procedures between district, state/UT and the center.
- vi. Enhancement of capacity building and training at state and district level.
- vii. To conduct meetings on disaster management.
- viii. Managing all the resources at district level in consultation with their respective State level directorates/offices.
- ix. Coordinating with stakeholders and liaising with the district as well as state offices.

- x. Enable local authorities to establish contact with the state Authorities and other departments.
- xi. Coordinate planning procedures between district, state/UT and the center.
- xii. Enhancement of capacity building and training at state and district level.
- xiii. Receive and process disaster alerts and warnings from nodal agencies and Early Warning System (EWS) providers.
- xiv. Facilitate coordination among primary and secondary Emergency Support Functionaries (ESF)/ Departments/ Agencies.
- xv. Carrying out search and rescue on requisition by District as well as state administration.
- xvi. Strengthening the response mechanism through training and awareness in the district.
- xvii. To train first responders at village / Panchayat level in firefighting.
- xviii. Assure the execution of all laws and maintenance of order in the area affected by the incident.
- xix. Provide materials and supplies to ensure temporary shelter for disaster-affected populations.
- xx. Assure the provision of basic food and other relief needs in the affected communities.
- xxi. To prepare, keep and check ready Mobile Hospitals, stocks of equipment and drugs;
- xxii. Develop estimates of resources needed and relief plans, and compiling reports on the disaster as required for District and State authorities and other parties as appropriate.
- xxiii. Coordinate and assure operation of all communication systems (e.g; Radio, TV, Telephones, Wireless) required to support early warning or post disaster operations.
- xxiv. Provide liaison with and assistance to print and electronic media on early warning and post-disaster reporting concerning the disaster
- xxv. Land usage & promotion of Disaster Resilient housing
- xxvi. To train the volunteers through NCC/ NYKS/ NSS etc. in Firefighting, First aid and other disciplinary & volunteering.

Results and Discussion:

Preparedness to Disasters:

The respondents were questioned about their knowledge of the disaster preparedness measures that were in place in the region. The answers to the query are displayed in Table 1. The study revealed noteworthy insights into respondent's awareness and preparedness regarding safety measures within their respective environments. The findings shed light on the knowledge of disasters common in the area, disaster management plan, capacity building programmes, administrative setup in the area specific to Disaster Management, Emergency support Functionaries, establishment of emergency operation systems, and the existence of other organizations associated with Disaster Management activities. A substantial majority of respondents, totaling 300 individuals, verified awareness of the existence of Disaster Management. This table is a blend of qualitative and quantitative insight for a clearer understanding of disaster preparedness in the region:

District	Response Option		Total	Additional Insights
	Yes	No		
Baramulla	84	16	100	➤ Most respondents mentioned floods, earthquakes, and landslides. ➤ Many stated they rely on ad hoc measures or community coordination. ➤ Those with plans rarely practice due to lack of awareness or resources. ➤ Common items missing: first-aid kits, food supplies, and torches. ➤ Respondents suggested the need for more local workshops and government initiatives.
Kupwara	54	46	100	
Bandipora	73	27	100	
Total	211	89	300	

Table 2: Knowledge regarding Disaster Management set up in North Kashmir

The above Table 2 represents that 84, 54 and 73 respondents from districts Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora respectively have the knowledge of disaster management scenario in the region, however, 16 respondents from Baramulla, 46 from Kupwara and 27 from Bandipora lack substantial knowledge regarding overall disaster management in the study area.

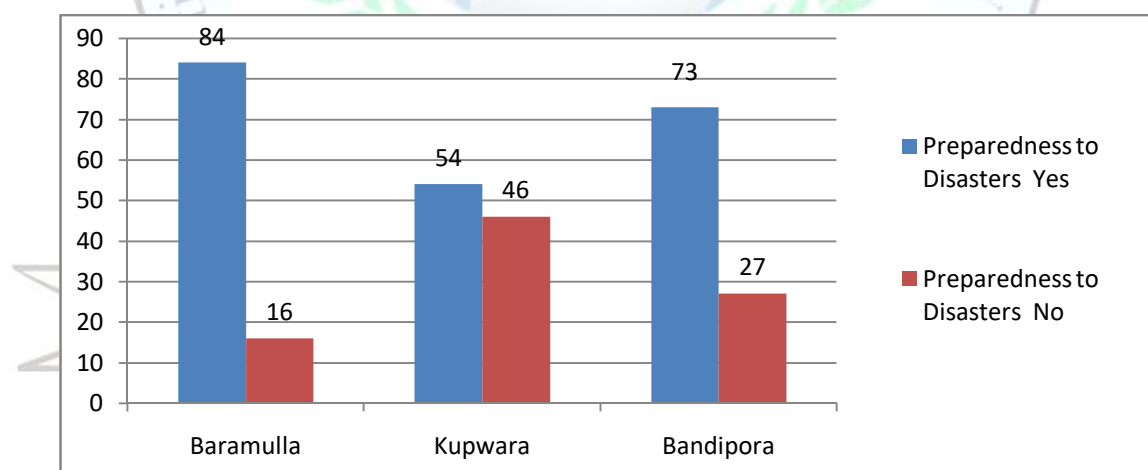


Figure 3: Opinion of respondents regarding Preparedness to Disasters

Level of awareness

District	Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Strongly Dissatisfied	Total
Baramulla	54	23	19	3	1	100

Kupwara	31	20	28	18	3	100
Bandipora	38	26	26	8	2	100
Total	123	69	73	29	6	300
Percentage	41%	23%	24.33%	9.66%	0.02%	100%

Table 3: perception of respondents w.r.t. public awareness and training programmes

Table 3 and Figure 4 represent the perception of respondents regarding satisfaction with the public awareness and training programmes which includes first aid, fire fighting, CPR, Search and Rescue and other basic life support services for effective management of disasters in North Kashmir.

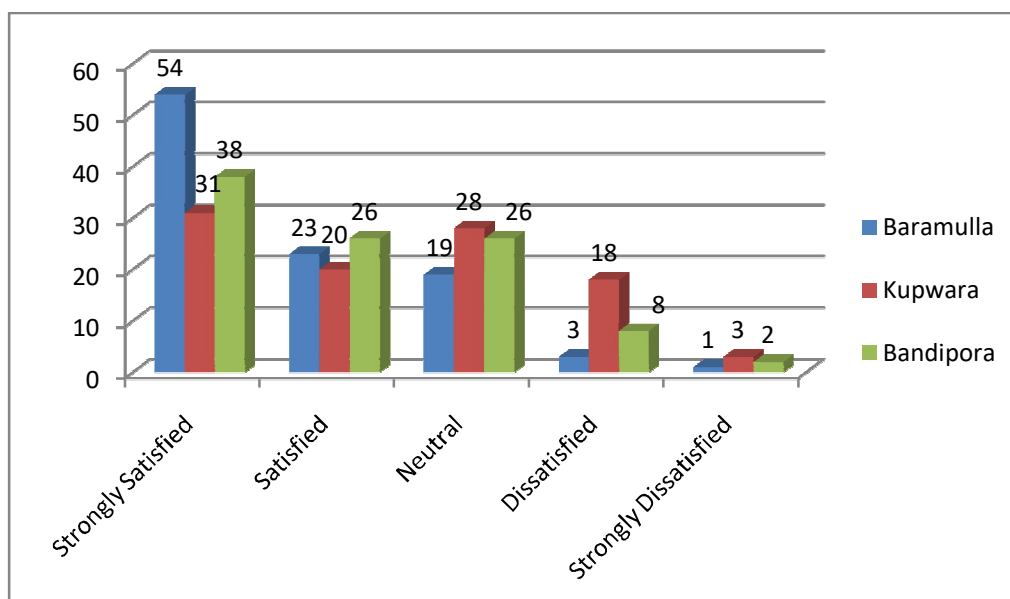


Figure 4: Level of awareness- perception of respondents regarding satisfaction with the public awareness and training programmes

Data interpreted in Table 3 regarding public awareness and training programmes for effective management of disasters in North Kashmir reveals that 64% respondents are satisfied with it whereas 24.33% respondents are neutral and only 9.68% respondents are dissatisfied with it. The maximum number of respondents are satisfied with the public awareness and training programmes for effective management of disasters in North Kashmir. Regarding awareness and training in Disaster management, the study revealed a gap of 35 respondents asserting lack of training in this domain.

Conclusion:

The analysis of disaster management preparedness and awareness in North Kashmir, focusing on the districts of Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora, presents a mixed scenario of knowledge and gaps. The study has displayed substantial knowledge of disaster management practices in the region. This indicates a commendable level of awareness in these areas. However, the findings also highlight concerning gaps, as a considerable percentage of respondents reported a lack of sufficient understanding of disaster management. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to address knowledge deficiencies.

When examining public awareness and training programs for disaster management, the study revealed that a major portion of the population has expressed satisfaction with these initiatives, demonstrating that the majority find the existing programs effective. However, there is always scope for improvement and attention must be focused to achieve 100% satisfaction in order to build back better. The overall satisfaction rate reflects positively on the region's disaster preparedness initiatives but also emphasizes the need to engage those who are neutral or dissatisfied to ensure inclusivity in disaster management planning and training.

Additionally, the study uncovered a critical gap in disaster management training and explicitly asserting a lack of access to adequate training programs. This finding highlights a pressing need to enhance training opportunities and equip communities with the necessary skills to effectively respond to disasters. Addressing this gap would not only improve individual preparedness but also strengthen community resilience across the districts.

In conclusion, while the majority of respondents demonstrate awareness and satisfaction with public awareness and training programs, the study points to significant gaps in knowledge and training in disaster management across North Kashmir. These gaps must be bridged through targeted capacity-building efforts, enhanced training initiatives, and more inclusive public awareness campaigns to ensure effective disaster preparedness and management in the region.

Recommendation:

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are made to improve disaster management in North Kashmir, J&K. Firstly, there is a need to develop a comprehensive disaster management plan that takes into account the unique needs and challenges of the region (NDMA, 2019). This plan should include strategies for preparedness, response, and recovery, as well as mechanisms for community engagement and participation (UNISDR, 2015). Secondly, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of local communities and institutions to prepare for and respond to disasters (IFRC, 2019). This can be achieved through training and capacity-building programs, as well as the provision of resources and support (Oxfam, 2018). Thirdly, there is a need to promote a culture of disaster risk reduction and management in North Kashmir, J&K (UNDRR, 2020). This can be achieved through awareness-raising campaigns, education and training programs, and community-based initiatives (Red Cross, 2019). Finally, there is a need to ensure that disaster management efforts in North Kashmir, J&K are aligned with the principles of "Build Back Better" (BBB) (GFDRR, 2018). This means that disaster management efforts should focus on reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, rather than simply rebuilding and recovering from disasters.

Robust planning by creating awareness among the public by way of social media and meetings prior to the expected hazard will prepare the public for resilient community. Post hazard, a good relief plan be charted and delivered will improve resilience.

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