

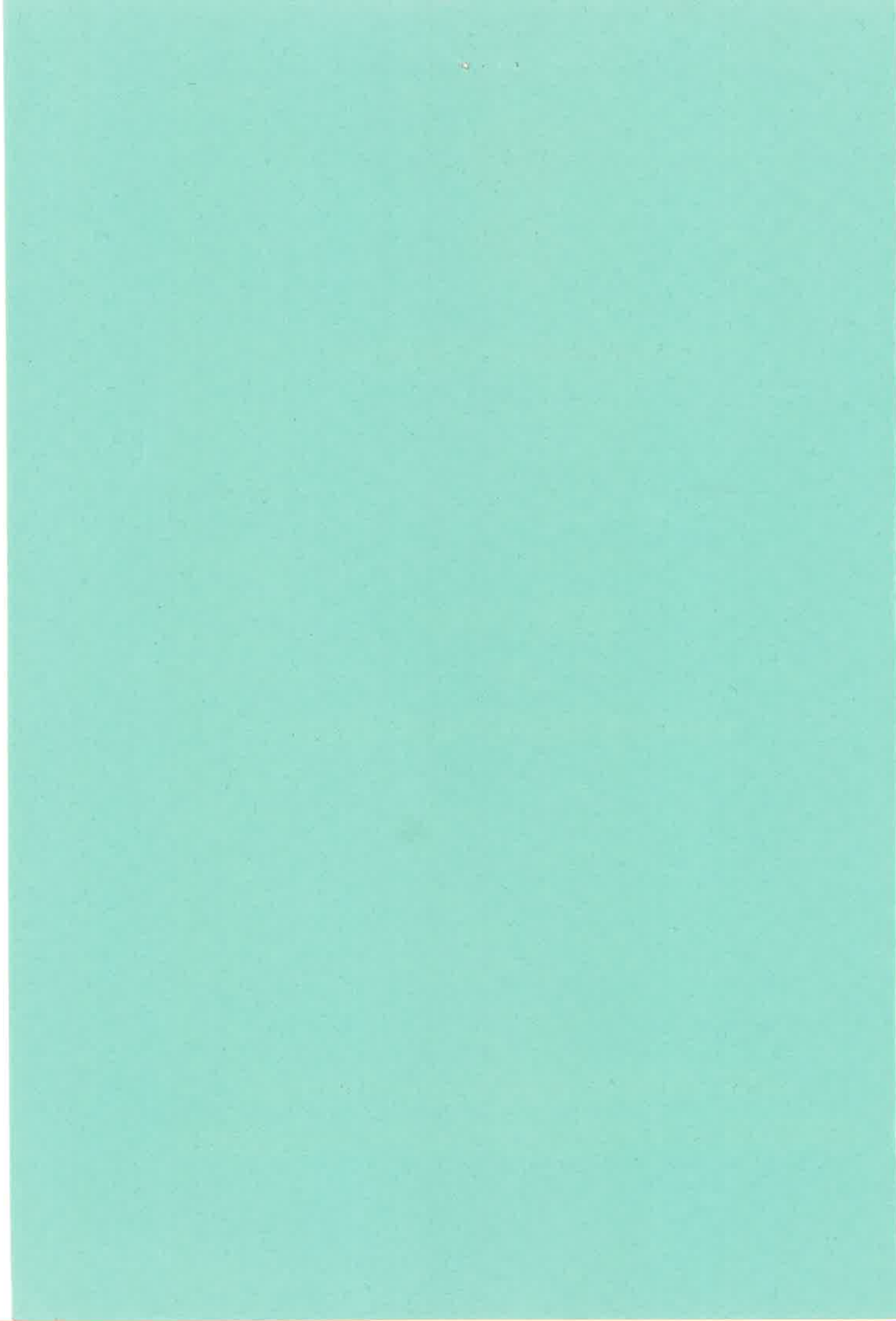


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GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

**STATE POLICY
ON
DISASTER MANAGEMENT, 2013**

**STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE & DISASTER MANAGEMENT**



GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

Policy On Disaster Management-2013

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The State of Meghalaya is vulnerable to natural disasters owing to its unique geo-climatic features. The major natural hazards for the State are earthquake, landslides, floods, cloudbursts, drought, fire, etc. The State has witnessed a great disaster such as the earthquake of 12th June, 1897 . These disasters result in loss of life and property – public and private – and disrupt economic activity, besides causing immense misery and hardship to the affected population.
- 1.2 The natural disasters have adversely impacted the economic development of the State. The disasters divert the energies and resources away from planned growth and development. While natural hazards cannot be controlled, the vulnerability to these hazards can be substantially reduced by planned mitigation and preparedness measures.
- 1.3 Reducing the risks posed by disasters is not an optional extra, but it is central to the very success of development itself. It is an urgent priority not only for the disaster managers, but also for the development planners and policy makers. Though ‘Disaster’ is a State subject, the Central Government has provided a broad framework for disaster management. The Government of Meghalaya recognizes the importance of the national disaster management framework and had decided to frame specific policy guidelines consistent with its needs.

2. **Objectives**

The main aim of this Policy is establishing principles and guidelines on various aspects of Disaster Management and making the people increasingly resilient to disaster. The focus is on reducing disaster risks and vulnerability through strengthening of Government and Non-Government at organizations, physical infrastructures and the capacities of the communities in meeting the challenges posed by disasters in the State of Meghalaya.

3. **Fundamental Principles of the Disaster Management Policy**

- 3.1 The approach of the State Government will be proactive – in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness before a disaster strikes. Its focus will shift from “relief, restoration and rehabilitation” to “planning, prevention and preparedness”.
- 3.2 The State Government will follow a holistic approach in dealing with disasters by making disaster prevention and preparedness an integral part of every development policy and plan. Disaster mitigation concerns will be adopted in all schemes/projects/development plans being developed and executed by the Government.
- 3.3 The State Government believes that disaster management is the responsibility of all organisations-Government and Non-Government:- and all people who may be potentially affected by a disaster. Non-Governmental organisations, religious organisations, the private sector, academic institutions, NCC, Scouts & Guides, Nehru Yuvak Kendras, NSS, ex-servicemen, along with the community will be sensitized, trained and co-opted into the planning process as well as the response mechanisms.
- 3.4 Particular attention will be paid towards addressing the reduction of vulnerabilities of women, children, aged and other disadvantaged sections of the society to disasters through appropriate prevention, mitigation and preparedness strategies.
- 3.5 The Policy will aim to strengthen capacity of all institutions concerned with disaster management and the community in order to mitigate the impact of disasters. New institutions may be set up where the existing mechanisms are found inadequate.
- 3.6 There shall be no discrimination in providing assistance under disaster management on grounds of religion, community, creed castes or sex.

3.7 It is not possible for the State Government to bear all the costs of disaster management. The long-term approach is to move towards risk transfer mechanism by introducing incentives to individuals and other entities to protect their interests through insurance.

4. **Strategy**

4A. **Legal Framework**

The institutions/individuals responsible for implementing disaster management activities must have the necessary legal sanction and validity with requisite powers for managing emergency situations. The Government of Meghalaya has adopted the legal framework provided under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005 that incorporates the roles of all relevant institutions responsible for managing disasters.

4B. **Institutional Framework and Key Responsibilities**

4B.1 **State Disaster Management Authority**

The State Disaster Management Authority headed by the Chief Minister is the apex body for disaster management in the State. It has the responsibility for laying down the policy, plan and guidelines for the management of disasters in the State. It approves the State Disaster Management Plan and Disaster Management Plans of the various Departments of the State and it reviews the development plans of the different Departments of the State and ensures that prevention and mitigation measures are integrated in the development plans and projects of the development Departments of the State. It will take such other measures as it may consider necessary for prevention of disasters, or mitigation or preparedness and capacity building, for dealing with a threatening disaster situation or disaster. It will also oversee the provision and application of funds for mitigation and preparedness measures. Responsibility for the declaration of a disaster at any level in the State rests with the State Disaster Management Authority or on any other Authority to whom this power is delegated by the State Disaster Management Authority. The declaration can be made on the recommendation of Revenue and Disaster Management Department.

The Deputy Commissioner will send proposals to the Government in the Revenue and Disaster Management Department for declaration of disaster in the affected areas.

4.B.2 State Executive Committee

The State Executive Committee comprises the State Chief Secretary as the Chairperson, and the Principal Secretaries/Commissioners and Secretaries/Secretaries in charge of the Departments of :-

- i) Public Works
- ii) Revenue and Disaster Management
- iii) Home and
- iv) Finance

as members. The Director General of Police and the Director General of Civil Defence and Home Guards will be special invitees to the meetings of the State Executive Committee.

The State Executive Committee will assist the State Disaster Management Authority in the performance of its functions and it will also coordinate action in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the State Disaster Management Authority and will ensure the compliance of directions issued by the State Government.

It will also examine the vulnerability of different parts of the State to different types of disasters and specify measures to be taken for their prevention or mitigation. The State Executive Committee will coordinate the response in the event of any threatening disaster situation or disaster. It will prepare the State Disaster Management Plan based on the State Policy on Disaster Management. It will also perform such other functions as may be prescribed by the State Government in consultation with the State Disaster Management Authority.

4.B.3. The Revenue and Disaster Management Department will be the Nodal Department for disaster management and under the leadership of the State Relief Commissioner shall play the coordinating role in disaster management. All Departments shall ensure full assistance to the nodal department.

4.B.4 **State Crisis Management Group**

The State Crisis Management Group has been constituted to deal with crisis arising out of extremists, terrorists attacks, communal violence, riots and break down of law and order situations. The State Crisis Management Group will be responsible for threat assessment, deployment of resources, providing public services such as fire extinguishers and evacuations, medical transport, public works, media management and communications. The State Crisis Management Group comprises the State Chief Secretary as Chairman with the following members:-

- i) The Principal Secretary / Commissioner and Secretary - Home (Police) Department
- ii) The Principal Secretary / Commissioner and Secretary- Health & Family Welfare Department
- iii) The Principal Secretary / Commissioner and Secretary -Public Works Department (R & B)
- iv) The Principal Secretary / Commissioner and Secretary -Urban Affairs Department
- v) The Principal Secretary / Commissioner and Secretary Revenue and Disaster Management Department
- vii) The Director General of Police
- viii) The Director General of Civil Defence and Home Guards
- ix) Inspector General of Police (SB) as members.
- x) The Principal Secretary/Commissioner and Secretary, Political Department
- Co-ordinator

The State Crisis Management Group will be assisted by the Coordination Sub-Group headed by the Director General of Police as Chairman with the following members

- i) Area Officer Commanding incharge Eastern Air Command
 - ii) General Officer Commanding 101 Area
 - iii) Director General Assam Rifles or his representative
 - iv) Inspector General, Border Security Force / Central Reserve Police Force / ITBP
 - v) Deputy Director SIB,
 - vi) Commissioner Special Bureau,
 - vii) Chief General Manager Telecom
 - viii) Member Technical Meghalaya State Electricity Board
 - ix) Director North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Services/ Director of Health Services (MI)
 - x) Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering as members.
- Inspector General of Police (SB) will be the Coordinator of the Sub-Group.

4.B.5 District Disaster Management Authority

The District Disaster Management Authority is headed by the Deputy Commissioner of the District with the Chief Executive Member of the District Council as the Co-Chairperson with the following members:-

- i) The Superintendent of Police
- ii) The District Medical and Health Officer
- iii) Two District Heads of Offices to be appointed by the State Government.

iv) The Additional Deputy Commissioner in charge of Revenue and Disaster Management will be the Chief Executive Officer of the District Disaster Management Authority.

The District Disaster Management Authority will act as the planning, coordinating and implementing body for the disaster management at the District level and take all necessary measures for the purposes of disaster management in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the National Disaster Management Authority and the State Disaster Management Authority. It will prepare the District Disaster Management Plan for the District and monitor the implementation of the National Policy, the State Policy, the National Plan, the State Plan and the District Plan. The District Disaster Management Authority will also ensure that the guidelines for prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response measures laid down by the National Disaster Management Authority and the State Disaster Management Authority are followed by all the Departments of the State Government at the District level and the local authorities in the District. The Deputy Commissioner will play the pivotal role at the District level, as head of the District Disaster Management Authority and ensure coordinated implementation of the disaster management activities.

4.B.6 District Crisis Management Group.

The District Crisis Management Group is constituted with the Deputy Commissioner as Chairman with the following members:-

i) Superintendent of Police

ii) Commandant of the Battalion Headquarter available in the District,

iii) Chief Executive Officer, Municipality / Executive Officer Town Committee,

iv) District Transport Officer,

v) Secretary, Autonomous District Council in the Headquarter wherever available,

vi) The District Medical & Health Officer,

vii)The Deputy Controller of Civil Defence and Home Guards where available,

viii) Additional Chief Engineer / Superintending Engineer / Executive Engineer,
PWD (Roads)

viii)Additional Chief Engineer / Superintending Engineer / Executive Engineer,
Public Health Engineering,

ix)The District Social Welfare Officer,

x)The Assistant Director, Information and Public Relations / District Public Relations
Officer,

xi)The Local Area Commandants of the Central Reserve Police Force / Border
Security Force Battalion,

xii) The Members of the Intelligence set up (Central and State) in the Districts.

District Planning Officer / Additional Deputy Commissioner in charge Crisis
Management Group will be the Member Secretary of the District Crisis Management
Group.

The responsibilities of the District Crisis Management Group will be preparation of
District Crisis Management Plan, to ensure maintenance of law and order during the
crisis, to coordinate with the other sub-groups ,to ensure timely supply of relief and
issue of guidance and direction to set up the control room during the period of crisis.

4.B.7. There shall be Disaster Management Committees at the urban, block and village
levels for performing appropriate disaster management related activities at their
respective levels consistent with their resources and capacities. They will also provide
necessary assistance during disasters to District authorities.

4.B.8. The response to a disaster requires coordination of resources available across all the
Departments and agencies. The State Government will ensure an appropriate chain of
command and legal framework whereby the State Relief Commissioner at the State
level and Deputy Commissioners at the District level are empowered to mobilise

resources of all relevant Departments and agencies in the event of an emergency. If necessary, the above mentioned authorities could also requisition and utilise the resources available with armed forces, central paramilitary forces, central organisation, local authorities, NGOs, public sector, private individuals and the community for disaster management.

4.B.9. The State Government will endeavour to work out an arrangement for sharing of resource with neighbouring States during emergencies.

5. Other Important Institutional Arrangements

5.A.1 State Disaster Response Force

The State will create response capabilities from within its existing resources by equipping and training at least one battalion equivalent force for effective management of disasters and necessary training arrangement will be made for the force in disaster management skills in consultation with the National Disaster Response Force.

5.A.2 State Police and Fire Services

The State Police Forces and the Fire Services are crucial responders to disasters. The police force will be trained in disaster management skills and the Fire Services will be upgraded to acquire multi-hazard rescue capability.

5.A.3 Civil Defence and Home Guards

The mandate of the Civil Defence and the Home Guards has been redefined to assign an effective role in the field of disaster management. They will play a crucial role in search and rescue operations during disasters. They will also be deployed for community preparedness and public awareness. A culture of voluntary reporting to duty stations in the event of any disasters will be promoted.

6. Financial arrangements

The State will constitute the State Disaster Response Fund for management of disasters in the State. The contribution of the fund will be 90% from the Central Government and 10% from the State Government. For this purpose, the 13th Finance Commission has recommended the merger of Calamity Relief Fund with that of the State Disaster Response Fund. The modalities for application of this fund will be worked out in accordance with the provision of the Disaster Management Act.

7A. Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation

7.A.1 Appropriate Disaster Management plans will be drawn up at the State District, Urban, Block and Village levels. Those will be updated at regular intervals, to ensure coordination and holistic response to a disaster.

7.A.2. A systematic study of the risk assessment and vulnerability in respect of main hazards facing the State – earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, cyclone and hailstorms, droughts and mining/industrial/chemical disasters – will be taken up and specific action plans formulated to handle such disasters.

7.A.3. Each Government Department shall prepare its plan/Standard Operating Procedure and Emergency Support Function(ESF) and have a mechanism for its half yearly review. All Departments will identify in advance the tasks which they will be expected to perform in major disasters and will prepare a detailed plan for emergency response. The personnel/teams will be identified to perform these tasks, the equipment/stores will be kept in readiness for mobilisation at the request of the nodal authority.

7.A.4. The communities are the first responders in a disaster situation and need to be empowered to manage disasters. The objective is to make the community aware about their vulnerability to natural hazards, to organize them in various teams and to train these teams in dealing with the impending disasters as first responders. Therefore, capacity building will be taken up at all levels-State, Districts, Blocks, villages and capacity of the communities as well as the personnel from Government, NGOs, and all agencies concerned with handling hazards/calamities shall be strengthened. The

Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute(MATI) has been strengthened with the establishment of Disaster Management Cell .

7.A.5. The State will build specialized search and rescue teams with the support of the Central Government. The Central Training Institute of the Home Guards and Civil Defence will be strengthened for imparting training to search and rescue teams.

7.A.6. The State Government will endeavour to bring its Building Codes and relevant Byelaws in accordance with the recommendations of the National Expert Committee on Techno-legal regime in consistent with the specific needs of the State. The relevant authorities (Urban Development Department/Municipal bodies/District Councils, Traditional Institutions) shall ensure that the building codes and type, designs as laid down by State Government are followed. Where buildings are being constructed with government grant or aid, it shall be mandatory that the construction is as per the relevant Building Codes specified by the State Government. The Hazard Safety Cell constituted by the Government shall put in place a mechanism to ensure that all future constructions both Government and Non-Government – adhere to the specified Building Codes. Appropriate training will also be imparted to local authorities responsible for enforcing safe construction standards. The masons, engineers, builders and other stakeholders in the building construction will be trained in appropriate building technologies.

7.A.6A. A Committee consisting of the members from the concerned technical Departments to examine the design of the life-line buildings to determine that they are structurally earthquake resistant.

7.A.7. The State Government will seek to retrofit lifeline buildings with available resources in a feasible time-frame. The Government shall also encourage retrofitting of private buildings particularly those where large number of people congregate such as cinema halls, shopping complexes, multi storey apartments, etc.

7.A.8. The State Government will encourage the financial institutions to review their lending guidelines to ensure adoption of safe construction practices. Some financial practices such as disaster risk insurance, micro-finance and micro insurance, warranty on newly

constructed houses and structures and linking safe construction with house loans will be considered for adoption. They will also be encouraged to loan funds for retrofitting purposes.

- 7.A.9. Disaster management will form an integral part of school curriculum and teachers training courses.
- 7.A.10. Information Technologies will be used for forecasting, prediction, early warning, dissemination, disaster database management, web-based inventory of resources for disaster management. The India Disaster Resource Network will be updated regularly.
- 7.A.11. Emergency Operation Centres shall be established in the State Head Quarter and Districts and communication equipments installed and networked.
- 7.A.12. The State Government believes that awareness generation is a key prerequisite for prevention, mitigation and preparedness by the community. Existing institutions such as press, radio, television will be used extensively for the campaign. The posters, pamphlets, manuals in vernacular language will be published and distributed. The manuals for appropriate construction technologies (using local materials) will be prepared in simple local language with drawings and will be distributed amongst the masses. The traditional institutions (village durbars etc.) will be used for disaster management extensively.
- 7.A.13 The State Disaster Management Authority/ The District Disaster Management Authority will issue necessary directions to the concerned Departments or any other authority or body to take effective steps to prevent any threatening disaster arising from unsafe buildings, structures or trees.

7.B **Mock Drills**

The effectiveness of any disaster Management Plans and Standard Operating Procedures should be tested and refined through mock exercises. This will also encourage to generate a culture of preparedness and quick response. Mock Drill is a process by which members of an institution get acquainted with the execution of a

response plan prepared for a specific purpose. The Government of Meghalaya appreciates the importance of conducting mock drills in the State and the Government has fixed the months of May and October for conducting mock drills in the State for testing the preparedness of the stakeholders.

7 C. Addressing the Gender concerns.

The State Government will adopt necessary measures to address the gender concerns during the time of disasters. Steps will be taken to address specific gender needs.

7D. Response Management

- 7.D.1. In the event of a major disaster State Disaster Management Authority will declare emergency and monitor response activities from time to time. The Executive Committee under the Chief Secretary will meet more frequently for monitoring, review and decision-making. It will be the State Relief Commissioner who will coordinate the relief activities on a real time basis and take prompt decisions. Wherever necessary he will take approval of superior authorities. At the district level, the Deputy Commissioner will perform a similar role under the overall supervision of the State Relief Commissioner.
- 7.D.2. The immediate priority will be search and rescue, opening of surface communication to areas which are cut off, provision of medical aid, food, shelter, drinking water, and sanitation. The various task forces created at the village, block and district level will be useful at this stage. However, if need be, the help of armed forces should be sought. The objective of relief activities would be to address the immediate need and not to continue for more than necessary period so as to compromise the social esteem of the population.
- 7.D.3. Adequate arrangement of security for the relief materials will be arranged.

7.D.4. Information should be shared by State Relief Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner., with the press on regular basis to prevent spread of rumours.

7.D.5. A quick estimate of damage assessment will be undertaken for assessing the relief requirements.

7.D.6. Transparency in the entire relief operations will be maintained through participation of the community and local leaders and issue of regular bulletins .

Animal care

7.D.7 Animals both domestic and wild are exposed to the effects of natural and man made disasters. It is necessary to devise appropriate measures to protect animals and find means to provide shelter and food to them during disasters and their aftermath to the extent possible. Departments of Forests and Environment and Veterinary and Animal Husbandry and the community should take necessary measures in this regard.

7.E. Recovery Management

7.E.1. Detailed assessment of damage will be undertaken through the respective Departments for taking up rehabilitation works as quickly as possible.

7.E.2. A rehabilitation plan will be prepared through the participation of concerned Departments and approved by the State Disaster Management Authority.

7.E.3. Mobilisation of resources will be taken up-through State funds, Central assistance, charitable organisations and international assistance. To avoid duplication, the funds and relief/rehabilitation activities will be routed through the State Disaster Management Authority /State Executive Committee/ State Relief Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner only.

7.F. Documentation

The Government will support efforts to document the disaster event(s), its management and lessons learnt as it would help in improving disaster management strategy in the future.

8.G Saving

Notwithstanding any action taken under this Policy so superseded shall be deemed to have been made or taken under the corresponding provisions of this Policy and shall continue to be in operation until cancelled or suspended by order made or notification issued under the corresponding provisions of this Policy.

