

DISASTER MITIGATION : MEDICAL PERSPECTIVES

Disaster is a word found in Oxford dictionary derived from french word 'DESASTRE'. disaster means negation or destruction, mitigation means to reduce the effects of Disaster. Disaster may be caused as an aftereffect of natural calamity or manmade calamity or as an effect of combination of both to effect atmosphere, biosphere or hydrosphere. It may be in the forms of volcanic eruptions or avalanche, landslide Amarnath (mudslide/ rockfall) Transportation (air, water, rail, road), Climatic (draught famine) Epidemics , Plague (Surat Gujrat) Earthquake (Latur, Bhuj, Ahmedabad) Fire (Ankleshwar, Oil drilling deepsea platform accident by a boat setting ablaze the platform), Brahmputra flood or Jhsaria coalmines. Japan, Indonesia, Phillipines or Jwalamukhi in India.

It is evident from spectrum of occurrence that adequate procedures to deal with disaster situations are necessary. Disaster management requires well-coordinated public policy for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency response and reconstruction. Appropriate plans are necessary as the disaster implicates much resource organization at various stages which makes it necessary to have coordination. Heath care in disaster is one of the critical elements.

Commonly disasters are defined as 'overwhelming ecological disruption which exceeds the capacity of a community to adjust and consequently requires assistance from the outside.

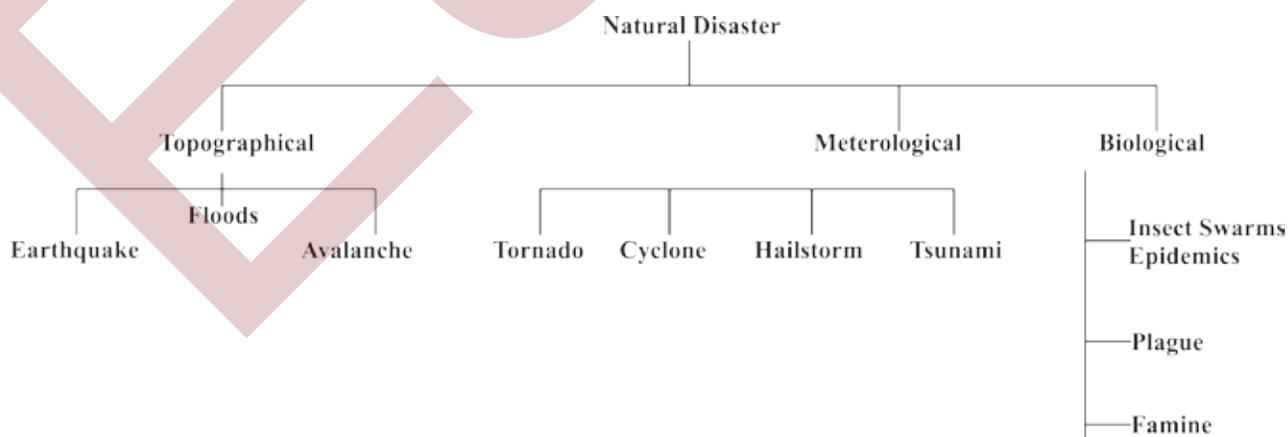
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W. Nick Carter defined it as 'an event, natural or manmade, sudden or progressive which impacts with such severity that the affected community has to respond by taking exceptional measures.

CLASSIFICATION OF DISASTER

Disaster affects us shall affect us & had affected us. We have to live with it except that the warning signals should be taken seriously. We should get ready to learn from our follies and to have a better way of life. Disaster is classified in THREE types:

1. Natural Disaster
2. Anthropogenic origin of Disaster
3. The Hybrid type



UNDRO's MANDATE IN DISASTER RELIEF AND MANAGEMENT:

UNDRO has a two-fold mandate:

1. To mobilize and co-ordinate international emergency relief to disaster stricken areas, and
2. To promote disaster preparedness and prevention activities including technical assistance to disaster-prone countries and regions. United Nations training programme in disaster management differentiates the following zones;

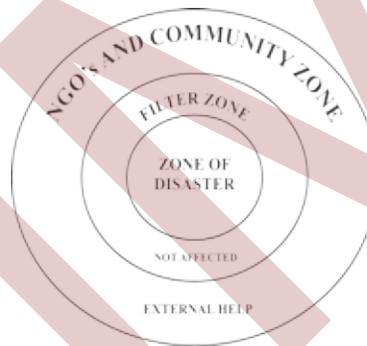
DISASTER RESPONSE

The rapid disaster response is heavily depended on appropriate disaster plan and preparedness. The initial response is hinged on the rescue and relief. Rescue in specific disaster requires trained personnel and special equipment like rescue in case of earthquake to find survivors in debris/collapsed building.

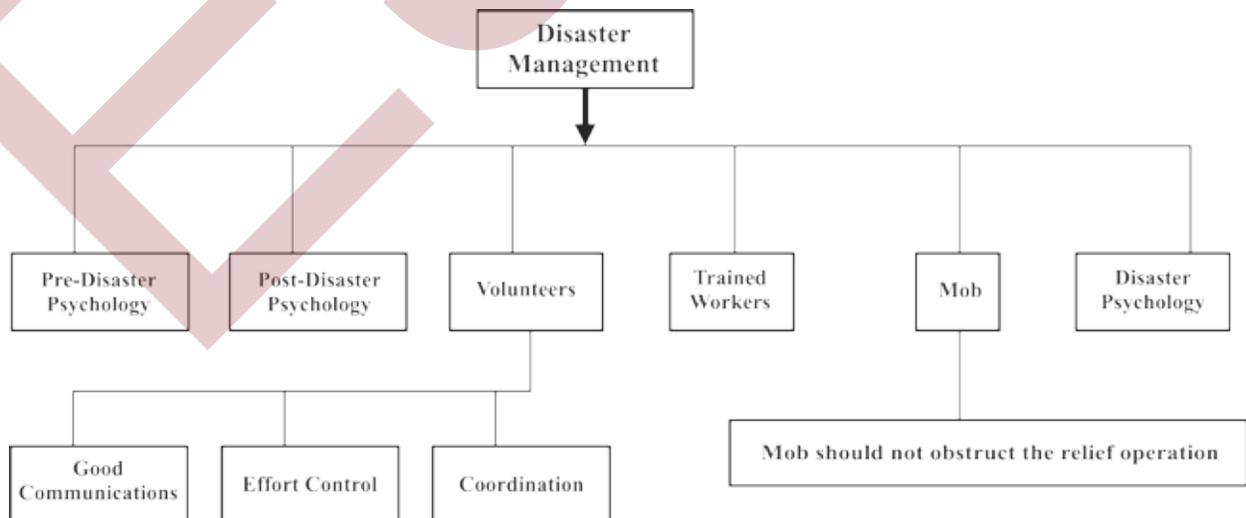
The important feature of the response includes the following:
Mechanism for rapid survey and assessment to determine immediate and medium term needs and measures required for rescue and relief

- a. Mobilization and deployment of resources
 - i. Extrication and rescue
 - ii. On-site medical care
 - a. Mass casualty care
 - b. Triage, First Aid, Evacuation.
- b. Transportation for definitive care at designated hospital
- c. Hospital care
 - i. Immediate life saving
 - ii. Definitive care
- d. Long term rehabilitation

United Nations training programme in disaster management differentiates the following zones:



To avoid the ill effects of disaster on human and animal psyche, it is essential to study following course for remedial solution:



TRAINING FOR DISASTER

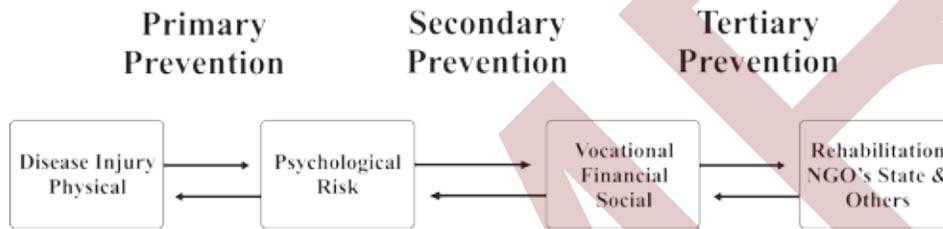
Training is the essential aspect of the preparedness and it will determine the outcome of the response, as well. Training needs attention at levels of Formation HQs, Medical units from M.O., Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Nurses and up - to attendant levels. The factors to be considered are: Creating awareness of the Risk, Vulnerability and Hazards.

a. Dissemination of Disaster Management Plans.

- b. Awareness of role and responsibility of various functionaries
- c. Arrangements for mobilization and its practice
- d. Training of hospital staff in operationalizing the hospital disaster plans

Primary physical prevention is based on warnings and steps taken. Immunization, chlorination of drinking water. It is

LEVELS OF PREVENTION & REHABILITATION



designed to promote general health habitation at risk free sites. The process requires a regular drill.

Psychological risk is the factor arising out of calamity steps to combat it.

Vocational, financial and social risks are caused due to abrupt change of conditions.

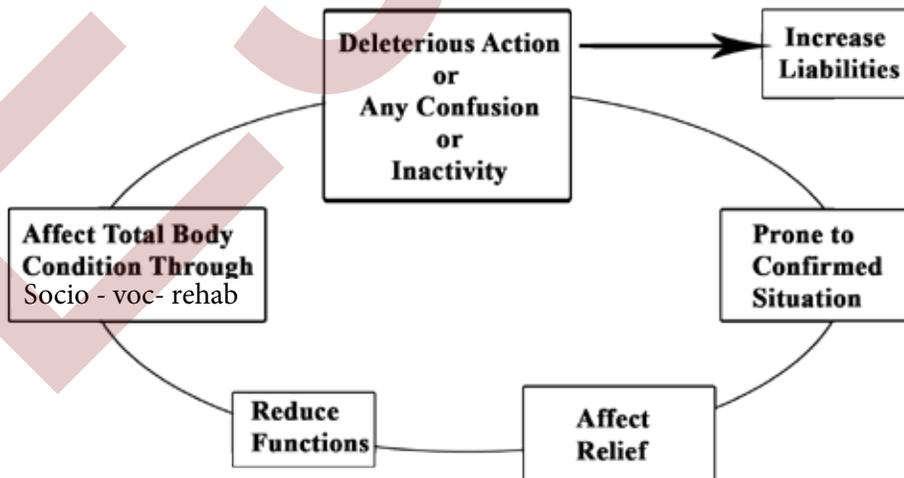
Rehabilitation is a socio-medical relief in three steps i.e. immediate attendance to save a life in peril. Nurse a life which is saved, then re-installation in the social life.

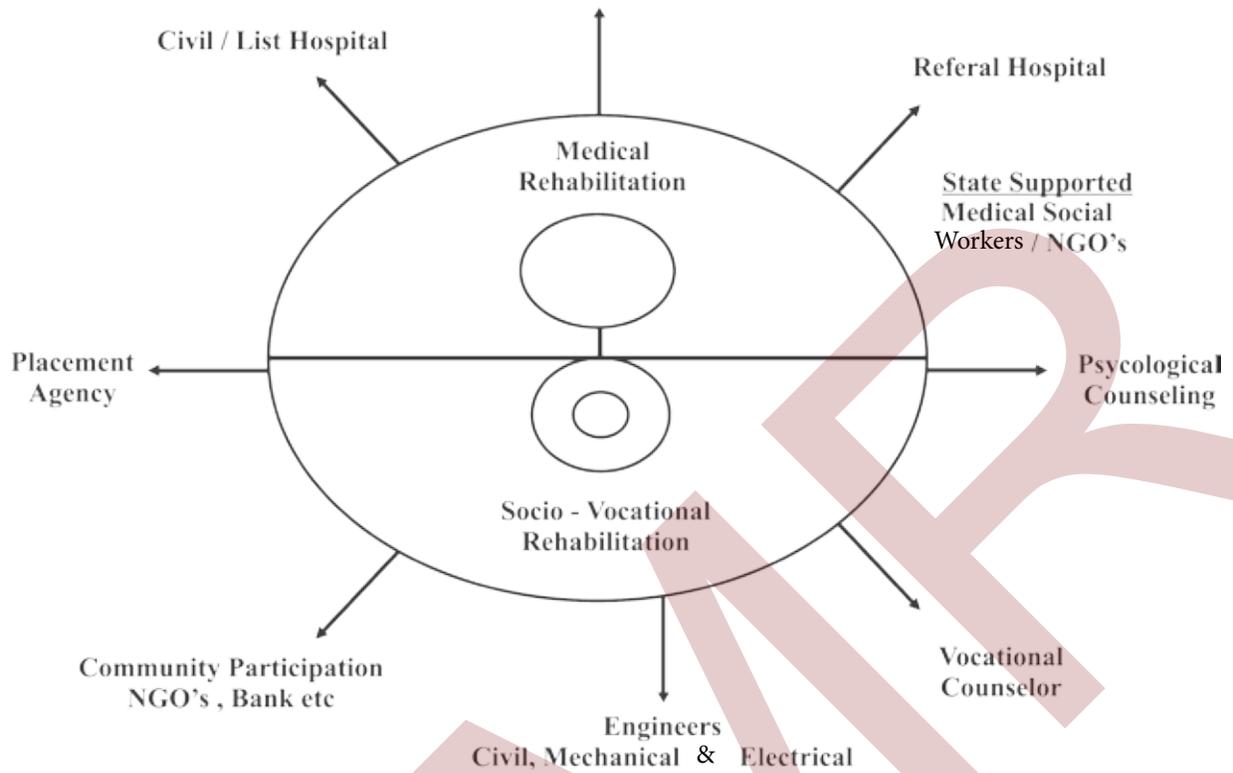
Socio - Vocational Rehabilitation

It is an effort which starts from the site of disaster moves to surrounding areas and ends up at the site of Origin. It aims are providing the calamity affected individuals and animals both with optimum support for reinstallation back in the mainstream of the society.

Vocational rehabilitation is the concept of the right to work, a mode to dignity and outlet of aspirations to add to one's self esteem.

The NGO's provide moral support to the affected society and also creates awareness in the community and come with work proposals.





DISASTER RE-INSULATION

Local resources may be used at the site of disaster for rehabilitation.