

3.1.2 Preparedness

Bangladesh

Cyclone Preparedness Programme in Bangladesh

A massive cyclone with wind velocity 62 m/sec accompanied by a storm surge 6-9 m in height struck Bangladesh in 1970, killing an estimated 500,000 people. Following this disaster, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, and the Government of Bangladesh launched the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP).

The goal of the CPP is “to minimize loss of lives and properties in cyclonic disaster by strengthening the capacity in disaster management of the coastal people of Bangladesh” based on the following objectives.

- To develop and strengthen the disaster preparedness and response capacity of coastal communities vulnerable to cyclones.
- To increase the efficiency of volunteers and officers.
- To maintain and strengthen the CPP warning system and ensure effective response in the event of a cyclone.

The CPP's Dhaka headquarters and 143 wireless stations comprise the largest wireless network in Asia, and 33,000 volunteers in local villages use megaphones and hand-cranked sirens to transmit the warnings received over this wireless system to villagers. These volunteers are also well trained in providing humanitarian relief, getting people to the 1,600 shelters that have been constructed along the coast, providing first aid and assessing the impact of cyclones. Volunteers regularly conduct simulation drills and hold meetings to raise awareness and disseminate information for disaster reduction.

The following main activities of the programme are being implemented to fulfill the objectives of the programme.

- Disseminate cyclone warning signals issued by the Bangladesh Meteorological Department to the community.
- Assist people in taking shelter.
- Rescue distressed people affected by a cyclone.
- Provide first aid to the people injured by a cyclone.

In May 1997, a massive cyclone with wind velocity 64 m/sec, almost the same scale as the 1970 cyclone, struck Bangladesh. This time, the CPP network functioned well in assisting evacuation, allowing one million people to take refuge in shelters before the cyclone hit. This reduced the number of casualties to 193. It was effective preparedness that enabled a dramatic reduction in the impact of the disaster compared with the previous catastrophe. The CPP presently covers eleven Districts in the coastal area and can send warning signals to approximately eight million people living there, of whom four million people can be assisted by the CPP.



Emergency drill of CPP



Cyclone shelter in Chittagong, Bangladesh

Cited references

- 1) Bangladesh Red Crescent Society: *Cyclone Preparedness Program at a Glance*, February 2002.
- 2) International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: *World Disaster Report: Focus on Reducing Risk*, March 2002.

- Background

On 12 November 1970, a major cyclone hit the coast belt of Bangladesh with wind velocity of 62 m/s accompanied by a storm surge 6–9 m in height, killing an estimated 500,000 people and making millions homeless and seriously destitute.

- Objective

To minimize loss of lives and properties in cyclone disaster by strengthening the disaster management capacity of the coastal people of Bangladesh

- Term/Time Frame

June, 1973 -

- Activities Undertaken

1. Disseminate cyclone warning signals to local residents
2. Assist people in taking shelter
3. Rescue victims affected by a cyclone
4. Provide first aid to people injured by a cyclone

- Major Achievements

In May 1997, a major cyclone with wind velocity 64 m/s struck Bangladesh. In this cyclone, one million people evacuated to shelters safely, reducing the death toll to 193 thanks to the CPP.

- Total Budget

Annual operating expense of CPP (2001): US\$460,000 (government: 56%, IFRC: 44%)
Construction cost of a cyclone shelter: approx. US\$78,000. (Running cost: US\$780)

- Contact Details

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