



ADRC Highlights Vol.58

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

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➤ **ADRC Visiting Researcher's Report**

□ **Mr. Pasrija V.P., India**



India, due to its geography and climatic conditions, is highly prone to various natural disasters. The major disasters in India are drought, floods, cyclones and earthquakes; though landslides, avalanches, snowstorms, hailstorms, and fires also frequently occur. About 68% of the country is vulnerable to drought, 40 million hectares is liable to floods, over 56% of the country is exposed to seismic activities, and about 8,000 km of coastline is vulnerable to

cyclones. In light of the frequency of natural disasters in the country, an integrated and well organized disaster management system has evolved over the years. While the Union Government plays a leading role in coordinating efforts at the national and international levels, responsibilities are determined and allocated throughout the administrative hierarchy at the Union, State, and district levels. In addition, a large number of secondary institutions supplement efforts by assisting in forecasting, providing relief and rescue resources, and supporting preparedness and mitigation efforts.

In recent past, the country has experienced two major disasters: a Super Cyclone in Orissa in October, 1999, and a severe earthquake in Bhuj, Gujarat in January, 2001, which took over 22,000 precious human lives and caused very extensive damage to public and private property. Based on the experience of managing these disasters, many initiatives have been taken to further strengthen our disaster management system. Special emphasis is being given to developing human resources, educating the public, increasing community participation, strengthening institutional mechanisms, and improving communication systems.

Like other parts of the World, India is now giving more emphasis to preparedness and mitigation measures. As disasters do not recognize political boundaries, the importance of regional and international cooperation has been recognized everywhere. There is a need to learn from the experiences of other countries by way of sharing information and adopting effective practices. With this background, I joined ADRC on the 5th of October, 2002 as a Visiting Researcher. I have been associated with the Nodal Ministry for Management of Natural Disasters in India for more than two decades. I would like to visit leading institutions in this field in Japan and have detailed discussions with concerned officers of the government of Japan about their disaster management strategies, particularly in the areas of preparedness in the context of floods, typhoons, and earthquakes. I understand that since 1960, when the government began taking various preparedness measures following a severe typhoon in 1959, the number of human lives lost to floods and typhoons in Japan has come down to an average of about 100 persons per year, compared with a previous average of annual death of about 1,000 persons. In my tenure as Visiting Researcher, I will benefit from an exchange of experience and information on the disaster management system and network in Japan, which will be of immense use and a very constructive contribution to the disaster reduction related efforts in my country.

➤ **The 6th International Conference on Corporate Earthquake Programs**

The conference was held in Osaka from the 28th to the 30th of October, 2002, with the support of ADRC and others. There were nine lectures in the Open Forum, and two keynote speeches that received great attention. One of the speeches was made by Prof. Matao Miyamoto, who discussed *The Merchants' Wisdom for Disaster Prevention in the History of Osaka*. The other was made by Mr. Katsuhiko Endo, who talked about *The Role of the Bank of Japan in Times of Crisis*. In the 5 sessions following these presentations, the conference also addressed the efforts of government, business, and regional networks for disaster management.



Mr. Satoru Nishikawa, the Executive Director of ADRC, participated as one of the moderators of Session A, "Disaster Reduction Education and Exercise for Business." Dr. Harumi Yashiro, Senior Researcher of ADRC also participated by giving report on *The U.S. Financial Response and the Impact to Insurance, Airline Industry from the September 11 Attacks*, in Session B. The report concluded that the economic impact on the world market of September 11 was less than it could have been due to accurate response by the FRB. However, despite exhausting efforts, the re-insurance sector is still being affected by the attack.

➤ **Visitors to ADRC**

□ **The delegation of Shanghai's Seismological Bureau**

A delegation of the Seismological Bureau of Shanghai, whose Deputy Director is Dr. WANG Wei, visited Japan from October 21st to November 1st. The City of Shanghai is planning to establish a new agency that deals with earthquakes and various other types of disasters.



The delegation came to Hyogo, Japan in order to study advanced response and reduction measures for various kinds of disasters. Hyogo has developed such advancement in response to the experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The group also visited Yokohama City, which is a sister city of Shanghai.

On October 22nd, they visited ADRC and our neighboring organization, the OCHA office of the UN in Kobe. ADRC gave them an outline of the functions and activities of ADRC. Then we exchanged opinions and discussed how we will cooperate with each other.

During the following days, they visited the 3-D Full Scale Earthquake Testing Facility that is under construction, the Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Research Center, the Emergency Management Center of Hyogo Prefectural Government, and the Crisis Management Office of Kobe City.

If you have comments or requests for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC at the address on the right.

Published by : **Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)**
3rd Floor, IHD Bld. 1-5-1, WAKIHAMAKAIGAN-DORI, CHUO-KU, KOBE
651-0073, JAPAN E-mail: editor@adrc.or.jp Phone: +81-78-230-0346