



*"Now I know why landslides occur!"
This photograph by Geotechnical Engineering Office of Hong Kong won 1st prize in the third category*

The Geo-technical Engineering Office (GEO) of the Civil Engineering Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) was established in 1977, initially as a geo-technical control body to regulate the whole process of investigation, design, construction, monitoring and maintenance of slopes in Hong Kong.

The GEO has gradually developed into its present form to protect the public from the landslide hazard through the following 4 principal slope safety duties:

- Policing slope safety;
- setting safety standards;
- undertaking geo-technical projects;
- providing education and assistance to the public.

Contribution to the 1998 United Nations World Disaster Reduction Campaign

As the major landslide hazard mitigation agency, the GEO supports IDNDR goals and objectives to reduce, through concerted international action, the loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters.

In 1998, the GEO participated in the following activities of the UN World Disaster Reduction campaign:

1998 IDNDR Internet Conference

The GEO co-authored, with a leading media consultant, papers on "Media and Disaster Prevention" and "How to get the message out".

1998 IDNDR International Photo Contest

Photos were received on the 3 following themes: Photos of Natural Disasters; Photos of Prevention Measures and Photos illustrating the 1998 campaign theme of "Prevention Begins with Information". GEO won 1st prize in the third category

INDIA

In 1997, a network of Indian NGOs concerned with natural disaster reduction issues held a wide variety of events. Some were partly supported by government, universities and other partner organisations.

The Joint Assistance Centre reported that the Structural Engineering Research Centre in Madras worked with the Institute for Youth & Disaster Preparedness on a series of workshops in the ten coastal districts in the state of Orissa. The Anna Institute of Management in Tamil Nadu (government-sponsored) has a disaster

management training centre that ran a large cyclone workshop in a coastal area attended by some 100 participants.

Other workshops and activities received good press coverage. Schools participated in demonstrations of rescue and fire extinguishing techniques. The Hitopadesh journal on civil defence ran a special issue on the theme of disaster prevention. An important event in 1997 was the translation into local languages of cyclone-proof building standards in some of the areas most prone to such disasters.

In 1998, many events took place nation-wide to celebrate 14 October. A Roundtable on Media and Disaster was organised in Gurgaon, in Haryana State, on 27 September. Seventy-one officers from all over Haryana State, and several speakers participated in this workshop. In his inaugural address, the Deputy Commissioner, Gurgaon, stated that mere laws and voluminous manuals were not enough to deal with disasters like floods, fires and earthquakes. This one-day workshop focused mainly on the following two aspects:

- Public Health related aspects of disasters and the role of Media
- Community-based disaster preparedness and the Media

The conclusions drawn during the final open discussion were that the media has a vital role to play in making disaster awareness and preparedness a way of life at community level, and that this should be done regularly and in a responsible way and not just when a disaster occurs. It was recommended that co-ordination between Governments departments, NGOs and media need to be strengthened.

The 8th National Convention On Disaster Reduction, organised by the Joint Assistance Centre (an all India Agency for assistance in disaster situations), was held from 14-16 October in Madan Mohan Malviya Engineering College, in Gorakhpur, in Uttar Pradesh State.

Role of media in disaster management highlighted

■ Govt should take all sections of the society into confidence'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALURU, OCT 13

THE media can play an important role in reducing the effects of natural calamities by educating the masses beforehand, speakers insisted at the workshop organised on 'The role of media in disaster prevention' at Thakur Park, Mangalore.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Nagaraj Union of Working Journalists in association with the Institute of Disaster Reduction Management, The United Nations, a showcasing the current situation. International decade of natural disaster reduction and this year's theme is 'Natural disaster reduction and the media'.

Speakers pointed at the sorry state of affairs with the government which lacked properly chalked out disaster management policy. It was essential that all sections of the society were taken into confidence by planning a disaster management policy which would help in better relief and rehabilitation work, they said.

The meeting was of the view that the role in general and government in particular are not serious about the effects of any natural calamity that actually occur. The gravity of such a natural calamity and its after-effects are analysed only after it was struck and when there is great loss of life and resources. Media could help in educating the masses on the natural calamities like earthquake, floods, droughts, epidemics etc. beforehand and develop preparedness among the common public. This, in turn, would reduce the impact of the calamity and save precious lives, speakers said.

The speakers included personalities from various fields of life who are associated with the Institute of Disaster Reduction Management. Dr P V Patilkar of the Haryana Book House who is also an ab-

caused an adverse effect on the agriculture. Damage to crop either due to heavy rains or shortfall in production wreck the farmers. "They need to be educated on controlling the damage and avoiding man-made disasters like crop damage due to heavy use of chemical pesticides and insecticides," he said.

In an introductory remarks, the Director of the Institute of Disaster Reduction Management (IDRM), Nulu Choudhury, expressed that the media could act as a pressure group to supervise the government's relief and rehabilitation operations. At the same time, it could educate the masses, he said. Media reports on disasters was a source of information on which future damage averted exercises could be planned and fortified.

President of Maharashtra Institute of Engineers and well-known structural engineer from city P T Masc was critical of the role played by the media in the post calamity period.

He said, the media has always been sceptical about the role of engineers in disaster management



Additional Commissioner of Police Anil Dhere speaking at the workshop on 'Role of media in disaster prevention'. Seated on dais are structural engineer P T Masc, social worker Wadkar and Suresh Dowlatabawar, Resident Engineer, Lakshadweep.

in relief and rehabilitation work. But the media has been the habit of pointing out lacunae in the work rather than lauding it, he said. He also lambasted the government bodies for not consulting engineers' institutions to chalk out disaster reduction and management plans.

The next to join the line was Additional Commissioner of Police Anil Dhere who expressed his disapproval of the exaggerated reporting of calamities by the media. "If journalists checked out its reports on the Lakshadweep then it would find that contrary to the death toll estimated by them, the actual deaths were far less," Dhere claimed.

The charge levelled against the government officials that they shy away from providing information was also not true, he said. Dhere, however, admitted that government agencies, including the police, were not equipped to fight the calamities due to lack of sufficient resources and training. He also said that the reason why the government was hesitant in taking help from non-governmental organisations

by other speakers, Resident Engineer of Lakshadweep, Suresh Dowlatabawar, said that the media's prime accountability was with the common reader who he said demanded true picture of an incident at shortest possible notice. "We have our own deadline for news and we don't have enough machinery to investigate on our own as the police do," Dowlatabawar said. He said there was any exaggeration in the claim that government officials often shy away from providing information to the media.

Dowlatabawar agreed with the views expressed by Dhere regarding functioning of a section of NGOs and lamented that for them disaster had become a business. Nagareshwar Lender (JEL), a K K Kichile spoke on the role of amateur radio operators (HAMs) in disaster management.

Secretary of the Institution of Engineers, Rukech, Srivastava and structural engineer I. K Jain also spoke. The programme was conducted by Nulu Choudhury, while president of NIJW T V Gokul

THE TRIBUNE

118TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Chandigarh, Friday, October 16, 1998

Workshop on disaster prevention

Tribune News Service
GURGAON, Oct 13: A workshop on 'Disaster prevention and the role of media' organised today by the Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) at Gurgaon. The main aim of the workshop was to take awareness in disaster management among the common public. The workshop was attended by officials from various departments, NGOs and media. The workshop was held in a well-ventilated hall with a stage and sound system. The speaker for the occasion was Dr P V Patilkar, President of Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA). He stressed on the need for common people to take preventive measures (PREP) and advised that they should be equipped with disaster management knowledge. He also stressed on the need for disaster management officials to be equipped with disaster management knowledge.

Dr P V Patilkar, President of Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), stressed on the need for common people to take preventive measures (PREP) and advised that they should be equipped with disaster management knowledge. He also stressed on the need for disaster management officials to be equipped with disaster management knowledge.

दैनिक जागरण

16 अंक 90 पृष्ठ 14-4 मूल्य रु. 2.00 पृ. दिल्ली, बुधवार 15 अक्टूबर 1998

'प्राकृतिक आपदा से निपटने में 'प्रेस' की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण'
प्रसिद्ध न्यूज एजेंसी का एक विशेष अंक 'प्राकृतिक आपदा से निपटने में प्रेस की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण' आज के पृष्ठ पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। यह अंक प्राकृतिक आपदा से निपटने में प्रेस की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण और सरकार के द्वारा जारी की गई दिशानिर्देशों और राष्ट्रीय आपदा निवारण योजना के अंतर्गत कार्य करने वाले लोगों को प्रेरित करेगा।