

# Lessons in disaster management – *the road ahead for West Bengal*

## State level lesson learnt workshop on preparedness for floods and cyclones in West Bengal



Organised by  
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama  
Narendrapur

Date:  
19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>st</sup> of November

Venue:  
Ramakrishna Mission  
Ashrama Narendrapur,  
Kolkata 700103 (Ph. 033-  
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Registration  
Until 25 October 2008

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### Background

West Bengal is one of most disaster prone areas in India. The disaster situation in West Bengal is hampering the development of the society and increases their vulnerability. Especially marginalized groups are often loosing their livelihood options and are forced to migrate to less disaster prone areas. If the change of the climate and its consequences is taking place as predicted from experts, this situation will even get worse: It is likely that the frequency and intensity of natural disasters increases.

It is timely to revisit the existing coping mechanisms for disasters on all levels, proof them on their suitability for the disaster scenario of the future and establish a holistic preparedness plan to face the future disaster. The workshop will address the lessons learned so far, analyse the state of preparedness for the future disaster scenario and take the first step to scope with the challenge of a holistic preparedness plan for floods and cyclones in West Bengal.

### Workshop

The workshop is carried out in the frame of the Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) project supported by DIPECHO and Welthungerhilfe and implemented by the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur. In the course of the project the interaction with other NGO's, specialists and government departments revealed the need of a long term strategy for disaster preparedness for Sundarbans.

The aims of the workshop are

- To bring different stakeholders together and reflect on the past experience in CBDRM in the Sundarbans
- To reflect on actual level of preparedness in the Sundarbans
- Recommendations for long term preparedness and risk management in the Sundarbans

The workshop will be held in the Ramakrishna Mission Institute Ashrama Narendrapur, Kolkata from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>st</sup> of November 2008.

Disaster preparedness especially in the Sundarbans now, is no longer an option but a necessity. Time has come to build on past experiences and draw up a practical and effective plan for disaster management aimed at reducing risk to people living in disaster prone areas and to making them better prepared to face situations in the future.

## **Call for posters**

Many organisations are working on DRM for floods and cyclones in West Bengal and comparable regions on different levels. Much good work is done and we want to call for posters to share the experience done. As the situation in Bangladesh is almost similar to the one in West Bengal we would like to invite posters for Bangladesh too.

Title of the poster should be mentioned on the registration sheet which should be submitted to [cbdrmrkm@gmail.com](mailto:cbdrmrkm@gmail.com) not later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of October.

## **Important dates**

- 25<sup>th</sup> of October - Last date Registration
- 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>st</sup> November, 2008 Workshop dates

**Language:** English

## **Contact:**

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## Tentative programme

Time	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2008
08:00	<b>REGISTRATION</b>
09:30	<b>INAUGURAL FUNCTION</b>
	<p>Welcome addresses (representatives of RKM, Welthungerhilfe, DIPECHO, State of West Bengal, Minister of Sundarban Development affairs, Secretary disaster management, joint secretary disaster management, ) Bengali Song on preparedness <b>Chair: To be named</b></p>
10:30	REFRESHMENT BREAK
	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION - STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ON FLOOD/CYCLONE IN WEST BENGAL</b>
	<b>Chair: Dr. J. Schmerbeck</b>
11:00	<p><i>Disasters in West Bengal</i> <b>Dr. D. Dasgupta:</b> Consultant for disaster management</p>
11:20	<p><i>Situation of floods and cyclones in the Sundarbans at present and in the future</i> <b>Prof. S. Hazra:</b> School for Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata</p>
11:40	<p><i>Strategy of the government of West Bengal to cope with future challenges of disaster management in the Sundarbans</i> <b>Mr. S. Acharya:</b> Joint Project Director, Sundarban Development Board</p>
12:00	<p><i>Overview on work done by NGO's in Sundarbans</i> <b>Fr. P. Roy:</b> Consultant on Disaster Preparedness</p>
12:30	<i>Open Forum/Plenary Discussions</i>
13:30	LUNCH BREAK
	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION - CASE STUDIES OF DISASTER RISK MANagements OF FLOODS AND CYCLONES FROM WEST BENGAL AND BANGLADESH</b>
	<b>Chair: to be named</b>
14:30	<i>Presentation each 15 minutes</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Living with disasters in the Sundarbans (villager from RKM project) (to be con.)</i></li> <li>- <i>Living with disasters in the Sundarbans (villager from INSS Project) (to be con.)</i></li> <li>- <i>Traditional coping mechanisms versus external approach (PUS)</i></li> <li>- <i>Interaction with government bodies (SMS or SKC) (to be con.)</i></li> </ul>
15:30	<i>Discussion</i>
16:00	REFRESHMENT BREAK
16:30	<i>Presentation each 15 minutes</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Embankments situation (Dr. J. Schmerbeck or Prof S. Hazra).</i></li> <li>- <i>Sustainability of CBDRM in the Sundarbans (Red Cross)</i></li> <li>- <i>Sustainability of CBDRM in Nadia and Murshidabad (SPADE)</i></li> <li>- <i>Experience from Bangladesh (Caritas, CCDB, Proshika)</i></li> </ul>
17:30	<p><i>Discussion</i> <b>Chair: To be named</b></p>
18:00	<i>Poster session, media, cultural programme</i>
20:00	<i>Dinner</i>

Time	Friday 20 <sup>st</sup> November 2008
09:00	Summary of day 1
09:30	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION - IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONG TERM CBDRM PLANNING</b> Chairs: to be named
	<i>Group work on the following topics</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediate response (authority of distribution of relief, cooperation, coordination)</li> <li>2. Linkage and networking between NGOs and different administrative levels (pre, during and post disaster, information flow,</li> <li>3. Long term livelihood restoration and strengthening of infrastructure (agriculture, embankments, roads, insurance)</li> <li>4. Long term strategy to cope with climate change (embankment, migration, conditioning</li> <li>5. Sustainability of CBDRM (task forces, training and capacity building of stakeholders)</li> </ol>
11:30	REFRESHMENT BREAK
	<i>Presentation of each group (15 +5 min)</i>
13:00	LUNCH BREAK
14:00	<i>Summary gaps identification and recommendations</i> To be named
14:30	<i>Discussion of recommendations</i> To be named
16:00	<i>Final note</i> To be named
16:30	<i>End of the workshop</i>