

## **Mr. Om Prakash from India**

I have been associated with disaster management since 2000. Disaster Management was transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) from Ministry of Agriculture in June 2002. The Ministry of Home Affairs is now Nodal Ministry for all natural and man-made disasters, except drought and epidemics for which the Nodal Ministries are Agriculture and Health. This Ministry plays a leading role in coordinating efforts at the national and international level. Government of India has shifted, in focus from post disaster response and relief to pre disaster aspects, such as awareness, preparedness and mitigation.



The Indian sub continent, due to its geographical extent and climatic behaviors, is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood and hailstorm are a recurrent phenomenon. 40 million hectares is prone to floods. Two major disasters that Country has experienced in the recent past are the Super cyclone in Orissa (October 1999) and the Earthquake in Gujarat (January 2001). During 1985-2000, annual average damage due to natural disasters was approx 60 million US\$.

Such frequent disasters lead to erosion of development gains and restricted options for the disaster victims. Physically safety, especially that of the vulnerable groups, is routinely threatened by hazards. The above mentioned two major disasters have very clearly illustrated that country need multi-hazard prevention, response and recovery plans for natural hazards so that threat to human life and property is minimized.

In India, concerned State Governments are responsible to manage the disaster at ground level. The Union Government supplements the efforts by extending logistics and financial support as well as coordinate efforts at national and international levels. In addition, a large number of secondary institutions also supplement efforts by assisting in forecasting, providing relief and rescue, resources and supporting preparedness and mitigation efforts.

We have an integrated Administrative Machinery and well organized disaster management system in the country and responsibilities are determined and allocated throughout the administrative hierarchy at the Union, State, and district level. We have National Contingency Action Plan- which identifies the role of different players.

I joined ADRC with intention to share, gain knowledge about countermeasures in Japan. This exchange of experience and information on the disaster management system in Japan certainly will be of valuable and a constructive contribution to minimize the affect of disasters in India.