

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: THE ROLE OF HEALTH SECTOR PERSONNEL-AN OVERVIEW**

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Efficient management of disasters has received increased attention globally. It has been realized by all countries in the world that no development is sustainable if human life is vulnerable to major Disaster risks. Disaster preparedness and response are the most important components of an effective Disaster Management Strategy. The objective of disaster preparedness is to ensure that appropriate systems are in the place and personnel are trained to provide immediate response to victims in the event of any Disaster. Medical response is one of the most critical, most important and of immediate requirement in any Disaster situation. The success or failure of any Disaster management operations will depend to a great extent on the success achieved by the medical and health sector since most of the death and illness caused by disasters are preventable health risks. Though disaster management is the responsibility of every organization and institution, the health sector has a key role to play, as it is the lead sector. Hence, health personnel play a very important role in reducing disaster risks. This paper briefly examines the role and responsibilities of medical and health personnel and provides an overview of emergency medical preparedness for reducing disaster risks. The concept of disaster medicine in dealing with the public health management of disaster and emergency medical preparedness, including the prevention, response, relief and rescue operation of health management while addressing various issues like casualty area management and hospital management etc though various strategies and actions will also be discussed. The impact of disasters on health and how they can be best managed to reduce the number of mortalities and morbidities resulting from disaster will be examined. The need for ensuring community participation in health management and prevention of health risk through immunization and vaccination, proper food and system of garbage disposal, vector control and research and epidemiological studies will also be discussed. Prof. Bhaskara Rao, Mulam, Specialist, Policy, Planning and Related Issues, SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), New Delhi.