



Institutionalizing GO-NGO Coordination in Himachal Pradesh for effective Disaster Risk Management

STRATEGY BLUEPRINT

Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority

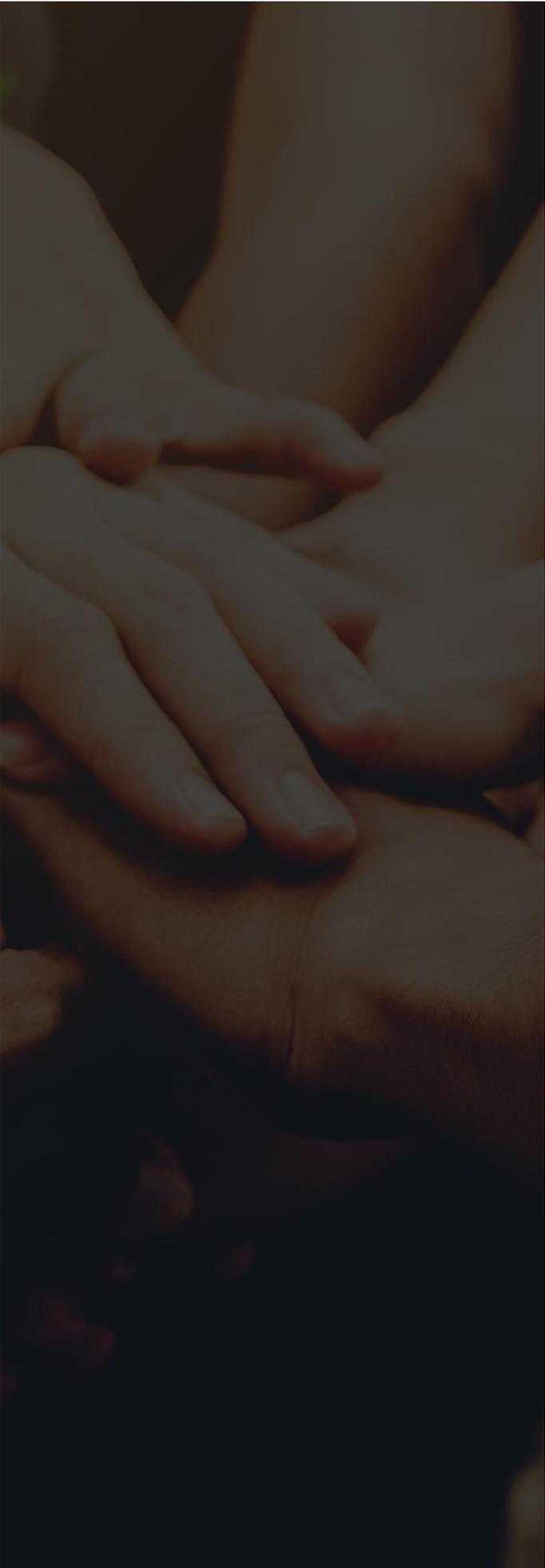


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INTRODUCTION

Dealing with disasters in a changing climate requires a long-term perspective. Collaborative efforts between government and NGOs/CSOs contribute to the development of sustainable solutions that address both immediate needs and the underlying factors contributing to vulnerability, promoting resilience over time. As the climate change intensifies the disaster risk, especially in the vulnerable mountainous regions, effective coordination between the Government Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) becomes even more crucial for dealing with disasters. NGOs play a pivotal role in disaster management, contributing significantly to preparedness, response, recovery, and risk mitigation efforts. Their unique characteristics, such as flexibility, community focus, and independence, allow them to complement and enhance the effectiveness of government-led initiatives. Considering this, the Government of Himachal Pradesh initiated the process of strengthening the GO-NGO coordination in the state. The Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (HPSDMA) organized a State-level consultation in 2011 which witnessed the constitution of the Himachal Pradesh Inter Agency Group (HPIAG).

The HPIAG aims at strengthening the existing systems and promoting synergetic actions for disaster risk reduction in the state. The specific objectives of the HPIAG are as under:

- To promote and institutionalize unified response strategy in humanitarian crisis.
- To mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in development programmes.
- To systematize the emergency response mechanism and to bring in the culture of “working together” in emergencies as well as in normalcy.
- To promote stakeholders' engagement in activities that will build their capacities to cope with calamities.
- To promote effective planning, coordination and execution over the issues pertaining to DRR in the state through a unified strategy over disaster preparedness and response.
- To promote sharing of best practices, tools & techniques and different types of resources among the stakeholder organizations for enhanced solution exchange.
- To undertake various capacity building measures for the professionals and volunteers of the member or non-member GOs and NGOs on various aspects of Disaster Management.
- To develop the HPIAG as a platform for advocating for a #ResilientHimachal.

The HPIAG developed the membership criteria and also adopted a functional structure which included the IAG Secretariat, Core Group, Convener and the General Members. To provide operational guidance to the member organizations, basic Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were also laid down for the HPIAG. It was envisaged that the HPIAG would function in consultation with the HPSDMA and maintain proper coordination with the concerned Government Agencies while sharing the information about the activities done by the HPIAG on a regular basis. However, a careful observation reveals that the HPIAG was far from progressing as per its mission and nowhere close to achieving any of its set objectives. From a lack of proactive approach from the member organizations to the lack of strategic leadership from the HPIAG Core Group as well as the Convener, there were several factors that contributed to a poor operational functioning of the HPIAG. The HPIAG also experienced lack of sustained support and guidance from the HPSDMA which holds both the mandate and capacity to steer the HPIAG through strategic interventions.

In the year 2018, fresh efforts were made to rejuvenate the HPIAG when a consultative meeting was organized by the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (HPSDMA) at the H.P. Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), Fairlawn, Shimla under the chairmanship of Shri D.C. Rana, Special Secretary (Rev.-DM) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh. A total of 40 participants including the leaders of various NGO from all the districts of the state attended this meeting. Remarkably, no in-person meeting of the HPIAG has taken place since that meeting in May 2018. The only significant outcome of that meeting was the constitution of District Inter Agency Groups (DIAGs) which led to an enhanced interaction and dialogue among the DDMA and NGOs working in respective districts. In the middle of COVID-19, an online meeting of the members of the HPIAG and DIAGs was conducted on 29 September 2020 with an objective of coordinated response during the pandemic. This meeting further triggered an exchange of ideas among the member NGOs that were individually doing great service during the pandemic, but could not demonstrate a collective, coordinated action as an IAG, neither at the state, nor at the district level.

This Strategy Blueprint on institutionalizing the GO-NGO Coordination in Himachal Pradesh for effective Disaster Risk Management aims at identifying the key issues that hindered the progress of the HPIAG since its constitution and subsequently addressing those issues with the help of a strategic framework. It is expected that along with the HPSDMA and the DDMA, the members of the state and respective district IAGs will contribute to and act in accordance with this blueprint to ensure its success.

1. CURRENT STATUS OF IAGs

The Himachal Pradesh Inter Agency Group (HPIAG) was reconstituted on 6th of May 2018. Subsequent to that, various districts also constituted or re-constituted their respective DIAGs. The details of the IAG Conveners according to the most recent information are given below.

Himachal Pradesh Inter Agency Group (HPIAG)

Convener: Mr. O. P. Bhatia | District Red Cross Society

- 1. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Bilaspur**
Convener: Mr. Amit Kumar | District Red Cross Society
- 2. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Chamba**
Convener: Ms. Anita Sharma | Samarpan Association
Co-Convener: Mr. Deepak Bhatia | Prerana - The Inspiration
- 3. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Hamirpur**
Convener: Mr. M. K. Bhardwaj | Jai Baba Kamlahiya Aradhana (JBKA)
- 4. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Kangra**
Convener: Mr. Narender Paul | Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development (CORD)
- 5. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Kinnaur**
Convener: Mr. Hishey Negi | Kaizen
- 6. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Kullu**
Convener: Mr. Nishchint Singh Negi | 7th Bn Home Guards & Civil Defence
- 7. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Lahaul & Spiti**
Convener: Mr. Kundal Lal | All India Radio (AIR)
- 8. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Mandi**
Convener: Mr. Jitender Verma | Center for Sustainable Development (CSD)
- 9. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Shimla**
Convener: Mr. Virender Mohan Vashist | Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA)
- 10. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Sirmaur**
Convener: Mr. Madan Dutt Sharma | Social Action for Rural Dev. of Hilly Areas (SARDHA)
- 11. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Solan**
Convener: Mr. Abhishek Taneja | Earthjust Ecosystems Foundation
- 12. District Inter Agency Group (DIAG) Una**
Convener: Mr. Vijay Bhardwaj | Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)

2. PROGRESS SO FAR

WHAT WENT WELL

- **Recognition of the HPIAG:** Since 2018, there has been a growing recognition for the HPIAG as a vehicle for GO-NGO coordination at the state-level. The national actors (including the NDMA, NIDM, National NGOs, Corporate Groups, etc.) as well as state-level agencies such as H.P. Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) recognize the HPIAG as the focal point for inter-agency coordination for disaster risk management in the state.
- **Inventorying of NGOs:** A database containing the crucial information (including Proof of Registration, Key Functionaries, etc.) related to member organizations has been developed. This voluntarily managed database is displayed on the website of the HPIAG at- <https://www.hpiag.in/p/home.html>
- **Growing Fraternity and Collaborations:** The members of HPIAG have been collaborating informally for initiatives that may or may not be related to DRM, but they are providing space for informal collaborations to the NGOs. There have been instances of NGOs collaborating in a project implemented in multiple districts.
- **Constitution of District IAGs:** Despite the associated shortcomings, all the districts in the state now have their respective District Inter Agency Groups (DIAGs), which have performed remarkably better than the State IAG when it comes to frequency of meetings. Some of the DIAG members also provide technical support to respective DDMAAs.
- **Capacity Development for DRM:** With a growing recognition and increasing membership base of the HPIAG and DIAGs, the member organizations are getting more opportunities to get their staff trained on various aspects of disaster risk management. This is steadily enhancing the human resource capacities with regard to the DRM in the state.
- **Increased Engagement with DM Authorities:** Since the constitution of the DIAGs in 2018-19, the member organizations have experienced more engagements with the HPSDMA and/or their respective DDMAAs of their respective districts. Some NGOs have been actively contributing to the implementation of schemes in their districts.
- **Enhanced Participation in DM Events:** Participation of NGOs in relevant events organized by the HPSDMA and/or DDMAAs has increased. The member organizations are participating in 'Samarth' campaign and various meetings (such as South-West Monsoon preparedness meetings) organized by the DDMAAs.

- **Ideas Exchange & Networking:** As the IAG framework provides a space for networking, many of the organizations that were earlier unfamiliar with one another eventually started communicating and discussing ideas with each other. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was observed that many IAG members were in regular touch with other NGOs while planning and implementing response activities.
- **Communication Groups:** The members of the HPIAG as well as some DIAGs have created WhatsApp groups to share news and updates regarding their respective work and also to disseminate important information (such as events, funding opportunities, etc.). Many of these groups are functioning very well and are keeping the members connected.

WHAT DIDN'T

- **Clarity of Purpose:** There is a lack of clarity among many member organizations, about the purpose and functions of the HPIAG. Many organizations think that it is an informal group of various Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations which only meets occasionally to discuss issues pertaining to disaster risk management.
- **Collective Spirit:** Despite valuable work done by many of its member organizations individually, the HPIAG still has not established itself as a self-sustained, functional platform for coordinated efforts in the area of disaster risk management and humanitarian response. In the absence of a shared agenda, the NGO members adopt an individualistic approach which harms the spirit of cohesion and collective action.
- **Contextual Leadership Skills:** The HPIAG lacks strategic leadership which is essential to the systematic functioning of any collaborative platform. While the conveners of the State as well as the District IAGs are very experienced, committed humanitarian workers, they somehow lacked the leadership skills required for working and coordinating with other member organizations.
- **Standardized Protocols:** The HPIAG does not have a clearly defined set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the member organizations. This being one of the most critical gaps in the GO-NGO coordination in all the phases of disaster risk management creates confusion among the members.
- **Integration of IAG into the DRM programming:** The IAG members often complain that their involvement in the programmatic interventions of the HPSDMA and/or the respective DDMA is very ad-hoc and lacks a systematic integration of the HPIAG in various stages of programmes (design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation).

- **Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction:** Many of the member organizations have been working in various thematic areas but have no conceptual understanding of how they can mainstream disaster risk reduction in their current and/or future projects and activities. A majority of the NGOs see DRR only as an independent subject that requires a new project or activity.
- **Coordinated Approach:** There are critical gaps in inter-agency disaster response coordination, whether we take into consideration the approach of member NGOs during COVID-19 pandemic or the recent floods during the SW Monsoon 2023. This resulted in discrepancies associated with assessing the needs of affected people and also caused duplication or negligence in relief distribution in many instances.
- **Earmarked Budget:** The HPIAG has no dedicated funding to manage administrative expenditure that the Secretariat may require for managing regular functions or for deploying human resources that can ensure smooth coordination with HPSDMA, DDMA and all the member NGOs before, during and after disasters.
- **Organizational Capacities:** Many of the IAG Members lack organizational capacities (such as technical, administrative, financial, etc.) which are crucial for their contribution in making Himachal a disaster-resilient state. While a considerable number of organizations have different types of capacities to support the goals of the IAG, many others do not have even the most basic resources.
- **Timebound Deliverables:** One of the biggest challenges with the functioning of IAGs at the state as well as district level is the absence of an action plan which contains any deliverables (or targets) to be produced collectively.

3. PROPOSED MEASURES

Based on an in-depth understanding of the issues related to the functioning of HPIAG in the recent few years, following measures are proposed to strengthen the HPIAG in the state.

1. Mapping and Assessment of NGOs:

- (a) Conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify NGOs (upto Tehsil-level) with relevant experience, expertise, and capacity in disaster risk management and/or relevant thematic areas. This would help the HPSDMA in selecting suitable NGOs for potential collaborations and grassroots-level interventions in the future.
- (b) Categorize NGOs based on their specialization (e.g., health, gender, shelter, water, education, etc.) to match their capacities with specific disaster risk management needs. An SDG-tagging of the NGOs based on their fields of work may add more value to the assessment.
- (c) Classify the NGOs based on various criteria pertaining to organizational strengths (such as technical competencies, impact made, available human resource, operational capacities, legal compliances, etc.)

2. Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):

- (a) Develop an Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism to ensure smooth flow of information and allocation of responsibilities (preferably in the form of a matrix) from Tehsil to State-level (Tehsil > Sub-Division > District > Division > State).
- (b) Develop standardized operating procedures for IAG Conveners, Core Groups and the member NGOs detailing out their roles and responsibilities during disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.
- (c) Finalize a schedule for mandatory regular meetings of the HPIAG and DIAGs and also agree upon the conditions for need-based meetings.
- (d) Develop a communication protocol to streamline information exchange, prevent misinformation and rumors and facilitate effective collaboration before, during and after disasters or emergency situations.
- (e) Prepare an oath for the member NGOs for ensuring adherence to the Humanitarian Principles and ensuring that the Relief work is carried out in accordance with the minimum standards of humanitarian assistance, H.P. Relief Manual and other techno-legal documents.

3. Capacity Building and Training:

- (a) Design and implement customized Capacity Building programs for NGOs to enhance their capabilities in the area of disaster risk management. An Annual Calendar may be developed for systematic upgradation of knowledge and skills among the member NGOs.
- (b) Conduct joint training exercises and simulations to ensure effective coordination and integration of NGOs efforts with the response of the Government Departments.
- (c) Plan to organize co-funded Exposure Visits of the member NGOs to important sites where they can learn from the experiences of other groups and/or networks.

4. Resource Mobilization and Funding for NGOs Engagement:

- (a) Earmark a budget exclusively for the HPIAG to cover the expenditure related to running the HPIAG Secretariat, holding meetings and organizing workshops/events.
- (b) Facilitate partnerships between the NGOs and private sector entities for resource mobilization. Creating a CSR-supported pooled fund for the HPIAG may be a sustainable way of engaging private sector in the DRM interventions.
- (c) Establish a transparent mechanism for the allocation of funds to NGOs based on their contributions to disaster risk management and resilience in the state. The HPSDMA may launch the 'Community Disaster Preparedness for Resilient Himachal' program to engage credible NGOs in educating the public.
- (d) Co-create a Scheme with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj to engage the identified NGOs in facilitating the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the Gram Panchayat Development Plans.
- (e) Create an exclusive fund and establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with key NGOs to formalize long-term collaboration (minimum 3 years) and agreements in the area of research, innovation, capacity development and programmatic interventions related to disaster risk management.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- (a) Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of NGO collaborations on disaster management outcomes.
- (b) Regularly review and update the strategy based on lessons learned and evolving needs related to effective disaster risk management in the state.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Phase 1 – Preparing Operational Frameworks (2 Months)

- A. Carry out an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) of all the participating NGOs
- B. Develop a Credits-based Capacity Development Plan for the member organizations
- C. Establish a robust mechanism for IAGs functioning and coordination
- D. Create a Himachal Disaster Resilience Fund (HDRF) for NGO-led DRM interventions
- E. Draft a Resource Mobilization Strategy for the financial sustainability of HPIAG & DIAGs
- F. Develop SOPs for the Inter Agency Groups in Before, During & After Disaster situations

Phase 2 – Strengthening Institutional Set-up (3 Months)

- A. Discuss the Results of Organizational Capacity Assessment in a Consultation
- B. Allocate coordination-related responsibilities to identified NGOs as per their OCA scores
- C. Invite Proposals from NGOs for short to medium-term HDRF projects on CBDRM, Early Warning Systems, Risk Mitigation, etc. (with an annual budget cap of INR 10 Lakhs)
- D. Develop Modules for the Training of Certified Disaster Resilience Practitioners (CDRPs)
- E. Systematically identify and train the CDRPs with proper Accreditation & Certification

Phase 3 – Joint Implementation of Programmatic Activities (18 Months)

- A. Engage the CDRPs in facilitating Grassroots-level Trainings Programs within various HPSDMA schemes, such as- Creation of Task Force of Youth Volunteers for Disaster Preparedness & Response, HAM and Community Radio, School Safety, Hospital Safety and Training of Masons, Carpenters & Bar Binders on Hazard Resistant Construction).
- B. Engage the empaneled CDRPs in various Awareness Generation events, Simulation Exercises and Coordinated Response to disasters and emergency situations.

Phase 4 – Monitoring and Evaluation (1 Month)

- A. Monitor the progress of HPIAG and DIAGs through Periodical Reporting
- B. Evaluate the effectiveness of all the measures taken.
- C. Refine the Strategy based on the feedback

Annexure (A) – Media Coverage related to HPIAG during COVID-19 pandemic

महामारी से मिलकर करेंगे मुकाबला

राजस्व-आपदा प्रबंधन प्रधान सचिव बोले, सरकार-गैर सरकारी संगठन एक साथ

दिव्य हिमाचल ब्यूरो – शिमला

राजस्व-आपदा प्रबंधन के प्रधान सचिव ओंकार चंद शर्मा ने कहा कि कोरोना संक्रमित होने वाले लोगों की संख्या बढ़ रही है, जिससे यह आवश्यक हो गया है कि सरकारी और गैर-सरकारी संगठन आपसी तालमेल के साथ काम करें। कानूनी तौर पर भी सभी प्रकार की आपदाओं के उचित प्रबंधन के लिए यह जरूरी है कि सभी राज्य सरकारों और जिला प्रशासन, एनजीओ समेत सभी हितधारकों के साथ तालमेल व समन्वय

वेबसाइट पर स्वयंसेवकों ने किया अप्लाई

राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण ने राज्य में कोविड-19 से निपटने के लिए स्वयंसेवकों को पंजीकृत करने की पहल की है। इस डाटाबेस में स्पैडिस्क सेवा करने के लिए 950 से अधिक हिमाचली नागरिक तैयार हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि भारत सरकार की 'माई गोव-मेरी सरकार' वेबसाइट पर भी बहुत से स्वयंसेवकों ने सेवाएं देने के लिए पंजीकरण किया है।

के साथ कार्य किया जाए। आपदा प्रबंधन अधिनियम, 2005 के अनुच्छेद 38(2), 22(2) और 30(2) के अनुसार सभी राज्य और जिला आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरणों के लिए अनिवार्य है

कि वे आपदा प्रबंधन के कार्यों को अधिक प्रभावशाली बनाने के लिए गैर-सरकारी संगठनों के सहयोग और समन्वय के साथ कार्य करें। इसी दिशा में प्रयास करते हुए प्राधिकरण ने राज्य व

जिला स्तर पर गठित इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप को सक्रिय करने के लिए सुझाव दिए हैं, जिसमें जिला स्तर पर सभी एनजीओ से समन्वय के लिए एक पदाधिकारी को नियुक्त करने और हर जिले के इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप के संयोजक को जिला आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण के साथ मिलकर काम करने के लिए अनुरोध किया है। कुछ जिलों में एनजीओ ने निजी स्तर पर जागरूकता कार्य और संक्रमण के लिए अति-संवेदनशील व्यक्तियों को सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए अभियान शुरू कर दिए हैं।

दिव्य हिमाचल Sun, 12 April 2020
<https://epaper.divyahimachal.com/c/50884081>



कोरोना की जंग में इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप की मदद लेगी सरकार

शिमला, 11 अप्रैल (सवेरा) : कोरोना की जंग में फतह हासिल करने के लिए सरकार इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप का सहयोग लेगी। आपदा प्रबंधन कानून के तहत प्रदेश में राज्य व जिला स्तर पर ग्रुप का गठन किया गया है। राजस्व विभाग एवं आपदा प्रबंधन के प्रधान सचिव ओंकार शर्मा ने ग्रुप के संयोजकों से जिला स्तर पर गठित आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरणों के साथ मिल कर काम करने का आग्रह किया है।

ओंकार शर्मा ने कहा कि कोरोना वायरस से फैली वैश्विक महामारी के कारण संक्रमित होने वाले लोगों की संख्या बढ़ रही है। नतीजतन यह आवश्यक हो गया है कि सरकारी और गैर-सरकारी संगठन आपसी तालमेल के साथ काम करें। कहा कि कानूनी तौर पर भी सभी प्रकार की आपदाओं के उचित प्रबंधन के लिए यह जरूरी है कि सभी राज्य सरकारों और जिला प्रशासन, एनजीओ समेत सभी हितधारकों के साथ तालमेल व समन्वय के साथ कार्य किया जाए। उन्होंने कहा कि आपदा प्रबंधन अधिनियम 2005

- आपदा प्रबंधन कानून के तहत गठित हैं इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप
- आपदा प्राधिकरण के साथ मिल कर काम करने का आग्रह

के अनुसार सभी राज्य और जिला आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरणों के लिए अनिवार्य है कि वे आपदा प्रबंधन के कार्यों को अधिक प्रभावशाली बनाने के लिए गैर-सरकारी संगठनों के सहयोग और समन्वय के साथ कार्य करें। उन्होंने कहा कि राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण कोरोना वायरस महामारी की रोकथाम और इससे जुड़े राहत, बचाव व जागरूकता संबंधी गतिविधियों में गैर-सरकारी संगठनों और स्वयंसेवकों के योगदान को सुनिश्चित करने का प्रयास कर रहा है।

इसी दिशा में प्रयास करते हुए प्राधिकरण ने राज्य व जिला स्तर पर गठित इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप को सक्रिय करने के लिए सुझाव दिए हैं।

सरकारी और गैर सरकारी संगठन तालमेल से करें काम

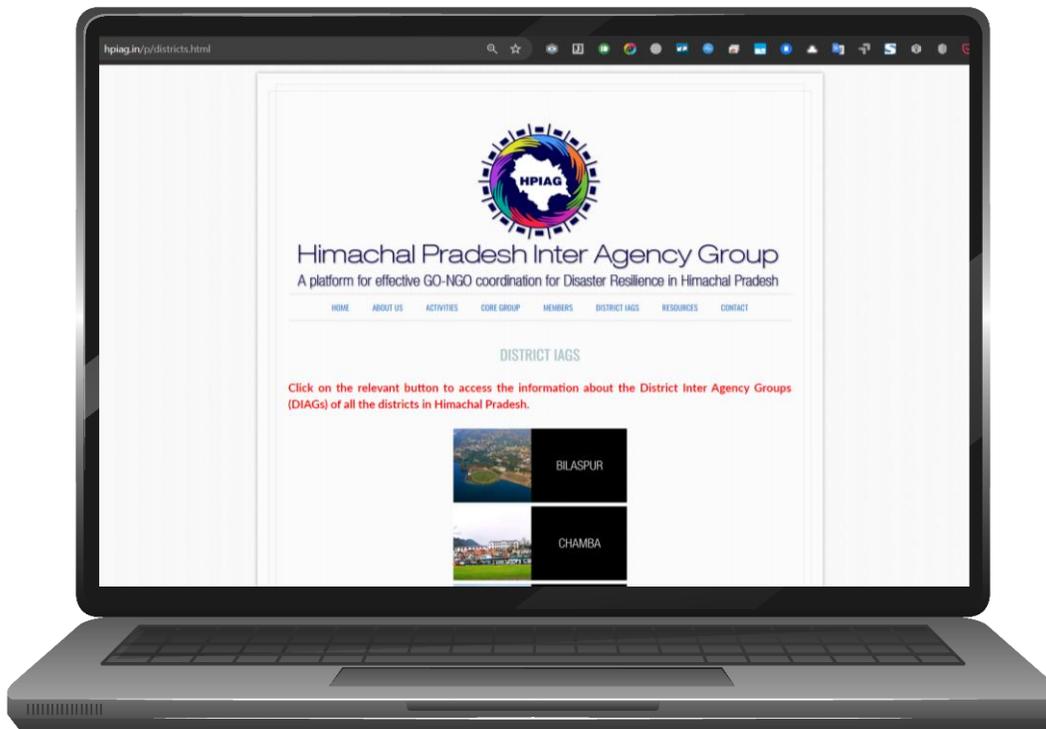
राज्य ब्यूरो, शिमला : राजस्व आपदा प्रबंधन के प्रधान सचिव ओंकार चंद शर्मा ने कहा कि कोरोना वायरस फैलने से यह आवश्यक हो गया है कि सरकारी और गैर सरकारी संगठन आपसी तालमेल के साथ काम करें। कानूनी तौर पर भी सभी प्रकार की आपदाओं के उचित प्रबंधन के लिए यह जरूरी है कि राज्य सरकार, जिला प्रशासन, गैर सरकारी संगठन तालमेल व समन्वय के साथ कार्य करें। सभी राज्य और जिला आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरणों के लिए अनिवार्य है कि वे सहयोग और समन्वय के साथ कार्य करें।

राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण कोरोना वायरस की रोकथाम और इससे जुड़े राहत, बचाव व जागरूकता संबंधी गतिविधियों में गैर सरकारी संगठनों और स्वयंसेवकों के योगदान को सुनिश्चित करने का प्रयास कर रहा है। वर्ष 2018 में राज्य इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप का पुनर्गठन किया गया था। प्रदेश के हर जिले का अपना इंटर एजेंसी ग्रुप, संयोजक, कोर ग्रुप और सदस्य हैं।

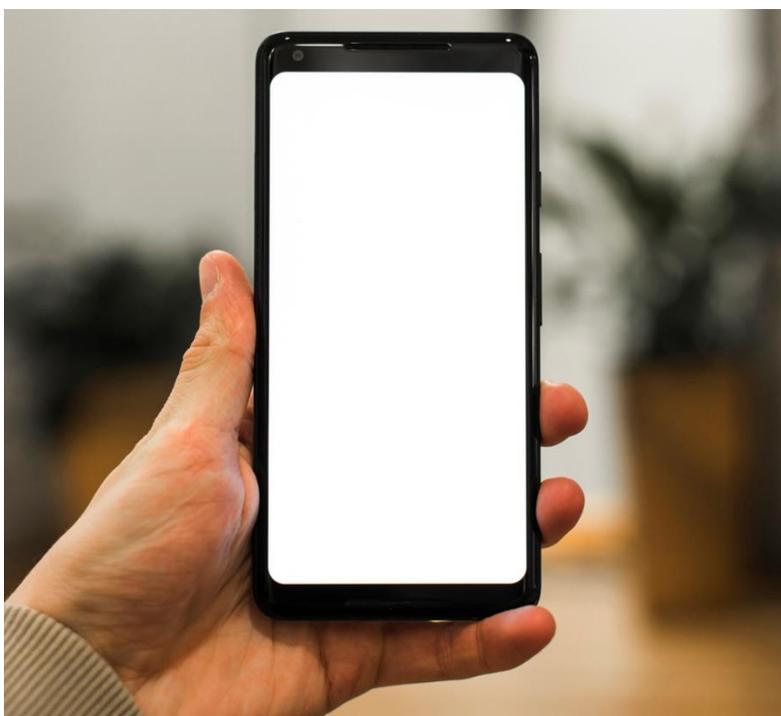
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Annexure (B) – Website and WhatsApp Group of the HPIAG



HPIAG Website



HPIAG WhatsApp Group

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