



PART- 1

NEPALESE ARMY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Ethos and Values of the Nepalese Army

The Nepalese Army has always been committed towards safeguarding the national unity, independence territorial integrity and sovereignty of Nepal. Right from its establishment, this institution has always fulfilled its responsibilities in the most commendable manner. Its professionalism has been exhibited in the countless battles it fought during the Unification Campaign of modern Nepal, in safeguarding national sovereignty and during its mobilization against insurgencies at different times in history.

Having readily adapted to the various stages of transformation of the systems of governance as desired by the Nepalese people, the Nepalese Army today stands on the side of Democracy and is equally devoted and committed towards safeguarding it as it is towards safeguarding the territorial integrity, independence, national unity and sovereignty of Nepal. It has been recognized as one of the major instruments of national power capable of maintaining stability within the nation. It has proven to be a strong, reliable and ultimate force in safeguarding the people and the Nation.

The Nepalese Army lives by its ethos of 'Mission First and People Always'; demonstrates, in its daily activities, its Core values of 'Duty, Integrity, Selfless Service, Courage, Discipline and Loyalty'; and adheres to the noble Guiding principles of 'Patriotism, Camaraderie, Institutional Cohesiveness, Respect for Diversity and Dignity of Service'.

Various Roles of the Nepalese Army

The Nepalese Army is a competent national force prepared to meet the full spectrum of challenges to security and defence. Besides safeguarding the nation from external aggression, it is well-prepared and fully competent in undertaking duties such as internal security, international peacekeeping, nation development, and nature conservation and disaster management and has already made valuable contributions in the aforementioned fields.

Nepal lies in an area that is at high risk from natural calamities. On several occasions, in response to both natural and manmade disasters, the Nepalese Army has mobilized its well trained and highly skilled manpower in rescue missions and has succeeded in saving lives and property of the population under risk.



The remains of NA Barracks at Laxmi Niwas, Maharjung

Past Contributions of the Nepalese Army in Disaster Management

The mega earthquake of 1934, the earthquake of 1988 with its epicentre in Udayapur, the massive floods of 1993 in the central region of Nepal, the flooding in the Koshi Barrage area in 2008, the epidemic in Jajarkot in 2009, the massive landslide in Jure of Sindhupalchowk and the avalanche and blizzards in the western mountainous region in 2014 are some of the major disasters where the Nepalese Army was mobilized in rescue and relief operations. The Nepalese Army has also been involved in international rescue and relief operations. It was mobilized in rescue and relief operations after the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and has had to take on such responsibilities in other United Nations mission areas also. Similarly, air assets from the Nepalese Army's Aviation Wing were sent

to supply relief materials when a devastating earthquake hit Pakistan in 2005. Likewise, in 2011, after a devastating earthquake struck Japan, a 12 member search and rescue team from the Nepalese Army was put on standby.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions for Disaster Management

During the mega earthquake of April 2015, the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006 was in force. That constitution had provisions that made it possible to mobilize the Nepalese Army for disaster management without prior authorisation of the parliament. The current Constitution of Nepal also allows for the same. On this authority, the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) immediately mobilised the Army and the National Security Council subsequently recommended the same to the President through the Council of Ministers. The proposal was approved by the President on 20 May 2015.



The Disaster Relief Act of 1982 has provisions to form a central rescue committee, at times of natural disaster, chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs. Further provisions are laid down in the Act to form sub committees for search, rescue and relief. Irrespective of the level of such committees (central or district level) representation of the Nepalese Army is mandatory.

Present Structure for Disaster Management and Its Evaluation

The existing system for disaster management is solely focused on the response after a major disaster. Other important aspects of disaster management such as, preparedness, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction have not been sufficiently incorporated in the disaster management system. As of now, the Nepalese Government is undertaking necessary steps for the approval and implementation of a 'National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (one version was drafted in 2009) which would incorporate all the aspects of disaster management. The key objective of such a document would be to promote a sense of partnership among various stakeholders by giving priority to unified effort in disaster risk mitigation so

that all the partners concerned in the field of economic and social development can implement this strategy at all levels of the society, ultimately transforming the nation into a 'Disaster Resilient Community.'

Similarly, the 'National Disaster Response Framework – 2013' has divided the stakeholders in the disaster response system into eleven response clusters, specifying the primary as well as secondary roles of each of them during disasters both within and beyond the capacity of the national response. It further establishes internal coordination mechanisms to support national disaster response activities. Within this framework, the Nepalese Army is given prime responsibility for directing and coordinating multinational military humanitarian assistance.

Existing Difficulties

Disaster management is a multi-dimensional activity involving various authorities within the government. However, in the existing system for disaster management, at times of disaster, the Ministry of Home Affairs assumes overall control of all the rescue and relief operations. Experience has shown that this may not always be the best practice. At times of major disasters, when



Destruction left behind at the Supply and Transport Unit



several ministries and departments of the government have to be involved, confusions might arise in areas such as leadership, coordination and areas of specialty.

At the time of the publication of this report, the legal provisions for implementing the 'National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management- 2009' had not yet been approved, and the provisions envisaged in the strategy could not be put into effect. Due to this, it has been extremely difficult to achieve the desired results during rescue and relief operations. The shortcomings of the present structure for disaster response has been substantiated by the response made at central and district levels after the mega earthquake on 25 April 2015. Therefore, it is evident that there is urgency for establishment of a National Disaster Management Authority to effectively deal with disasters of similar nature in the future.

Steps Undertaken by the Nepalese Army in Enhancing Its Response Capabilities

The Nepalese Army is committed to support, in every possible manner, the efforts of the Nepalese Government in establishing Nepal as a 'Disaster Resilient Community.' The Nepalese Army aims at fulfilling the responsibilities laid down by the Government in the field of disaster management by managing required resources, formulation of an action plan and by effectively mobilizing the required resources.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aim, the Nepalese Army has adopted a 'Three- Pronged Strategy', which is explained below.

- Management of Resources Required for Rescue and Relief Operation Under this the following action plans have been implemented.
- Allocation of budget each year (NRs 12,500,000/- in FY 69/70; NRs 12,000,000/- in FY 70/71 and NRs 18,732,000/- in FY 71/72) for priority based procurement of rescue and relief equipment.
- Similarly, under bilateral military assistance, equipment required for conducting rescue and relief operations have been received from friendly nations. Bridging equipment useful in keeping major lines of communication open search equipment to conduct search operations in urban areas with collapsed structures, equipment which can be used in rescue operations during floods, water treatment plants and medical equipment are some of the items which have been received under such assistance. Some of the major equipment received from friendly nations are - the rapid assembly 'Acrow' bridge and flood rescue equipment from USA, heavy plant equipment and mobile hospital from China and air transport and aerial cableway from India.
- These have been distributed across the Divisions with due consideration of their type and the nature of potential risk in the region. They have been suitably located at different locations so as to facilitate their rapid deployment at times of emergency.
- Although air transports are procured for various military purposes, their significance in rescue and relief operations is clearly undisputed. Recently, after a long gap, the Nepalese Army procured (with approval from



NA personnel engaged in Search and Rescue Exercise in the past decade

the government) two additional MI 17 helicopters and has already placed them on active service since 22 June 2015.

- Skilled Manpower Generation for Rescue and Relief The following action plans have been adopted for generation of skilled manpower for rescue and relief operations.
- Nepalese Army personnel have been sent to participate in various workshops, seminars and exercises on disaster management organized by various organizations at international, regional and national level.
- In order to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge on rescue and relief, classes and exercises on disaster management have been included in all trainings conducted at various levels in the Nepalese Army.
- To enhance the search and rescue capacity of Nepalese Army, tactical level search and rescue training is conducted at all Divisional Training Centres twice a year. Further, more a disaster management workshop and exercise is organized annually at all Divisional Headquarters.
- Initiatives have been undertaken to jointly conduct training on search and rescue in urban areas with collapsed structures with partners such as Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology (NCET).
- Initiatives have been taken to conduct trainings related to emergency medical preparedness, involving all concerned including army medical personnel, in order to generate skilled manpower and to ensure prompt medical service at times of disaster.



Formulation of Rescue and Relief Plan and Coordination In order to ensure effective management, coordination and utilization of international military and non military humanitarian assistance made available at regional, national and international level during disasters; workshops and seminars (For example: Ex 'TEMPEST EXPRESS,' Ex 'JOINT ENDEAVOR,' Ex 'UNITY OF EFFORT,' etc.) with involvement of representatives from foreign military services, international and national relief organizations and government offices have been conducted from time to time. Of special mention is Ex

Joint Endeavour, which was a multi-national exercise organized by the NA that was able to bring together active participation from China, India and the United States, all of whom were later to be major responders in the April 2015 earthquake.

- New Developments – 4th Prong The organizational approach through establishment of a dedicated Directorate with two specialist battalions for HADR, already accomplished in the NA, may be taken as the practical emergence of a 4th Prong to this effort.



Exercise on Multi National Military Coordination Center (MNMCC) in 2012