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**General Principles
Of
Civil Defence Strategy
in
India**

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CHAPTER-I

(Part-1)

General Principles of Civil Defence Strategy

Introduction

Civil Defence in India is a Government program that provides guidance and assistance in preparing for, responding to and recovering from public emergencies that results from conflict or natural disasters.

Historically, Civil Defence in India came into existence during 2nd World War when Sir Edpuganti Raghavendra Rao, the first Indian origin Governor of Central Provinces was appointed as the first Civil Defence Member of the Governor General's Executive Council. The Civil Defence preparedness was largely concentrated on Air Raid Precautions in the State of Bombay, which provided the logistical base for all military shipments to the Burma Front. After Independence Civil Defence gained importance during Indo-China conflict and formal arrangements were made for protection of population against enemy air attacks during the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict. However, the statutory organizational set-up of Civil Defence took place after passage of the Civil Defence Act (Act-27) by the Parliament of India in 1968.

The need for Civil Defence in India was amplified due to-

- Occurrence of huge number of damage incidents beyond the coping capacity of the Local Emergency Services in vulnerable regions.
- To unify the overall efforts of the country to withstand the enemy onslaught and raise public morale.

Civil Defence Organization's contribution has always played an important role in responding to Disasters and War Emergencies in order to reduce losses, build a culture of safety and Disaster Resilient Communities. Relatively small investments in Preparedness against emergencies enable communities to speed up Recovery by months or years and thereby prevent millions of deaths due to hunger, weather and epidemics that may occur consequent to many major disasters. According to the human capital theory in economics, the country's population is valued more than other factors like land, industry and wealth due to its capacity to rebuild a country after its destruction by nature's forces. Therefore, to ensure economic stability and security of the country it is essential that a strong Civil Defence Corps is available for protection of its people. Moreover, Civil Defence has stressed on building confidence, reducing fear and uncertainty, ensure higher survival rate, assist in raising people's quality of life that has made economic benefits feasible.

Response to any emergency whether natural or manmade can be successfully achieved only if a large trained volunteer force of emergency workers is available as stand by in all vulnerable areas of India. Studies in World War II showed that lightly trained civilians in

organized teams could perform up to 95% of emergency activities during disasters with proper liaison and support from the local government.

Presently, the Civil Defence measures are designed to deal with immediate emergency conditions, protect the public and restore vital services & facilities that have been destroyed or damaged by any emergency. The concept of Civil Defence, the largest community based initiative in India and many other countries, has never been separate from Emergency/ Disaster Management – it is considered all over the World as part of the entire emergency management process. There has been a paradigm shift in the role played by Civil Defence Organization in India with a primary objective to support all-hazard emergency management at State and Local levels. The activities of Civil Defence today are consistent with and contribute to the emergency preparedness of the Nation against any type of attack/ threat be it natural or manmade.

The Civil Defence Organizations in the World have been accorded an important status under the United Nations enacted Geneva Convention, 1949. An Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention was included in June 1977 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts that lays down provisions for protection of Civil Defence Volunteers during armed conflicts. ***The Geneva Convention stipulates “Civil Defence Organizations” as those establishments and other units organized or authorized by Competent Authorities of a party to the conflict to perform any of the listed tasks for humanitarian assistance.*** All Civilian Civil Defence Organizations and their personnel shall be respected and protected, subject to the provisions of the Additional Protocol. Detailed provisions of the Additional Protocol are given as end of Part-I.

Civil Defence Strategy Principles

The Emergencies arising out of hostile attack and natural disasters have the capacity-

- (a) to create mass casualties and trauma for the vulnerable population.
- (b) to dislocate normal life of the community by disrupting essential services such as power, light, water, sewage, rail / road / inland waterways / telephone / telegraph communication as well as disrupt supply of essential commodities like food and fuel;
- (c) to demoralize the population and generate a sense of misfortune.
- (d) to create a psychological impact on the populace, cause panic and during hostile attack facilitate the enemy operations.
- (e) to disrupt business continuity and affect industrial production.

The Civil Defence Program in India relies on the individual and the locality, building capacities to increase the chances of survival, to minimize the damage, recover quickly and support the response initiatives of the local administration. During times of War and Emergencies the Civil Defence Organisation in India has played a vital role in guarding the hinterland, supporting the Armed Forces, mobilizing citizens and assisting the civil administration in the following objectives.

- (i) Saving Lives and Property.
- (ii) Minimizing damage.

- (iii) Enhancing Industrial Resilience for Business Continuity.
- (iv) Maintaining Public Morale.
- (v) Raising Public Awareness and Survival Skills.

The Principles of Civil Defence Strategy have been derived from the current approach and guidelines initiated for Disaster Management within the Country.

Principle 1. Individual Self-preservation and Community Resilience.

The extent and complexity of any emergency / disaster lays enormous responsibility on the individuals and the communities to undertake measures for its survival, safety and security. Individuals and communities must build capacities to defend themselves against any emergency and its consequences as well as support each other for the common objective of survival when normal life has been disrupted. This principle needs to be understood in terms of degree of disruption acceptable without the community undergoing long term changes in its social structure as this factor will decide the early recovery and restoration to normal level of functioning of all services. Elaborate preparedness arrangements are needed at local level to develop and support this principle which invariably will contribute to the overall country resilience.

Principle 2. Systematic Approach to Hazard Identification and Risk Management.

A systematic approach to build capacities of the community in a logical manner is necessary in the process of acceptable hazard identification, risk assessment, risk communication and development of cost effective risk reduction strategy. The Community members of Civil Defence organisation must play an important role in deciding the levels of acceptable risk and the corresponding measures for managing those risks.

Principle 3. Integrated Community Preparedness & Business Continuity

An all hazard approach will be necessary for comprehensive and integrated community preparedness and business continuity. The community members of civil defence must undertake activities that promote co-ordinated involvement of all local emergency organizations in activities aimed at risk reduction, rapid response and sustained recovery. The preparedness strategy must also encompass industrial preparedness for protection of workforce to sustain business continuity during emergency and rapid recovery after the emergency. The preparedness strategies must include hands-on training and simulated disaster drills / exercises based on the risk assessments.

Principle 4. Comprehensive Resource Utilization for Emergency consequences.

The community resilience will be best exhibited by generation of resources from within the local area for rapid response and higher survival. This must be the basis for planning a comprehensive strategy of utilizing resources at different levels of alert in order to avoid convergence and wastage. Moreover, the magnitude and complexity of any emergency will throw up challenges of back up resources which can be resolved through trained local volunteers. This will be necessary to reduce the critical incident stress on the technical responders and maintain the level of efficiency of the responding agencies.

Principle 5. Integrated Alert and Information Management.

The crucial element for implementing emergency management plan will depend upon effective information coalition, information management and information dissemination. It is necessary to build an efficient decision support system integrating the administrative and community channels for rapid response and sustained risk management. The Civil Defence Air Raid Warning System must be utilized and upgraded for other public emergencies in addition to external aggression. Upgraded information management tools within the Civil Defence Organisation will provide the appropriate support to the administrative controller for sound decision making.

Implementation of Strategy

The measures for protecting the civil population against the effects of hostile attacks and natural disasters have become a necessary part of every Government's administrative system. The Civil Defence measures will always be an extension of the peace time functions of the Government reoriented with additional responsibility for war emergencies and natural disasters. The responsibility for each part of Civil Defence action will be placed on various departments of the local government which perform similar functions during normal times, like

- Home Department - Emergency Response Services i.e. Search & Rescue, Security, Fire Fighting etc.
- Medical & Health Department - Emergency Treatment, transportation and hospital Services.
- Municipal Health Department - Emergency Public Health Services & Disposal of Human dead & carcasses.
- Public Works Department - Structural Engineering, Clearance & Access and Emergency Repair & Demolition Services.
- Water Supply Department - Emergency Water Supply.
- Education Department - Civil Defence measures in Educational Institutions and conservation & protection of museums / libraries/ art galleries.
- Supply Department - Emergency food supplies and related equipment.
- Public Welfare Department - Emergency evacuation and sheltering.
- Animal Husbandry Department - Care of Animals.
- Agriculture Department - Assessment of food crops production.
- Public Distribution Department - Emergency Food and Civil supplies.
- Revenue / Finance Department - Emergency funds, relief and financial assistance.

Implementing authority

The Civil Defence Act provides for the State Government to appoint a person, not being, in its opinion, below the rank of the District Magistrate as "**Controller**". This is based on the principle of designating the highest local government authority having direct control over district resources. However, this should be observed throughout the administration wherein the Commissioner, District Magistrate and Sub-Divisional Officer

respectively will be the designated authority for Civil Defence in the Division, District and Sub-Division. All communications from the Government regarding Civil Defence matters should be sent to or through the District Magistrate, or failing this, copies should be sent to him for information as he is responsible for the organisation and functioning of the Civil Defence resources even though a separate Controller may have been appointed. In certain cases it may be found more convenient to have an "autonomous" Controller i.e. one who works directly under Government. The above officers require additional assistance if they are to discharge their additional responsibilities. The same applies to the other district officials such as the Civil Surgeon who will be made responsible for Medical & Health Services and Executive Engineer (P.W.D.) for construction, repair and demolition.

While each Department is responsible for policy and technical direction of Civil Defence, measures must be implemented to co-ordinate departmental activities so as to harmonize with the overall emergency mission and prevent conflict and duplication.

Co-ordination can be achieved by :-

- (a) Comprehensive assessment of needs of various agencies/departments.
- (b) Specific allocation of responsibilities to various agencies / departments as per their capability and availability.
- (c) Interaction between various agencies / departments through consultation. Each agency /department to establish co-ordination committees for consultation.
- (d) Preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) by each agency / Department based on allocation of responsibilities under the Emergency Plan.

The Civil Defence Controller must also co-ordinate the Local Civil Defence plan with other autonomous agencies / departments such as Cantonments, Port Trust, Railways, Industrial Establishments, Airport Authorities, etc.

Powers of District Magistrate or corresponding officer

The District Magistrate is a representative of the government in each district and wide powers are delegated to him in an emergency which may extend up to all executive powers of the Government. In any case he has inherent powers as he representative of Government, and after any emergency he must take charge generally and act on his own responsibility.

In order to implement, Civil Defence measures in the entire district, the District Magistrate will be the "Controller" of Civil Defence and he can designate sub-divisional officers to act as "Controller" on his behalf in other towns of the District for better control and co-ordination. Similarly, departmental officers in towns other than district headquarter such as Assistant Surgeons, P.W.D. Engineers etc., should be placed in position in which they can act freely in any emergency, subject to the general supervision of the Commissioner / District Officer or Sub-Divisional Officer as the case may be.

Since every contingency cannot be foreseen, more important than exact formal delegation of powers is the assurance of approval and support from higher authorities if controlling officers have to act with strength and conviction.

The Organizational Chart for Civil Defence Services in a District is given at the end of this chapter.

The Civil Defence legislation is sufficiently elastic to enable the constitution of a Civil Defence Service for a whole district with the District Magistrate as Controller, or to divide the district and constitute even a single factory into an area. Local circumstances will govern such a decision in each case.

Co-ordination Committee

At appropriate time it will be advisable to set up Area Co-ordination Committees on which representatives of Central Government Departments, Defence Services, Port Trust, Railways, Autonomous Public Organizations, Industrial Units, etc. may be nominated. All these units are normally expected to have independent C.D. Organizations that will be co-ordinated with local C.D. Organisation. This co-ordination is necessary to achieve the following-

- (a) Mutual Aid arrangements.
- (b) Disposal of Explosive Devices.
- (c) Warning / Alert arrangements.
- (d) Utilization of Training facilities and
- (e) Resolving differences and avoidance of conflict.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Strategy

Progress towards implementation of Civil Defence strategy must be assessed at all levels.

The Home Department under the Home/Chief Secretary will be the **Evaluation Authority** in every State Government. The State Government may for the purpose of co-coordinating the activities of the Controllers within the State appoint a Director of Civil Defence under section 4(2) of the Civil Defence Act, 1968. The Director of Civil Defence will be the **Monitoring Authority** for Civil Defence Strategy and any directions by him with regard to Civil Defence measures shall be complied by all Controllers.

The Commissioners of a Division will exercise their control in the same way as they do in respect of their normal functions and secure co-ordination by periodic meetings with officers responsible for each section of the Civil Defence Plan. In order to effectively implement the plan in the event of war emergency, it will be essential that the Civil Defence Plan is well coordinated with the military plans for active defence, and the appropriate Military Authority is consulted by the State Government, Commissioner, District Magistrate and Sub-Divisional Officer in their respective spheres. He should, therefore, be invited to attend or send a representative to the periodic meetings. All

efforts should be made by each of the Civil Officers mentioned above to keep the appropriate Military Authority informed of the measures proposed to be taken in an emergency, no matter how junior in rank he may be. The Civil Authorities must also evaluate the assistance that can be provided to the Military Authority as well as expected of him during any emergency.

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977.

Chapter VI. Civil Defence

Art 61. - Definitions and scope

For the purpose of this Protocol:

(1) "**Civil defence**" means the performance of some or all of the under-mentioned humanitarian tasks intended to protect the civilian population against the dangers, and to help it to recover from the immediate effects, of hostilities or disasters and also to provide the conditions necessary for its survival. These tasks are:

- (a) warning;
- (b) evacuation;
- (c) management of shelters;
- (d) management of blackout measures;
- (e) rescue;
- (f) medical services, including first aid, and religious assistance;
- (g) fire-fighting;
- (h) detection and marking of danger areas;
- (i) decontamination and similar protective measures;
- (j) provision of emergency accommodation and supplies;
- (k) emergency assistance in the restoration and maintenance of order in distressed areas;
- (l) emergency repair of indispensable public utilities;
- (m) emergency disposal of the dead;
- (n) assistance in the preservation of objects essential for survival;
- (o) complementary activities necessary to carry out any of the tasks mentioned above, including, but not limited to, planning and organization;

(2) "Civil Defence organizations" means those establishments and other units which are organized or authorized by the competent authorities of a Party to the conflict to perform any of the tasks mentioned under (1), and which are assigned and devoted exclusively to such tasks; (3) "Personnel" of civil defence organizations means those persons assigned by a Party to the conflict exclusively to the performance of the tasks mentioned under (1), including personnel assigned by the competent authority of that Party exclusively to the administration of these organizations;

(4) "Material" of civil defence organizations means equipment, supplies and transports used by these organizations for the performance of the tasks mentioned under (1).

Art 62. General Protection

1. Civilian civil defence organizations and their personnel shall be respected and protected, subject to the provisions of this Protocol, particularly the provisions of this section. They shall be entitled to perform their civil defence tasks except in case of imperative military necessity.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 shall also apply to civilians who, although not members of civilian civil defence organizations, respond to an appeal from the competent authorities and perform civil defence tasks under their control.

3. Buildings and material used for civil defence purposes and shelters provided for the civilian population are covered by Article 52. Objects used for civil defence purposes may not be destroyed or diverted from their proper use except by the Party to which they belong.

Art 63. Civil defence in occupied territories

1. In occupied territories, civilian civil defence organizations shall receive from the authorities the facilities necessary for the performance of their tasks. In no Circumstances shall their personnel be compelled to perform activities which would interfere with the proper performance of these tasks. The Occupying Power shall not change the structure or personnel of such organizations in any way which might jeopardize the efficient performance of their mission. These organizations shall not be required to give priority to the nationals or interests of that Power.

2. The Occupying Power shall not compel, coerce or induce civilian civil defence organizations to perform their tasks in any manner prejudicial to the interests of the civilian population.

3. The Occupying Power may disarm civil defence personnel for reasons of security.

4. The Occupying Power shall neither divert from their proper use nor requisition buildings or material belonging to or used by civil defence organizations if such diversion or requisition would be harmful to the civilian population.

5. Provided that the general rule in paragraph 4 continues to be observed, the Occupying Power may requisition or divert these resources, subject to the following particular conditions:

- (a) that the buildings or material are necessary for other needs of the civilian population; and
- (b) that the requisition or diversion continues only while such necessity exists.

6. The Occupying Power shall neither divert nor requisition shelters provided for the use of the civilian population or needed by such population.

Art 64. Civilian civil defence organizations of neutral or other States not Parties to the conflict and international co-ordinating organizations

1. Articles 62, 63, 65 and 66 shall also apply to the personnel and material of civilian civil defence organizations of neutral or other States not Parties to the conflict which perform civil defence tasks mentioned in Article 61 in the territory of a Party to the conflict, with the consent and under the control of that Party. Notification of such assistance shall be given as soon as possible to any adverse Party concerned. In no circumstances shall this activity be deemed to be as interference in the conflict. This activity should, however, be performed with due regard to the security interests of the Parties to the conflict concerned.

2. The Parties to the conflict receiving the assistance referred to in paragraph 1 and the High Contracting Parties granting it should facilitate international co-ordination of such civil defence actions when appropriate. In such cases the relevant international organizations are covered by the provisions of this Chapter.

3. In occupied territories, the Occupying Power may only exclude or restrict the activities of civilian civil defence organizations of neutral or other States not Parties to the conflict and of international co-ordinating organizations if it can ensure the adequate performance of civil defence tasks from its own resources or those of the occupied territory.

Art 65. Cessation of protection

1. The protection to which civilian civil defence organizations, their personnel, buildings, shelters and material are entitled shall not cease unless they commit or are used to commit, outside their proper tasks, acts harmful to the enemy. Protection may, however, cease only after a warning has been given setting, whenever appropriate, a reasonable time-limit, and after such warning has remained unheeded.

2. The following shall not be considered as acts harmful to the enemy:

- (a) that civil defence tasks are carried out under the direction or control of military authorities;
- (b) that civilian civil defence personnel co-operate with military personnel in the performance of civil defence tasks, or that some military personnel are attached to civilian civil defence organizations;
- (c) that the performance of civil defence tasks may incidentally benefit military victims, particularly those who are hors de combat.

3. It shall also not be considered as an act harmful to the enemy that civilian civil defence personnel bear light individual weapons for the purpose of maintaining order or for self-defence. However, in areas where land fighting is taking place or is likely to take place, the Parties to the conflict shall undertake the appropriate measures to limit these weapons to handguns, such as pistols or revolvers, in order to assist in distinguishing between civil defence personnel and combatants. Although civil defence personnel bear other light individual weapons in such areas, they shall nevertheless be respected and protected as soon as they have been recognized as such.

4. The formation of civilian civil defence organizations along military lines, and compulsory service in them, shall also not deprive them of the protection conferred by this Chapter.

Art 66. Identification

1. Each Party to the conflict shall endeavour to ensure that its civil defence organizations, their personnel, buildings and material are identifiable while they are exclusively devoted to the performance of civil defence tasks. Shelters provided for the civilian population should be similarly identifiable.
2. Each Party to the conflict shall also endeavour to adopt and implement methods and procedures which will make it possible to recognize civilian shelters as well as civil defence personnel, buildings and material on which the international distinctive sign of civil defence is displayed.
3. In occupied territories and in areas where fighting is taking place or is likely to take place, civilian civil defence personnel should be recognizable by the international distinctive sign of civil defence and by an identity card certifying their status.
4. The international distinctive sign of civil defence is an equilateral blue triangle on an orange ground when used for the protection of civil defence organizations, their personnel, buildings and material and for civilian shelters.
5. In addition to the distinctive sign, Parties to the conflict may agree upon the use of distinctive signals for civil defence identification purposes.

6. The application of the provisions of paragraphs 1 to 4 is governed by Chapter V of Annex I to this Protocol.

7. In time of peace, the sign described in paragraph 4 may, with the consent of the competent national authorities, be used for civil defence identification purposes.

8. The High Contracting Parties and the Parties to the conflict shall take the measures necessary to supervise the display of the international distinctive sign of civil defence and to prevent and repress any misuse thereof.

9. The identification of civil defence medical and religious personnel, medical units and medical transports is also governed by Article 18.

CHAPTER V. CIVIL DEFENCE

Article 14 : Identity card

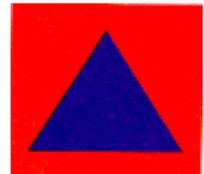
1. The identity card of the civil defence personnel provided for in Article 66, paragraph 3, of the Protocol is governed by the relevant provisions of Article 1 of these Regulations.

2. The identity card for civil defence personnel may follow the model shown in Figure 3.

3. If civil defence personnel are permitted to carry light individual weapons, an entry to that effect should be made on the card mentioned.

Article 15 : International Distinctive sign

1. The international distinctive sign of civil defence provided for in Article 66, paragraph 4, of the Protocol is an equilateral blue triangle on an orange ground.



2. It is recommended that:

- if the blue triangle is on a flag or armlet or tabard, the ground to the triangle be the orange flag, armlet or tabard;
- one of the angles of the triangle be pointed vertically upwards;
- no angle of the triangle touch the edge of the orange ground.

The international distinctive sign shall be as large as appropriate under the circumstances. The distinctive sign shall, whenever possible, be displayed on flat surfaces or on flags visible from as many directions and from as far away as possible. Subject to the instructions of the competent authority, civil defence personnel shall, as far as possible, wear headgear and clothing bearing the international distinctive sign. At night or when visibility is reduced, the sign may be lighted or illuminated; it may also be made of materials rendering it recognizable by technical means of detection.