

LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT**Dr. Chitra S. Rajuskar**Associate Professor,
Karve Institute of Social Service, Pune-52**Abstract-**

Natural disasters are a part of life and their occurrence in unplanned, densely populated cities becomes a tough job for the youth volunteers to help the victims. As the technology advances, today, everyone is becoming aware about personal and professional development. Despite this, growing number of educational institutions, the gap between desired disaster management skills and actual skills possessed by the youth is consistently widening. The academic world too narrowly focuses on skill management. Learning is prerequisite for any growth and advancement in life. In emergency management, an understanding about life management skills has utmost importance.

Keywords: disaster management, life management, skills, volunteer.

Introduction-

India is witnessing natural and human induced disasters quite frequently. Floods, droughts, sudden climate changes, lightening, cloudbursts, fires, industrial accidents, road and rail accidents, earthquakes, cyclones, epidemics, and many more become increasingly common. These have resulted in loss of lives, paralysis in multiple casualties, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, etc. What is happening around us shakes our complacency and challenges our faith in development. R. K. Celly and T. N. Gupta in their article "Dimensions of Natural Disaster Management in India" in Shelter (October 12, 1999) observe that "a natural hazard is an event of nature which causes damage to life and property, to such an extent that normal, social and economic mechanisms available to the society are inadequate to restore normalcy".

Disaster management is the discipline of dealing with as well as avoiding natural and man-made disasters. It involves preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters. In India, not everyone is competent in the skills, even in today's era of globalisation. Even so, it is highly identified as a need and a must skill-set to be developed, and learn life management skills. Crisis handling is an art as well as a science. It needs advances planning. We need a holistic approach. Water, health, food, shelter, livelihood, and childcare are all closely integrated into human life. Only the people with faith in ethics should be associated with such work. It is a challenging task, which requires hard work, sincerity, loyalty and spirit of service.

Important life management skills for volunteers working in disaster management-

Few of the life management skills were identified on the basis of experiences learnt from disasters in India. Skill development is an important component for disaster management. It is essential to learn safe and secure practices for reducing the risk. Empowering the population residing in highly industrialised cities and geographically disaster prone areas is today's need. Awareness about skill requirement and disaster management is slowly increasing. Following are few of the life management skills for various types of disasters-

1. Self-awareness- it includes the perception one has of one's own characteristics, feelings, attitudes, values and abilities. It is a picture of the person he has (or considers) of himself, self-confidence, knowledge of self-concept
2. Sensitivity- sympathy and empathy
3. Time management

4. Effective Communication with local people (listening- leading to understanding)
5. Task delegation and supervision
6. Co-operation
7. Adaptability (accepting and overcoming challenges)
8. Analytical and problem solving skills
9. Preparing a plan of action- good planning skills
10. Eliciting information in order to collect relevant data that would lead to assessment of a problem/situation
11. Observing both verbal and non-verbal behaviour, which helps in process of assessment

All the aforementioned skills could be classified into three categories- cognitive, procedural and interactional skills. Cognitive skills are intellectual skills and can be improvised by developing critical and reflective thinking. Procedural skills are required in today's youth-volunteers because disaster management activities are based on certain logical systematic and scientific steps which are to be procedurally followed. Ex- planning skills. Interaction skills are most essential in disaster management because interaction is the main channel of victim-volunteer communication.

The requisites for volunteers-

Volunteers working in disaster management must know methods to deal with a critical issue or situation. The needs identified in the disasters are not same; so the volunteer has to identify the problems that could lead to a crisis and learn when and how to intervene effectively by using the skills

1. Use of Personal protective equipment during disaster management
2. Health management
3. Community understanding
4. Stamina and energy management
5. Good observant
6. Knowledge about human behaviour
7. Result oriented behaviour- respond rapidly with beneficial end, decision making
8. Safety management
9. Emotion and conflict management- develop special negotiating and communication skills required to reduce conflict or ensure cooperation in a crisis situation.
10. Technical knowledge- develop special knowledge and expertise in the field.
11. Positive attitude

Conclusion-

Knowledge of how to carry out the difficult planning and coordination activities associated with preparing for, and managing crisis situations, is a necessity for the volunteers as well as the society. Rather than enthusiastic volunteer action, it is beneficial if the disaster management activities are carried out by skilled and trained personnel. Such training activities can be carried out for aspiring volunteers. The first thirty minutes, post any disaster, are considered as the golden period for saving lives.

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