

**Address of Honourable Governor, Chhattisgarh, Shri Shekhar Dutt on the  
Inauguration of International Conference on Humanitarian Logistics**

**At IIM, Raipur, 02 December 2013**



It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to be amongst you on the occasion of inauguration of International Conference on Humanitarian Logistics (ICHL) organized by Indian Institute of Management, Raipur (IIM). At the outset I welcome all the dignitaries both from India and abroad. I can see a galaxy of expert and delegates gathered here, which in itself speaks of the importance of this theme. I wish to compliment the organizers of the conference who have selected such a contemporary subject for deliberations.

The worldwide rise in natural and man-made disasters in the last two decades has emphasised the re-examination of the preparedness to cope with them. Such disasters have occurred with high impact and have the potential to completely disrupt the daily lives of people and result in huge loss of lives and capital to the extent of wiping out the entire cities. Countries world over have been developing mechanisms to mitigate such disasters but the some of the recent disasters reveal that the existing preparedness is less than satisfactory, particularly, in emerging economies like India, such preparedness require high priority. The key to cope up with such disasters is the Logistics, termed as Humanitarian Logistics organized to make the life saving drugs, food products, and other necessary amenities available to the affected people. The time has come whereby policy makers, Government bodies, academia, and operation leaders should meet on a common platform to deliberate on this key and relevant issue of Humanitarian Logistics.

The rapid frequency with which Natural and man made disasters are causing havoc and damage to human life and property has forced us to sit up and take note of this alarming situation. Today, experts from different fields who have come together, may address this contemporary concern. I hope it would also lead towards fostering international cooperation to prevent loss of life, social and economic disruptions, caused by natural disasters such as earth quakes, cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, wild fires, which require global or regional responses.

After Gujarat earthquake and Tsunami in southern part of India, Govt. of India has started giving special attention to the disasters and at national level, a National Disaster Management Authority has been formed with the Hon'ble Prime Minister as its head. Similarly, at the State level, Hon'ble Chief Minister heads the State Disaster Management Authority. An institute dedicated to disaster management has been established at New Delhi. With these initiatives, focus on the natural disasters has increased. As Uttarakhand grapples with one of the worst natural disasters the state has faced in recent years, questions are being raised on whether a part of the destruction was man-made. Recently we have seen early warning and evacuation system helped minimize the death toll as Cyclone Phailin that lashed the country's eastern coast. The experience underscores the type of disaster preparation nations will need as climate change leads to fiercer and more frequent storms. I am happy to learn that officers of Armed Forces are also participating in this conference. Soldiers fight bravely in war but at the same time they help the civilian during peace. We have recently seen our Army and Air Force playing a pivotal role in the rescue operation in natural disaster of Uttrakhand.

Moreover, in addition to natural disasters, it is man made disasters and security threats which are a cause for worry. Although, now the State Government agencies and district administration are more aware of this aspect of threat, we are far from fully prepared to deal with disasters and threats of violence created by man. We need to put in place, Standard Operating Procedures, infrastructures, trained manpower, equipments and resources to deal with such eventualities.

During serious disaster situations, the major challenges are the protection of human beings, properties and the vital life-supporting infrastructure necessary for disaster mitigation. Advanced disaster management technology could provide a critical support system to disaster management authorities during the situation of disaster related crises. It has now come to realization that taking care of the natural resources and managing them wisely not only assures the survival of future generations, but also reduces the risks that natural and man-made hazards pose to people living today.

Preparedness and mitigation measures to reduce disaster risks are identified. These risk reduction measures are not necessarily big projects. Risk reduction processes are also related with community mobilization and resources within the community's immediate reach. To tide over the disaster situation, several awareness programmes need to be organize and officers and engineers need to equip themselves with the knowledge of disaster mitigation techniques and educate the common masses.

As speed and appropriate action are clearly key factors of success of an emergency operation. In pre-disaster situation the key to preparedness is analysis of information, prediction, anticipation, early warning systems. In this sense it is very important to call attention to the problems faced by people in disaster zones after the media spotlight has moved on, and even more critically, to people affected by slow onset disasters.

In the last decade of the 20th century much has been done to achieve better quality, coordination and professionalism in emergency aid delivery. It is clear that the most critical period of any post-disaster operation is the first 48 hours, whether looking at search and rescue or immediate treatment of victims, food and water delivery, or shelter. Much more can be done, and we must continue building the institutional framework within which coordination takes place, and developing the necessary resource base for action.

Bhopal, a city in central India, still suffers from a horrific gas leak that occurred 28 years ago. December 2 & 3 mark the anniversary for those suffering from breathing troubles and other effects of the deadly methyl isocyanate that seeped out silently into the city late one night. Twenty years on, many of the gas leak victims still live hard lives, struggling with poverty and lasting health effects. Victims say they still suffer from the deadly effects from the leak, including miscarriages, dizzy spells, cysts, blindness and stunted growth.

In a democracy, the Government has to be responsive to the needs of the people specially, where such needs are also the responsibility of the State. In the same way, the citizens must also realize their responsibilities and duties. Without their active co-operation, nothing can be achieved. During any crisis, the help and co-operation of people of all walks of life, whether ordinary citizen or professionals like doctors, engineers, fire fighters, administrators etc is required. So people of different section should aware, informed and trained about disaster management.

Community is always the 'victim' and also the first to respond. If related officers and staff are properly trained and can provide early warning with local knowledge, local capacity, local expertise, during the first emergency phase; they can be of immense help in coordination of entire effort. This local capacity is to be built through training and they have to be involved in all stages of planning & preparedness. I firmly believe that involvement of local people, volunteers, and humanitarian organizations at the grassroots level is a mandatory requirement in mitigating the sufferings by disasters.

What I mean to say is that the human life is valuable and needs protection from various dangers and we must keep us prepared to react to the dangers which most of the time strike unexpectedly. In this regard, training of the human resource and of various agencies is essential so that at the time of an emergency, they carry out their responsibility without any doubt in their minds. Similarly, to provide the resources, infrastructure, equipments etc. is the responsibility of the Government.

In the end, I again congratulate the IIM, Raipur for this highly relevant conference and hope its deliberations shall bring out useful strategies which will go a long way in offering solution for all related issues. Thank you indeed for having made me a part of such an important subject. On my part, I will be more than happy to be of help in your efforts.

Thank You,

Jai Hind