

**PREPAREDNESS STATUS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT STUDY IN  
WEST BENGAL**

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**Introduction:**

Not a year passes when disaster does not happen in any part of the globe causing loss of lives, damage to the properties and suffering of the millions (1). Each country thus being attacked with disaster suffers also economic loss and if it is developing country, it creates an added economic strain to her people (2)

West Bengal state has a perennial problem of disaster due to floods and as such miseries and calamities do affect the lives of millions residing in the vicinity of flood zones

It is also the fact that some disasters may be prevented, some may be mitigated whereas in some cases intensity may be reduced. It is because of the fact that disaster from flood every year is almost inevitable, strategies for mitigating the effects have to be formulated so as to minimize the damages. Ever since the proclamation of UNO as Nineteen Nineties be the decade for reduction of natural disaster, most of the countries prone to disaster have adopted the WHO's theme on the "World Health Day" in 1991 i.e. "Should Disaster Strike - be prepared" (4), as the practical measure to safeguard the life and properties of their

people. Thus, preparedness against the havoc of disaster has become key strategy for disaster mitigation. It is with this background Disaster Management Centre (DMC) at All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta conducted an in-depth research study in flood prone districts of West Bengal with following objectives.

1. To examine the preparedness plan of flood prone districts in relation to pre, during and post disaster phases of disaster management.
2. To identify weaknesses, if any, in the plan and to compare districts quantitatively in relation to their preparedness status using preparedness indicators.
3. To recommend measures so as to strengthen the plan in order to mitigate effects of disaster effectively.

**Methodology:**

1. **Area:** Eleven districts in West Bengal which are known to be regularly affected with flood/drought were surveyed. These districts are: Hooghly, West Dinajpur, Maldah, Murshidabad, Midnapur, Nadia, 24 Parganas(n), 24 Parganas(s), Burdwan,

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