

9.4 AWARENESS MATERIAL

DMI's awareness material is targeted at educating individual disaster managers, CBO leaders, Panchayat members, grassroots workers, and vulnerable households towards disaster preparedness. As visual communication is more powerful than text-rich tools, Learning Resources publishes need based awareness posters for vulnerable groups ranging from disaster managers to semi-literate individuals

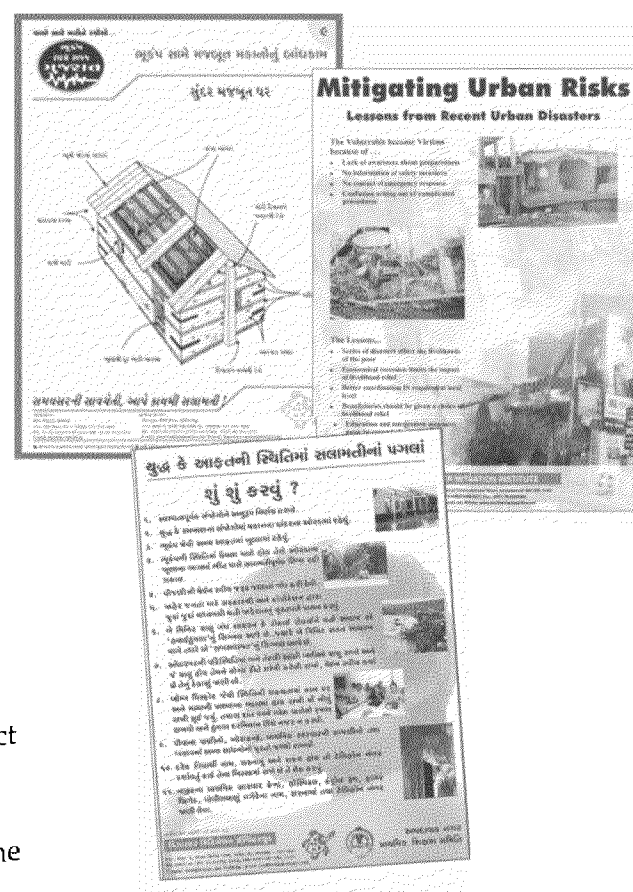
Information and glance posters, TV slides, leaflets and brochures provide information, insights and inputs on key concerns of disaster mitigation. Experience reveals greater impact of visual material amongst at risk groups. Preparedness aspects like 'dos' and 'don'ts' of natural disaster, lessons from natural and conflict related disasters, emergency supply checklist, preparedness planning, school safety, and minimum relief standards are covered through these communication tools.

A *Multimedia Learning Series* of audio-visual presentations aimed at capturing best preparedness practices and sharing them with the community, is being developed and some experimentation has already been carried out. The audio-visual material will be used as a medium to promote and encourage preparedness among vulnerable communities. It will also be used to positively influence policy makers for informed disaster preparedness decision-making. Several CDs have already been produced documenting various aspects of DMI's work. Up to eight items on floods in Bhuj, drought in Patan, and so on are now available for training and advocacy purpose. Multimedia Learning Services have already been used in Local Capacity Building Cycles (Chapter 7), National Course Series (Chapter 8), the Sphere revisions process (Chapter 5), and food consultations.

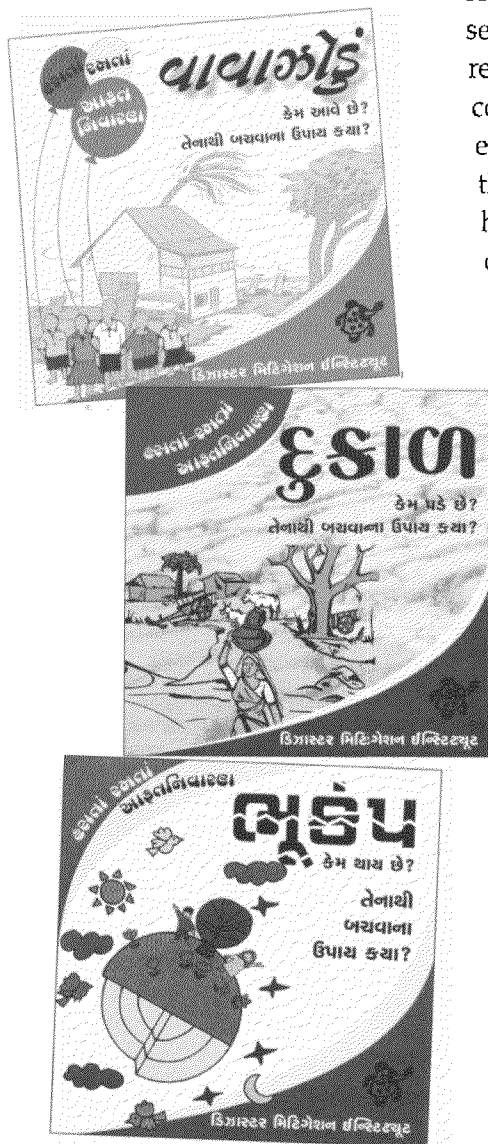
OBJECTIVES OF AWARENESS MATERIAL:

DMI's Awareness Material, ranging from posters, to pamphlets, to one-page handouts, is designed to reach a large number of people and to communicate a few succinct points, not necessarily to treat a subject at great depth. These materials are directed toward a wide variety in audience. They are produced mostly in Gujarati because the community is the main audience, but some items are printed in English and are directed at policy makers.

These materials often build on each other and are integrated into other DMI activities. For example, as a follow up to the earthquake safe



Posters say a lot in few words



Three disaster brochures for school children

building measure posters, DMI developed a more detailed pamphlet (15,000 copies) that was aimed at masons or others actually constructing buildings. The earlier poster was a general description of seismically safe building techniques that would be of interest to a resident that does not need to know very specific details of construction, but who should be aware of the general issues if, for example, they were to hire a contractor and wanted to make sure that the contractor performed seismically safe work. On the other hand, those actually doing the construction work need very specific descriptions of appropriate building techniques. More detailed material reflects learning and experience. The school disaster preparation is a good example. Following deaths caused by panic at a school, DMI was asked to produce some material on school safety. A brochure was produced addressing school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Then training modules were developed and an *Afat Nivaran* article was prepared.

Awareness Materials are distributed when DMI team attends a community meeting or when they meet with government officials. They are distributed from stalls at fairs and DMI's Information Centres in the slums of Bhuj and Ahmedabad act as dissemination points for preparedness related community information.

EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS MATERIAL:

The response to and requests for more information about disaster preparedness issues suggest that the awareness of mitigation measures in the community has grown over the years. DMI has received positive verbal feedback concerning its Awareness Material. Participants have said they liked the appearance of the material even if they were not able to read it themselves; often they had their children read them the material. Often, the government has requested copies of material. The earthquake-affected communities in Gujarat appreciated the set of 9 posters on earthquake safe building measures for their usefulness and timeliness. 5,000 copies of each poster were printed (45,000 total).

9.5 DMI WEBSITES

DMI established its main website (www.southasiadisasters.net) in 1999. It contains a basic description of DMI's work and its approach to disaster mitigation, as well as material on DMI's Activity Centres and specific projects. Photographs relating to DMI's activities, as well as pictures of its team are on the site. There is also a list of DMI publications and information sheets; a means for ordering these publications is also provided. Visitor to the site are able to provide feedback on the site itself

as well as on DMI's work in general. The website is useful to researchers, students, academicians, practitioners in government agencies and NGOs, and many others.

DMI also maintains two other related websites: one focusing on the Emergency Food Security Network

- (www.emergencyfoodsecuritynetwork.net) of which DMI is a member,
- and one on the Sphere Project (www.sphereinindia.net); see Chapter 5.

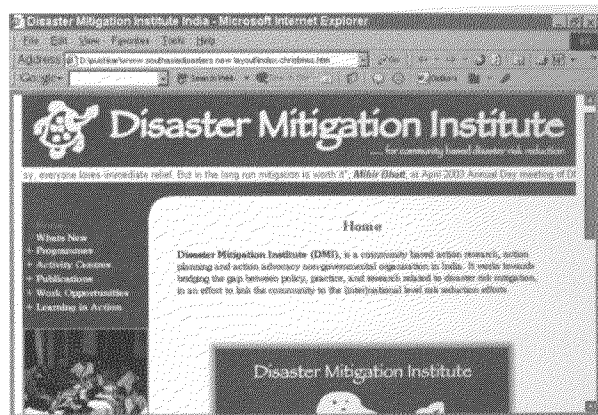
OBJECTIVES OF DMI WEBSITES:

The main purpose of DMI's websites is to reach out and inform people about DMI's activities and approach to disaster risk mitigation with its focus on a community-based approach. While it is difficult to know exactly what changes this has led to, the target audience for DMI's main website is global in nature and the great majority of the visitors to the site come from outside India. These visitors are interested in learning about disasters in India generally, and DMI's specific risk mitigation activities. They comprise disaster management professionals, academics, and students, among others. While it is difficult to know exactly what changes this has led to, it is clear that many people have become better informed of DMI's activities and this has often led to partnerships between DMI and individual visitors and/or their organisations. The focus of the Sphere website is more national in nature; the Emergency Food Security Network (EFSN) target audience is also national, and even local within Gujarat.

A secondary objective of the websites is to provide an opportunity for feedback on DMI's activities and approach. However, people who contact DMI through its websites can be added to its mailing list for the purpose of future outreach and information sharing.

EFFECTIVENESS OF DMI'S WEBSITES:

The main measure of effectiveness of the websites is the great number of people visit the sites, especially DMI's main site. The main site receives an average of 26,000 visitors a month; the Sphere website receives 6,000 visits a month, and the EFSN website approximately 500-600. It is hoped that these visitors will expand their knowledge of disaster mitigation and thus improve their own efforts in this regard. Several comments have been received on how to improve the website. A visitor said, "I visit your website for some of the most innovative ideas"



DMI website attracts 26000 visitors each month.