

Risk Reduction Opportunities for Indian Cities

Cities in India offer the biggest and best opportunity to implement risk reduction and resilience building measures as envisaged in the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) of Government of India as launched in June 2016.

Since 2001, the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) has worked in at least 65 cities from 16 states and 2 union territories of India. The activities include emergency management exercises, community consultations, participatory risk assessments, school safety audit, hospital fire safety audit, capacity building activities through trainings, demonstrations and mock-drills; advocacy through round tables; community researches; gender studies.

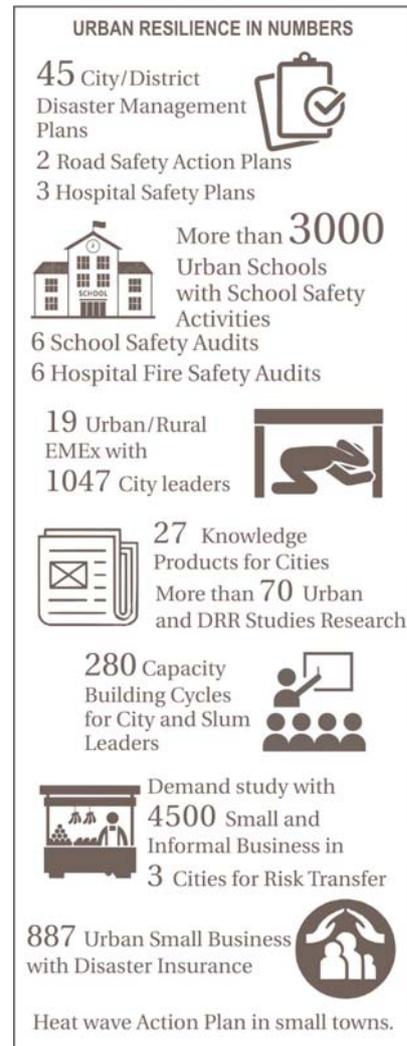
In addition AIDMI has worked on information dissemination; participatory shelter and urban school reconstruction activities; restoration of city livelihoods; micro-finance to businesses and risk transfer initiatives of slum dwellers. Several city drought management plans are made and in cases area based disaster risk reduction has also been taken up for special sectors as slums or *dargah* or temples. These activities support slum areas and the urban poor from marginalised communities.

The following is an overview of selected opportunities.

- Building Urban Resilience: 8th South-South Citizenry Based Development sub-Academy (SSCBDA), Ahmedabad, January 2016 by AIDMI suggested that city-to-city risk reduction is the best and most cost effective measure of collective widescale risk reduction in India. Cities

learns from other cities rapidly and concretely.

- Risk Transfer and Insurance: Demand Survey for Disaster Microinsurance in Guwahati in Assam, Puri in Odisha, and Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, January 2016.
- City Disaster Management Plans: 45 city and district disaster management plans with NDMA, ASDMA, BSDMA, OSDMA and Government of Jammu & Kashmir. Through these efforts it has been learnt that it is the process of such planning that is far more important than the actual final one-time top-down product.
- City Wide Emergency Management Exercises (EMEx) is a key to urban disaster preparedness and planning. In this "area based approach" is for more effective when focus is on excluded groups and risk hotspots in cities.
- AIDMI with ASDMA conducted a Guwahati City-level review study on flood risk management. The study reviewed 25 key Guwahati focused documents of last 10 years to list out key recommendations for Guwahati city specific flood risk management.
- 624 schools have been audited from 14 Urban Areas - 8 States/ UTs indicated that's schools in cities are fore-runners of disaster risk preparedness at school level as well as at home.
- Urban Small Businesses clearly indicated that citizens and private sector are keen to take action, put in time, and in cases resources to reduce risks they face with Disaster Insurance.
- In the end one of the lowest hanging fruit of NDMP is urban risk reduction.



In conducting the above mentioned work, AIDMI has developed and refined tools and methods that are of use to NDMP implementation process at the national and state level, such as Risk Review Tool for Urban Basic Services; Metro Flood Management Tool; Local Urban Employment Resilience Index; Resilient Ward Index; and Integrated City Risk Reduction Tool.

Time has come for Indian cities to become engines of disaster risk reduction activities. ■

- AIDMI Team