

Concept note

Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF)
Webinar on ‘International Cooperation in Disaster Management: Lessons from Fukushima’
11th March, 2021

The Fukushima nuclear disaster at the nuclear plant in Okuma, Fukushima was caused by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. It was the most severe nuclear accident since the Chernobyl disaster in 1986.

The Govt of India responded by sending a 46-member team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) besides relief supplies to Japan. It was the first overseas mission for the NDRF personnel trained in handling disasters, including nuclear emergencies. The NDRF team was deployed at Onagawa, a port town of Miyagi Prefecture where they conducted search and rescue operations for missing persons. The painstaking efforts of the NDRF personnel in the bitter chill of Tohoku’s blustery winds received appreciation from a cross section of people in Japan. The friendly gesture of the Indian government during a crisis situation contributed significantly towards strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

In the aftermath of this disaster, the Govt of Japan worked in close coordination with the people in the affected region for recovery and reconstruction of Tohoku making commendable progress in improvement of infrastructure to restore normalcy. The speedy recovery of this totally devastated region amidst harsh conditions is one of the best models of post disaster reconstruction work for any country to emulate.

The Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF) is organising a webinar on the 11th March 2021 coinciding with the 10th anniversary of Fukushima disaster to deliberate on the lessons learnt from this event in the field of international cooperation in disaster management. While the proceedings in this webinar will be wide ranging, some of the relevant issues which the panelists would be requested to deliberate are:

* Safety measures to be adopted by nuclear plants, particularly those in the high seismic zone or closer to the sea.

- * Considering the delay of a number of days in dispatching the NDRF team to Japan, there is a need to have an efficient decision making process in place at the appropriate level in the Govt. to ensure quick decision to despatch teams for international response in any major disaster
- * Pros and cons of bilateral deployment of NDRF teams to affected country instead of deployment under UNOCHA as per INSARG guidelines.
- * Relevance and importance of INSARG certification to the NDRF teams to ensure prompt despatch of the response teams to the site of disaster to work in a coordinated manner with INSARAG trained teams of other countries.
- * Status of ready availability of relief items as part of the 'National Disaster Response Reserve' to ensure prompt despatch of relief items to affected country.
- * Need to have an inter-governmental Disaster Management Centre to facilitate cooperation and coordination among SAARC and BIMSTEC member countries on the lines of AHA (ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in disaster management)