



Uttaran

Emergency Reponse Guideline

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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1. Introduction:

Bangladesh is highly exposed to a wide range of natural and climate-induced hazards due to its geographical location, increasing climate variability, rapid and often unplanned urbanization, and environmentally harmful human activities. The country regularly experiences hazards such as cyclones, tidal surges, floods, tornadoes, river erosion, cold waves, droughts, fires, waterlogging, and salinity intrusion. These hazards escalate into disasters when they interact with high levels of vulnerability, poverty, dense population, weak infrastructure, and limited coping capacities, particularly in coastal and riverbank areas.

Climate change has significantly intensified disaster risks in Bangladesh by increasing the frequency, severity, and unpredictability of climate-related hazards. The combined effects of climate change, unplanned development, unsustainable human intervention in natural systems, and river control measures have further increased exposure and vulnerability across the country. As a result, the lives, livelihoods, and basic rights of vulnerable and marginalized communities are increasingly at risk.

Uttaran is a human rights-based organization committed to promoting an equal, democratic, and just social system. Since its establishment, Uttaran has worked to strengthen community resilience, protect human dignity, and uphold fundamental rights, particularly for poor, marginalized, and disaster-affected populations. To ensure internal good governance, transparency, accountability, and institutional discipline, Uttaran has developed and follows a comprehensive set of organizational policies, guidelines, and operational procedures.

In response to evolving national and international humanitarian standards and ethical practices, Uttaran periodically reviews and updates its policies and operational frameworks. Accordingly, and in alignment with the **Bangladesh Disaster Management Act 2012** and the **Standing Orders on Disaster (Revised) 2010**, Uttaran has developed this guideline to provide a structured and principled framework for preparedness, response, early recovery, and rehabilitation in situations arising from disasters triggered by natural and human-induced hazards, as well as conflicts and other emergency contexts.

This guideline is further guided by internationally recognized humanitarian frameworks, including the **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)** and the **SPHERE Standards**, to ensure that all emergency responses are needs-based, impartial, accountable, inclusive, and delivered with quality, dignity, and respect for the rights of affected communities.

2. Principle:

Uttaran follows the Principles of Humanitarian Action which are:

a) Humanity: The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for the rights and well-being of human beings. Concern to alleviate human suffering and preserve human dignity is the driving force for humanitarian action. In line with this principle, Uttaran reaffirms the humanitarian imperative and that it's priority is the humanitarian duty to save lives and alleviate suffering.

b) Impartiality: Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of needs alone, prioritizing those most in need, without discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion. Uttaran recognizes the importance of balancing the needs and interests of different stakeholders. Uttaran also strives to be strictly non-partisan in its humanitarian action. To do so, and in line with the principle of impartiality, Uttaran's humanitarian response always gives priority to the most vulnerable.

c) Neutrality: Humanitarians must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of an ideological, religious, racial or political nature. Uttaran assesses the relationship between a policy of neutrality and its advocacy role on a case-by-case basis, without compromising the principle of humanity.

d) Independence: Humanitarians must remain independent of the political, financial or other objectives that any others may have in areas where humanitarian action is being implemented. Uttaran is committed to the principle of independence where and when it is engaged in humanitarian action and in any other situation in which IOM adheres to the principle of humanity.

3. Operational Commitments

In addition to the core humanitarian principles, Uttaran commits to the following practices in all humanitarian responses:

a) Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA):

Ensure that humanitarian action upholds dignity, equality, participation, and accountability, with affected people recognized as rights-holders.

b) Protection of People in Humanitarian Crises:

Particularly in disasters triggered by natural hazards, Uttaran prioritizes:

- Life-saving interventions
- Prevention of family separation
- Protection from secondary or cascading risks
- Protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation

- Safe and equitable access to humanitarian assistance
- Support to basic rights including food, shelter, water, clothing, education, and health
- Protection of livelihoods, assets, and continuity of education where feasible

c) Inclusive Data and Assessment:

Collect and use sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADD) and conduct needs, gender, and diversity assessments to ensure inclusive and context-sensitive responses.

d) National Coordination and Compliance:

Work in close coordination with government authorities and disaster management committees at all levels, following national policies, instructions, and coordination mechanisms.

e) Data Protection and Privacy:

Protect the personal data, dignity, and confidentiality of affected people in line with Uttaran’s data protection policies.

f) Safeguarding and Ethical Conduct:

Adhere to Uttaran’s safeguarding, gender, child protection, code of conduct, human resource, and other relevant organizational policies.

g) Coordination and Partnership:

Coordinate with local communities, civil society organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, and humanitarian coordination platforms to ensure effective, complementary, and locally led responses.

h) Quality and Accountability Standards:

Apply the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), SPHERE Standards, and IASC Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) to ensure quality, accountability, and protection.

i) Accountability to Affected People:

Ensure accessible and safe Feedback and Response Mechanisms (FRM) so affected communities can raise concerns, provide feedback, and influence humanitarian action.

4. Anticipatory Actions and Preparedness

Uttaran recognizes the importance of anticipatory actions in reducing the impact of natural and climate-induced hazards before they escalate into full-scale disasters. Anticipatory actions involve proactive measures, based on early warning information, to protect lives, livelihoods, and property before the disaster strikes.

Uttaran commits to the following anticipatory actions:

- **Early Warning Systems (EWS):** Uttaran works with local, national, and international meteorological and climate agencies to monitor and respond to early warning signals for potential hazards, such as cyclones, floods, or droughts.
- **Forecast-Based Financing (FbF):** In alignment with international practices, Uttaran participates in forecast-based financing initiatives, which allow for the pre-distribution of resources based on anticipated hazards. This approach supports early intervention measures, such as stockpiling essential relief materials, preparing shelters, and deploying community response teams.
- **Community-Driven Preparedness:** Uttaran will continue engaging with communities to conduct preparedness training, mock drills, and contingency planning to ensure rapid, coordinated action when a disaster is anticipated.
- **Proactive Risk Mitigation:** Uttaran promotes risk reduction activities that are undertaken well before disasters occur, such as flood protection, cyclone shelter construction, strengthening embankments, and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- **Monitoring and Assessment:** Using data from early warning systems and climate forecasting, Uttaran will conduct regular assessments to identify potential risks and develop actionable mitigation strategies.

5. Aims and Objectives of making the guidelines:

5.1 Aims of making the guidelines:

In managing disasters, the aim of Uttaran is to evade humanitarian catastrophe and to help to decrease the danger level of the people, especially poor and unprivileged people, to a humane and acceptable level in case of natural, environmental and man-made disasters; in this case, Uttaran shall work in cooperation with the local people, donor organizations and the Bangladesh government.

Similarly, the objective of creating this guideline is to implement risk management, provide response, collect and supply data and assistance programs with discipline, democratic practice and transparency before, during and after the disasters and at the same time, keep ready a capable and effective emergency response method to fight the disasters.

5.2 Objectives of making the guidelines:

- Increase general affordability of Uttaran for disaster management.
- To determine strategies to reduce risks and mitigate damages of disasters within the working areas of Uttaran.
- To devise strategies to enable people's effective participation in disaster risk management and through its application, to take initiatives for preparing disaster risk plans;

- To encourage the implementation of cheap and durable methods and use of local knowledge and technologies for disaster risk management;
- To establish a connection with the local governmental organizations in disaster risk reduction activities;
- To ensure rapid, accurate, and needs-based assessment of disaster impacts, enabling timely, well-coordinated, and effective emergency response actions.
- To ensure that all humanitarian responses are delivered in line with humanitarian principles, accountability standards, and international best practices

6. Disasters:

Disasters are such dangerous situations which severely damage property, infrastructure and emergency services, can cause loss of lives and dictates the injury and homelessness of the affected group of people.

Uttaran assumes that disasters, natural or man-made, are such severe situations that damages the lives, livelihood, properties, farms, fisheries and crafts of the people and their surroundings and hampers the natural flow of life in a way that the society, the environment and the surroundings are damaged to a point where fighting that situation alone becomes difficult or impossible.

7. Humanitarian assistance:

32.5% people living in disaster prone areas of Bangladesh live below the poverty line among which almost 1/3 are extremely poor and they depend on physical labor (BBS 2011). During and after disasters and during the leisure time of the farmers (Lean period), a huge part of this population is given humanitarian assistance for protecting their lives and livelihood by the government and other development organizations.

Individuals/families under the humanitarian assistance program are:

- Miserable and extremely poor individuals/families during normal times.
 - The families who do not possess any land of their own other than their house.
 - The families who are depend on day-to-day labor.
 - Female led families (widow, abandoned husband, single)
 - The families who have not received any micro credit.
 - The families led by a poor and disabled person.
- Socially backward population.
- Individuals/families who are miserable or poor during or after disasters.

- Poor people who face temporary shortage of food but are involved in various professions.

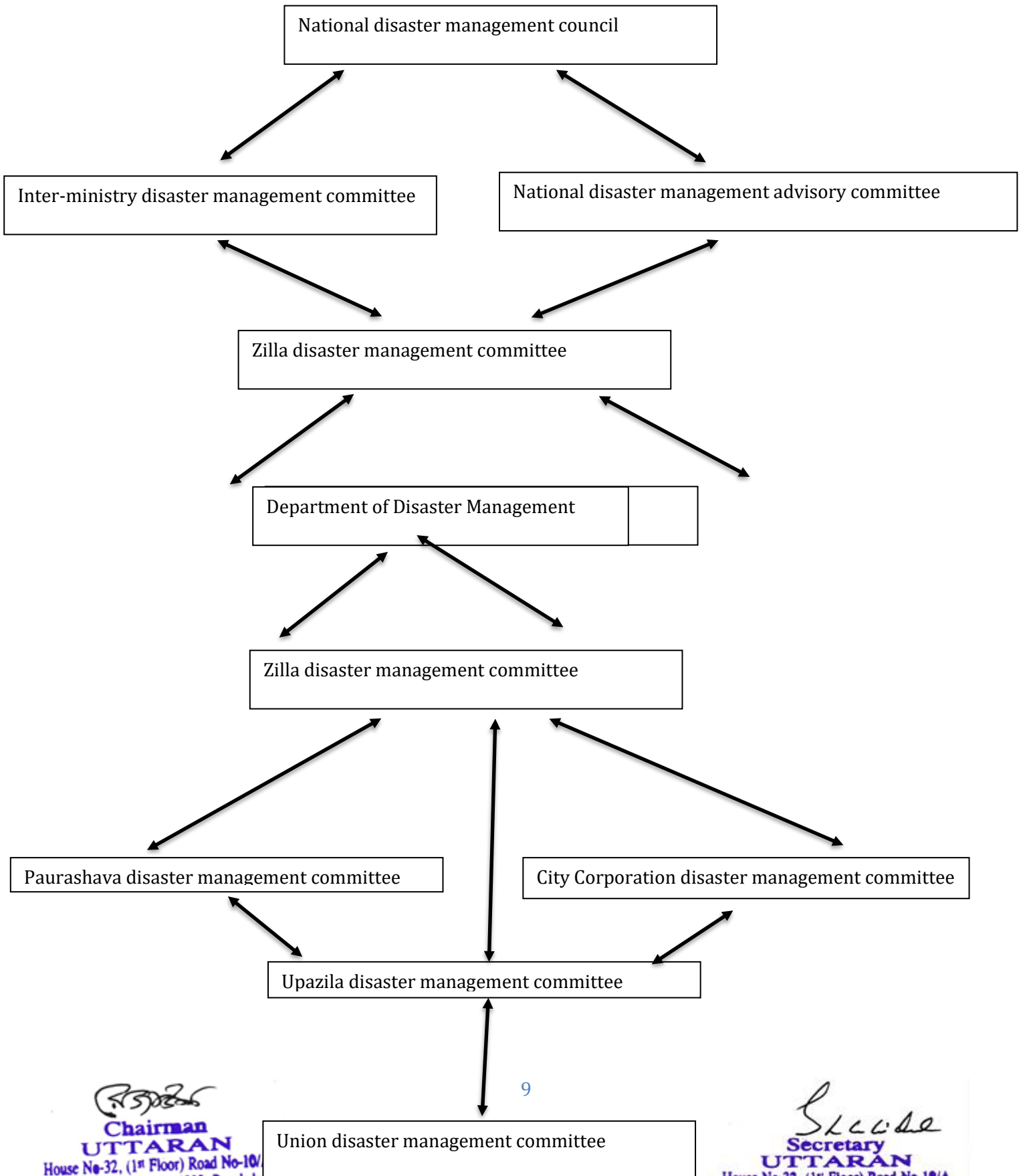
8. Coordination and Partnerships

Uttaran recognizes that effective disaster response and preparedness require close coordination with government authorities, local communities, UN agencies, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Uttaran actively participates in national-level technical working groups and disaster management platforms to align its efforts with national strategies, best practices, and global humanitarian standards.

This coordination includes:

- Engagement in national disaster management consultations led by the Bangladesh government and local disaster management committees.
- Regular participation in technical working groups focused on disaster preparedness, response, and climate adaptation.
- Contribution to policy discussions and technical meetings that shape national disaster risk management and climate resilience strategies.
- Ensuring Uttaran's operations reflect national priorities and are informed by global frameworks such as the SPHERE Standards, Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), and IASC Minimum Standards.

9. Institutional infrastructure of disaster management Bangladesh



10. Uttaran Emergency Response Committee

For implementation of disaster management related activities under Uttaran's emergency response committee, there are committees working on two levels-

10.1 Central committee:

At the leadership of Uttaran's directors, an emergency response central committee shall be formed consisting of 5 members. In that committee, the director shall be the chairman. Uttaran's disaster and humanitarian action program manager member shall fulfill the duties of secretary and the rest three will remain as members. Every committee shall have a minimum of two female members.

10.2 Centre Committee:

Every centre office shall have a committee consisting of five members under the leadership of the centre manager. The centre manager shall fulfill the duties of chairman. One member shall fulfill the duties of secretary and the rest three people shall remain as members. Every centre committee shall maintain communication with the central committee. Every committee shall have 2 female members but if there is shortage of female members, at least one female member has to stay.

11. Functions of the emergency response committee:

Uttaran shall implement disaster management cycle meaning prevention, mitigation, pre-preparation, response, rehabilitation, rebuild and development programs and side by side implement various programs in order to raise national and international level awareness.

11.1 The functions that will be performed by the emergency response central committee are:

- This committee will host Uttaran's disaster and humanitarian action department.
- This committee will commence in a meeting immediately after local warning signals are posted in case of cyclones, tidal waves , Fire, and other disasters in which a forecast can be received.
- In case of disasters where a forecast cannot be received like earthquakes, waterlogging, in such cases they shall commence in a meeting immediately after a disaster based on the collected data. In this case, disaster and humanitarian action shall collect and track and necessary data.
- The meetings will be held at the call of the chairman.
- The resolutions of every meeting shall be recorded.

- Distribution of responsibilities shall be done at the meetings.
- To form a focal point/central monitoring team for providing instructions to the workers in the field about the degree and direction of the disaster and about government-non government preparations.
- A necessary number of workers from the local office will be given the duty of collecting necessary data regarding the possible affected area.
- Every worker will remain at a safe place.
- This monitoring team will process the data from the field level and make a report.
- The central committee will make a situation report based on the received data.
- They will provide situational reports to the donor organizations.
- They will keep ready existing resources and man-power to fight the possible damages.
- They will provide necessary decisions/instructions in order to keep all of Uttaran's offices in the possible affected areas active.
- They will assess the risks of the programs that are possible to implement after the disaster.
- They will prepare an action plan.
- They will contact individuals/institutes who supply materials necessary to fight the disaster.
- They will prepare a list of necessary materials.
- They will do regular follow-ups and monitoring.
- If no emergency takes place, the committee shall have meeting based on the situation.

11.2 The functions that will be performed by the emergency response centre committee are:

- Meetings shall be convened at the instructions of the central committee/ chairman's call.
- The Resolutions of every meeting shall be recorded.
- Distribution of responsibilities shall be done at the meetings.
- The centre committee shall alert the members/beneficiaries about the disaster info. They shall arrange use of mic if needed coordinating with the local authority.
- They shall encourage members/beneficiaries to go to the shelter centre or safe shelter if necessary.

- They shall activate Uttaran’s community focal point/trained data collectors in various communities and collect data from them regarding the local community or government-non government authority’s preparations.
- They shall convey the collected data to the central monitoring team regularly.
- They shall alert the people before a disaster and help the troubled people after a disaster in association with the trained local volunteers.
- They will assess the risks of the programs.
- They will prepare an action plan.
- They will prepare a list of necessary materials.
- They will let the central committee of their need of materials.
- They will do regular follow-ups and monitoring.

12. Pre-preparation for disasters:

Before any disaster strikes and after receiving the weather office signal, trained volunteer teams of Uttaran and local staff shall give warnings side by side with the government and tell the community to take preparations in order to safeguard them from the disaster. They shall arrange for a mic if necessary. In this way, they shall alert the community so that they can save their lives and property.

13. What to do during disasters

During a disaster, the staff and volunteers of Uttaran shall remain in a safe place and constantly exchange information. They shall maintain communication with various committees of the government and they shall collect governmental SOS forms and submit it to the on-duty team of the head office.

14. Rapid Need Assessment (4 W):

Within 72 hours after a disaster, data regarding damages in the Union, Upazila and Zilla have to be collected. Through an experienced volunteer team, need assessment shall be done for the disaster and a report shall be made which will be sent to the donor organizations.

15. Materials used for emergency response during disasters:

For emergency response during disasters, the materials enlisted by the central committee shall be made available/usable and shall be used in necessary places.

16. Staff and volunteer hiring for emergency response during disasters:

According to employee management policy of Uttaran, staff and volunteers shall be hired for emergency situations.

- Deposition shall be done if necessary, from the existing trained disaster staff pool of Uttaran.
- In case of emergency, Uttaran's director using his power shall hire employees through the head-hunting method from CV bank.
- Uttaran shall hire/deposit necessary volunteers from the its trained volunteer pool according to the category of the program.

Uttaran shall arrange skill development programs often in order to increase the skills of its employees and volunteers or send them away to such programs.

17. Providing orientation to the staff and volunteers

Before a disaster strikes, the emergency response committee shall provide day long orientation to the enlisted employees and volunteers. Orientation shall be provided according to attached schedule. The topics upon which orientation shall be provided are: Uttaran's vision, mission and strategy, safe-guarding, Community and child protection policy, code of conduct, core humanitarian standard, sphere, work premises, number of beneficiaries, beneficiary selection process, who can be the beneficiaries, and who cannot, survey form etc.

18. Establishing contact with the administration and the disaster management committee

The emergency response committee in contact with the Ward, Union, Upazila and Zilla disaster management committees and the administration, shall implement all programs. In this case, periodically employees will be assigned and Uttaran's administration wing shall coordinate the program of sending/participation of delegates in meetings at different levels.

19. Purchase of necessary materials for emergency response

A purchase committee shall be formed for emergency response. The committee members shall conduct purchase activities following Uttaran's procurement policy.

20. Things to do by the community:

In case of implementation of every program of Uttaran including humanitarian assistance, they shall be conducted in light of the opinion of the local/targeted people. Uttaran always wants to gradually improve its quality of programs by coordinating with the people and prioritizing their needs. Uttaran shall implement its programs according to the Complain and Feedback Mechanism in order to connect with the community.

21. C W C (Communication with Community):

Post distribution monitoring shall be done in order to establish communication with the community. From there, the opinions of the community shall be collected and reported.

Attachment:1:

1. Steps of beneficiary selection are as follows:

- Providing notification letters to D.C, U.N.O, chairman, members.
- Within the defined locality, the community meeting place shall be selected where the victims of disaster's can participate easily.
- Everyone within the defined locality have to be invited to participate in the Participant Selection Process (in a community meeting)
- Everyone at the community meeting must be informed about the project and the regulations of the participant selection for the project. On the basis of which, the community members accessing the degree of risks, shall select the participants unanimously and from that they shall prepare a draft list and announce the draft list in front of everyone in the community meeting.
- The organization's selected workers shall go from house to house to again verify the list and prepare a participant profile.
- The prepared list has to be matched with that of the local government's so that overlapping/duplication can be avoided and an accurate unbiased list can be prepared.
- The prepared list has to be disclosed to everyone within the locality. For example: The lists shall be hanged at various places of the village (for 2 days) so that everyone can see and know about the lists and can provide their opinions.
- Based on everyone's feedback, when the final list is prepared, the F.F. of the project, project workers and project managers will sign on it.
- The list signed by F.F., project workers and project managers shall also have to be signed by the related P.S.C, members, chairman, U.N.O/P.I.O which shall be considered as the final list for the project.
- Any changes to be made to the final list have to be done in the same procedure.

N.B: The local people have to be included with every work and their opinions have to be taken. It is mentionable that, those who have not been selected as beneficiaries but also be informed as to why they were not selected as beneficiaries.

22.Review of the Guideline:

This policy has been published as part of the last governing board meeting and it will be reviewed after next 3 years. The effective date of this policy is 1st January 2026