



Are you prepared?

Next time when the ground beneath your feet trembles, try the 'Triangle of Life'...

When the Earth trembles, do you do too? Getting under a table or rushing down the stairs of a building and finding an open space is what most of us would do when the ground beneath our feet threatens to give away. A chill runs down our spine every time we look at gory pictures from a site that has suffered a calamity. Buildings and structures ideally meant to cushion our lives, at times crumble and surrender to the might of mother-nature. Chances of emerging unscathed after suffering such a blow are slim, but with the growing rate of scientific research and technological advancements, one can anticipate an oncoming hazard. One can run away from cyclones, tornados and tsunamis when one is well informed and well equipped. There are alarm systems

which alert us in advance of an expected earthquake, but they only put one in a better position to prepare for a possible disaster. Techniques like drop, cover and hold-on are passé. "Duck and cover results in a 98% death rate when buildings collapse. The only people who survive are those who do the 'triangle of life'. This is either intentionally or as a result of panicking, fleeing, being knocked to the floor and somehow finding themselves in a survivable void. If the masses followed the 'triangle of life', there would be a major shift from death to survivability, in earthquakes," says Doug Copp, Professor of Disaster Mitigation at the International Institute of Disaster Reduction Institute.

If a building collapses, there is no way that getting under a table would help, but what might help is getting next to a

sturdy structure and not under it. This helps create a triangular void and that's how during rescue operations one notices that people stuck under these automatically-formed triangles of life are easier to rescue and have a greater survivability ratio.

Disaster management is generally perceived as an area of expertise which the masses can't do much about. But experts believe that awareness and practicality would help a great deal in mitigation of loss in such crunch situations. Being aware of one's surroundings and the prospective hazards and their solutions are of utmost need. "In the present day scenario, 'Disaster Management' has essentially brought in the pre and post disaster phases together. Thus bringing in the paradigm shift from "relief centric" to "mitigation centric" approach. Post-disaster phase includes reset-

tlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction, whereas the pre-disaster measures include prevention, mitigation, preparedness that encompasses capacity building of stakeholders, advancement in early warning, last mile connectivity, disaster-safe constructions, hazard specific micro-zonation, risk mapping and a techno-legal regime for safe habitat planning," says Dr. Chandan Ghosh, Professor and Head (*GeoHazards Division*) National Inst. of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

In a world where man-made hazards are a handful, tackling natural calamities becomes tougher with panic stricken and unaware victims. It is essential for all to spread the word, because a disaster never devastates a place alone, it devastates lives. **B&E**

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