

Abstract

The occurrence of disasters is increasing at an alarming rate and intensity so that efficient measures need to be in place to mitigate and prevent the impact thereof. South Africa as a developing country has it hard to deal with some of the impacts (damage) of disasters. Common disasters are floods, fire, drought, spillages and minor earthquakes. Flood disasters are a major global problem and many developing countries are affected by floods to some extent and find particularly difficult to protect their people against such disasters.

According to Napier and Robin (2000), floods cost communities in terms of lives lost, economic and environmental damages and human suffering. Therefore it necessitates the introduction of measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level. Negative impact is suffered due to measures that are not in place. One reason can be budgets that are insufficient to cater for those measures. Lack of measures means lack of preparedness; which will be researched in this study. Effective flood risk reduction measures require an understanding of the processes that cause floods, the magnitude, appropriate analytical methods and environmental assessment procedures and need to be implemented to reduce the risks (UNISDR 2002).

According to the Disaster Management Act (South Africa 2002), preparedness is the state of readiness which enables organs of state and other institutions involved in disaster management, the private sector, the communities and individuals to mobilise, to organise and provide relief measures to deal with an impending or current disaster or effects of the disaster. It is vital for the communities to understand the hazard so that they get prepared.

National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) has declared Fezile Dabi as disastrous area early 2011. This is the result of heavy rainfall experienced within December 2010 and January 2011, and this negatively affected the municipality due to lack of capacity to deal with floods.

According to the Disaster Management Act (South Africa 2002), disasters should have a dedicated account wherein money is allocated as emergency fund. The December 2010 - January 2011 floods became an eye opener to NDMC that this act has not been adopted; therefore the mandate will be enforced to ensure the efficiency of the recovery phase.

It is clear that most local and some district municipalities in South Africa have not implemented the disaster management framework that assists in the execution of disaster projects and programmes within stipulated time frames as would be contained in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2000:17) the failure to implement affects service delivery as a whole.