

**NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW SCHEME  
“MODERNIZATION OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES  
IN THE COUNTRY” FOR 12<sup>th</sup> FIVE YEAR PLAN (2012-17)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The history of Fire Services in India is more than two hundred years old. Initially it was restricted to three main port cities of the Country, Mumbai (1803), Kolkata (1822) and Chennai (1908). Development of Fire Service was boosted during the Second World War. “Fire Service” is now a State subject and has been included as a municipal function in the XII Schedule of the Constitution of India in terms of Article 243-W. The role of the Fire Services has dramatically changed over the years and presently the Fire Services is called to respond to terrorist attacks, hazardous material incidents, advanced emergency medical situations, high angle rescue and confined space rescue incidents, trench and collapse operations, underwater rescue and much more in addition to their conventional role of Fire Fighting and Rescue.
- 1.2. The fast pace of industrialization with the extensive use of hazardous materials and increased construction of multi-storied buildings has not only enhanced the risks due to fire accidents but has also put tremendous strain on the operational abilities of Firemen. In addition, in the aftermath of any disaster, the immediate mobilization and deployment of trained fire personnel for search and rescue operations is critical for the survival of disaster-affected victims. The Fire Services have, therefore, to be developed as multi-hazard disaster response force capable of acting as first responders in all types of emergency situations.
- 1.3. The fire hazards in rural areas require appropriate types of fire fighting appliances, depending upon the terrain, topography and availability of water sources. The metropolitan and other large cities demand the provisioning of other specialized fire fighting and rescue appliances.
- 1.4. The Ministry of Home Affairs constituted the **Standing Fire Advisory Council (SFAC)** chaired by Director General Civil Defence consisting of all the States Fire Chiefs as its members to advise the Ministry on Fire Service related matters. The SFAC has been taking stock of the status of Fire Service in the Country regularly and has been making technical recommendations. SFAC has prescribed norms for establishment of Fire Services which indicates setting up of Fire Stations based on population, response time, requirement of manpower, equipments, etc., (**Annexure – I**). These norms indicate the requirement of 70868 Fire Stations all over the Country with corresponding fire appliances and vehicles. However, as per the data compiled in 2002, only 1854 fire stations were operating in the country under various municipalities and State Governments, with having 5882 fire appliances/vehicles. In addition, there were 278 fire

stations operating in industrial units exclusively with a fleet of 1053 appliances/vehicles of various specifications. Thus, a shortage of 97.54% in the number of fire stations and about 80% in the number of fire fighting and rescue vehicles.

- 1.5. Based on the analysis, the Ministry of Home Affairs requested the State Governments to send an updated proposal in 2005 and a proposal for a total cost of Rs. 19262 crores were received during 2007-08. The Ministry examined these proposals of the State Governments and projected a demand of Rs. 5670.44 crores (Rs. 4874.60 crore as non-recurring and Rs. 795.84 crore as recurring expenditure), to the Planning Commission for allocation of funds. However, the Planning Commission allocated only Rs. 200 Crores towards the scheme for strengthening of fire and emergency services in the country that was implemented during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan Period. The scheme included Grants-in-aid to States for modernization of fire services, training and capacity building, advertisement and publicity activities, school fire safety programme, a country-wide fire hazard and risk analysis and monitoring and evaluation of project implementation. The scheme is to be completed by March 2013.
- 1.6. In order to analyze the existing deficiencies and gaps of the fire services in the country and to suggest an action plan for augmentation of fire services, a study is being carried out on Fire Hazard and Risk Analysis. The study is a part of the ongoing plan scheme for strengthening of fire and emergency services. M/s Risk Management Solution India Pvt. Ltd. (RMSI), a private consultant firm, was hired to carry out the study in all the states/UTs of the country. The firm has submitted its report on the pilot study, which was conducted in six selected states, namely Delhi, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The finding of study indicates the following existing gaps in the country (**Annexure - II**):

- i. Fire Stations – 78%
- ii. Fire Fighting and Rescue Vehicles – 82%
- iii. Specialized equipments – 93%
- iv. Fire Fighting Personnel – 89.5%

As per the pilot project report, a fund of Rs. 372138 crores would be required to meet the existing deficiency in the fire services during next 10 years. Full report on existing gaps in fire services and actual fund requirements would be available in Oct 2012 after completion of the study.

- 1.7. Over the period of time, the role of the fire services has dramatically changed and now the Fire Services respond to all emergency situations like terrorist attacks, hazardous material incidents, advanced emergency medical situations,

urban rescue incidents, collapse operations, underwater rescue and much more in addition to their conventional role of fire fighting and rescue. As envisaged in Disaster Management Act 2005, fire services are also responsible to carry out relief, search and rescue operations in case of large natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, etc. Given the existing state of preparedness and fire fighting capabilities, it is clear that very little competency is available with fire service departments for responding to all such emergencies. Thus, it is high time to strengthen the fire services as “multi-hazard response force” capable of efficiently and effectively act as the “first responder” in all emergent situations. The fast pace of urbanization and industrialization justifies the need for upgrading the Fire Services in the Country.

## **2. Proposal for the New Scheme on “Modernization and Up-gradation of Fire Services in the Country”**

2.1 As the existing scheme is nearing its completion, the Ministry of Home Affairs has drawn up a new Scheme “Modernizing Fire and Emergency Services in the Country” to be implemented in the country at an estimated cost of Rs. 2000 crore during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan Period (2012-17).

2.2 A National Consultation on Fire Services was organized at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, in which the Minister of State (MHA) and Secretary (BM) emphasized on the urgency to effectively strengthen the fire services in a more organized manner throughout the country and also asked the states to present their suggestions/inputs for formulating the new scheme to modernize and up-grade the fire services. Based on the suggestions of the State Governments and recommendations of the pilot study on fire hazard and risk analysis, a new scheme for modernization and upgradation of Fire & Emergency Services has been proposed to be implemented under the 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2013-17) at an outlay of **Rs. 2000 crores**.

## **3. Objective**

The overall objective of the scheme is to modernize and up-grade the fire and emergency services in the country and to increasingly transform the Fire Services into Multi-Hazard Response Force capable of acting as first responder in all types of emergency situations.

## **4. Coverage**

The Scheme will be covering 28 States and 07 Union Territories, with a total of 640 Districts and 5576 Sub-Divisions.