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Kochi, Apartment Dwellers, Lack of Awareness, Disaster Preparedness

'High-rise dwellers in the city lack awareness on disaster preparedness'

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THE number of apartment dwellers in the city is increasing. However, when it comes to being prepared to deal with emergency situations, the residents lack awareness and have no clue about how to respond.

A study report prepared through a detailed survey reveals there is lack of awareness and preparedness among residents, owners and associations of apartments in the city, both in facing and responding to disasters.

"The apartments do not follow even simple, low-cost steps towards disaster preparedness. A large number of apartments are not prepared to face or respond to minor or major disasters. There appears to be a lack of preparedness for the safety of residents," said the survey report prepared by the Disaster Management Committee (DMC) of the Kochi chapter of the All India Professionals Congress (AIPC).

"Disasters are waiting to happen. But they can easily be prevented with foresight and if simple precautions and preventive measures are taken.

Often, only very simple, cost-free and low-cost efforts are required to prevent, manage and respond to disasters," M P Joseph, former District Collector and Mayor of Kochi, who is also the DMC chairperson, told reporters on Wednesday.

Sharing more details about the survey findings, Joseph said the seminal study on 'Disaster Preparedness in High Rise Apartments' was conducted by the committee comprising 14 professionals.

"As many as 45 apartments in the city were comprehensively surveyed. A team of professionals visited the apartment complexes with the survey questionnaire, which consisted of 50 questions divided into eight segments, as well as in scientifically analysing the data using various statistical tools," Joseph said.

He said the DMC received technical inputs for the study from domain experts such as Muralee Thummarukudy, the chief of the Disaster Risk Reduction in the UN Environment Programme, and James Aloysious, an international expert on disaster management.