



Mains Practice Question

Q. Response to disasters must be proactive not reactive. Discuss. (250 words)

12 Dec, 2018 GS Paper 3 Disaster Management

Approach

- Give brief description or definition of disaster.
- State and elaborate on disadvantages of traditional reactive approach to DM.
- State and elaborate advantages of proactive approach to deal with DM.

Introduction

- Disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.
- Primarily disasters are triggered by natural hazards or are human-induced, or as result from a combination of both.
- In the traditional reactive disaster management approach, focus is on relief and rehabilitation in post disaster scenario. A paradigm shift has now taken place in disaster management, replacing traditional relief centric approach to holistic and integrated approach with emphasis on prevention, mitigation and preparedness.
- The four phases of disaster are 1) mitigation; 2) preparedness; 3) response; and 4) recovery.

This model helps frame issues related to disaster preparedness as well recovery after a disaster.

Body

The major disadvantages of reactive approach to disaster management approach are:

- **Enhanced loss of life and material:** Reactive approaches focus on relief and immediate rehabilitation and ignore preventive disaster reduction policies. Such an approach cause higher amount of loss of life and material.
- **Absence of adaptive approach** to different type of disasters: For different types of disasters response measures may vary, which is not possible in reactive approach to disasters. Reactive approach remain 'one size fits all' approach to disaster.
- **Absence of Early Warning Systems** in reactive approach causes delayed response to disaster. The provision of timely and reliable information, through identified institutions, allows the community and the government machinery to reduce their risk and be prepared to face the hazard is essential.

Advantages of Proactive approach

- **Saving lives:** Statistical evidence suggests disaster prevention helps limiting loss of life to disasters in a number of developed and developing countries.
- **Protecting infrastructure and livelihoods:** The cost of property damage from disasters is prevented and curtailed through integrated disaster management approach emphasising

prevention and mitigation.

- **Protecting the environment:** Increased disaster resilience in some cases has also helped in protecting and preserving the natural environment.

Conclusion:

- Disaster does not emerge suddenly; it has a life cycle, which may take days, months or even decades to develop depending on its causative factors. A disaster thus needs to be examined as it will allow anticipating the crisis and thus preventing and mitigating it to the extent possible.
- Crisis can also be mitigated through measures, like better enforcement of building codes and zoning regulations, proper maintenance of drainage systems, better awareness and public education to reduce the risks of hazards etc.
- India has upgraded its disaster reduction capability according to '**Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**' which was adopted during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan in 2015 for 25 years (2015-2030).

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