



National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

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- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is the apex **statutory body** for disaster management in India.
- The NDMA was formally constituted on **27th September 2006**, in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2005 with **Prime Minister as its Chairperson** and nine other members, and one such member to be designated as Vice-Chairperson.
- **Mandate:** Its primary purpose is to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response. It is also the apex body to lay down policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management to ensure timely and effective response to disasters.
- **Vision:** To build a safer and disaster resilient India by a holistic, proactive, technology driven and sustainable development strategy that involves all stakeholders and fosters a culture of prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

What led to the Evolution of NDMA?

- In recognition of the importance of Disaster Management as a national priority, the Government of India set up a **High-Powered Committee (HPC) in August 1999** and a **National Committee after the Gujarat earthquake (2001)**, for making recommendations on the preparation of Disaster Management plans and suggesting effective mitigation mechanisms.
- The Tenth Five-Year Plan document also had, for the first time, a detailed chapter on Disaster Management. The Twelfth Finance Commission was also mandated to review the financial arrangements for Disaster Management.
- On 23 December 2005, the Government of India enacted the Disaster Management Act, which envisaged the creation of NDMA, headed by the Prime Minister, and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) headed by respective Chief Ministers, to spearhead and implement a holistic and integrated approach to Disaster Management in India.

What are the Functions and Responsibilities of NDMA?

- Approve the National Disaster Plan
- Lay down policies on disaster management
- Approve plans prepared by Ministries or Departments of the Central Government in accordance with National Plan
- Lay down guidelines to be followed by State Authorities in drawing up State Plan
- Lay down guidelines to be followed by different Ministries or Departments of Central Government for purpose of integrating measures for disaster prevention or mitigation of its effects in their development plans and projects
- Coordinate enforcement and implementation of disaster management policy and plan
- Recommend provision of funds for the purpose of mitigation
- Provide such support to other countries affected by major disasters as determined by Central Government
- Take such other measures for prevention of disasters or mitigation or preparedness and capacity building for dealing with threatening disaster situation or disaster as it may consider necessary
- Lay down broad policies and guidelines for the functioning of National Institute of Disaster

What is the Institutional Framework for Disaster Management in India?

- The primary responsibility for management of disaster rests with the **State Government** concerned.
- However, the National Policy on Disaster Management puts in place an enabling environment for all i.e., the Centre, State and District.
- The **National Policy on Disaster Management, 2009** has been prepared in tune with and in pursuance of the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**. It provides the framework/roadmap for handling disasters in a **holistic manner**.
- Under the provisions of the Act, the Disaster Management Authority has been established at 3 levels viz. National, State and District.
- The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** has been established under the **Chairmanship of the Prime Minister** and National Executive Committee (NEC) of Secretaries has been created to assist the NDMA in the performance of its functions.
- At the State level, a **State Disaster Management Authority** has been created under the **Chairmanship of Chief Minister** of the State, which has been assisted by a State Executive Committee.
- At the District level, **District Disaster Management Authorities** have been created.
- It lays down the policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management for ensuring timely and effective response to disaster and long-term disaster risk reduction.
- India is also a signatory to the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)** that sets targets for disaster management.

What are State level Institutions?

- **State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)**
 - **Headed by Chief Minister** of the respective state, SDMA lays down the policies and plans for disaster management in the state.
 - It is responsible to coordinate the implementation of the state Plan, recommend provision of funds for mitigation and preparedness measures and review the developmental plans of the different departments of the state to ensure integration of prevention, preparedness and mitigation measures.
- **State Executive Committee (SEC)- Headed by the Chief Secretary of the state**, SEC has the responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the National Policy, the National Plan and the State Plan as provided under the DM Act.

What are District level Institutions?

- **District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA)**
 - Section 25 of the DM Act provides for constitution of DDMA for every district of a state.
 - **The District Magistrate/ District Collector/Deputy Commissioner heads the Authority** as Chairperson besides an elected representative of the local authority as Co-Chairperson except in the tribal areas where the Chief Executive Member of the District Council of Autonomous District is designated as Co-Chairperson.
 - Further in district, where Zila Parishad exists, its Chairperson shall be the Co-Chairperson of DDMA.
 - The District Authority is responsible for planning, coordination and implementation of disaster management and to take such measures for disaster management as provided in the guidelines.
 - The District Authority also has the power to examine the construction in any area in the district to enforce the safety standards and to arrange for relief measures and respond to the disaster at the district level.

What are India's Efforts in Managing Disaster?

- **Establishment of National Disaster Reaction Force (NDRF):**
 - India **consciously developed DM as a holistic approach**, not just reacting after a disaster but also integrating disaster preparedness, mitigation, and **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** into plans and policies.
 - India has increasingly mitigated and responded to all types of disasters, including with the establishment of its **National Disaster Reaction Force (NDRF)**, the world's largest rapid reaction force dedicated to disaster response.
- **India's Role as a Foreign Disaster Relief:**
 - India is also an **emerging donor** that has provided a **substantial amount of foreign disaster relief**, as well as **foreign development assistance**, to other countries.
 - **India's foreign humanitarian assistance** has increasingly included its military assets, primarily deploying naval ships or aircraft to deliver relief.
 - In line with its diplomatic policy of "**Neighbourhood First**," many of the recipient countries have been in the region of South and Southeast Asia.
 - In the last two decades, **India has given foreign humanitarian assistance bilaterally** to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and others.
- **Contribution to Regional Disaster Preparedness:**
 - As part of its neighbourhood development efforts, **India also contributes to regional disaster preparedness and capacity building efforts.**
 - Within the context of the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**, India has hosted DM Exercises that allow NDRF to demonstrate for counterparts from partner states the techniques developed to respond to various disasters.
 - Other **NDRF and Indian Armed Forces exercises** have brought India's first responders into contact with those from states in the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** and the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- **Managing Climate Change related Disaster:**
 - Globally, disasters in the last two decades have **predominantly been climate-related disasters**, of which floods are the most frequently occurring type of disaster and **storms are the second most deadly type of disaster** (surpassed by earthquakes).
 - India has adopted the **Sendai Framework for DRR**, the **Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030)**, and the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**, all of which make clear the connections among DRR, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), and sustainable development.
 - India **participates in several multilateral organisations** that address these and other issues that benefit from multinational coordination.

What are the Shortcomings and Challenges?

- Questions were raised about the role of NDMA during **Uttarakhand Flooding in 2013**, where it failed to timely inform people about the flash floods and landslides. The post disaster relief response had been equally poor. Experts blamed the **poor planning of NDMA** that led to unfinished projects for flood and landslide mitigation.
- A CAG report noted that there were **delays in completion of projects under the flood management programmes**. It noted the projects were not taken up in an integrated manner and blamed NDMA for institutional failures for **poor flood management**.
 - It held that there were huge **delays in completion of river management activities** and works related to border areas projects which were long-term solutions for the flood problems of Assam, north Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- Devastations during **Kerala Floods in 2018** and **Chennai Floods in 2015** were eye-opening for the institutions regarding preparedness for the disaster situation.
 - CAG report on 2015 Chennai Floods termed it to be a "man-made disaster" and holds Tamil Nadu government responsible for the catastrophe.
- The NDRF personnel lack sufficient training, equipment, facilities and residential accommodation to tackle the crisis situation properly.

- **Misutilization of Funds-** Government constituted **National Disaster Response Fund** and State Disaster Response Fund to deal with the disasters.
 - Audit findings reveal that some states have mis-utilized funds for expenditures that were not sanctioned for disaster management.
 - There was in a few cases significant delay in releasing funds. Additionally, some States didn't invest the funds thereby incurring huge interest losses. This shows financial indiscipline in states management of funds.

What can be the Way Forward?

- **Policy guidelines at the macro level are needed** that would inform and guide the preparation and implementation of disaster management and development plans across sectors.
- **Building in a culture of preparedness and mitigation** is the need of the hour.
- Operational guidelines should be framed for **integrating disaster management practices into development**, and specific developmental schemes for prevention and mitigation of disasters.
- **Robust early warning systems coupled with effective response plans** at district, state and national levels should be put in place.
- **Community, NGOs, CSOs and the media should be involved** at all stages of disaster management.
- **Climate risk management should be addressed** through adaptation and mitigation.
 - A dynamic policy is required to develop disaster-resilient infrastructure through proper investment in research. ISRO, NRSA, IMD and other institutions have to collectively provide technological solutions to enhance capabilities to tackle disasters.
- India should **learn from best global practices**.
 - Countries such as Hong Kong, China, Japan and Korea have built a robust infrastructure over the years to effectively tackle typhoons and other disasters.

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