



National Disaster Management Authority

For Prelims: NDMA, NDRF, Sendai Framework, SAARC, BIMSTEC.

For Mains: Evolution of National Disaster Management Authority and its Shortcomings.

Why in News?

Recently, the [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#) celebrated its **18th Formation Day** on 28th September, 2022.

- **Theme 2022:** Volunteerism in Disaster Management.

What is NDMA?

▪ About

- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is **India's apex statutory body for disaster management.**
- The NDMA was formally constituted on **27th September 2006**, by the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The Prime Minister is its chairperson and it has nine other members. One of the nine members is designated as Vice-Chairperson.
- The primary responsibility for the 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 government is working on a programme to set up disaster management volunteers (**Aapada Mitra**) in 350 districts of the country.

▪ Aapada Mitra:

- It is a [Central Sector Scheme](#) that was launched in May 2016.
 - NDMA is the implementing agency.
- It is a programme to **identify suitable individuals in disaster-prone regions** who can be trained to be first responders in times of disasters.
- To provide the community volunteers with the skills that they would need to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster thereby enabling them to undertake basic relief and rescue tasks during emergency situations such as floods, flash-floods and urban flooding.

How has NDMA evolved?

- 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 23th 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 the 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 the 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 Management

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 (Comptroller and Auditor-General)** report noted that there were delays in completion of **projects under the flood management programmes**.
 - 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.

What are India's Efforts in Managing Disaster?

- **Establishment of National Disaster Reaction Force (NDRF):**
 - 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'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.
- **Contribution to Regional Disaster Preparedness:**

- 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:**
 - India has adopted the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), 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.

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.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Discuss the recent measures initiated in disaster management by the Government of India departing from the earlier reactive approach. **(2020)**

Q. With reference to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines, discuss the measures to be adopted to mitigate the impact of the recent incidents of cloudbursts in many places of Uttarakhand. **(2016)**

Q. Drought has been recognized as a disaster in view of its spatial expanse, temporal duration, slow onset and lasting effects on vulnerable sections. With a focus on the September 2010 guidelines from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), discuss the mechanisms for preparedness to deal with likely El Nino and La Nina fallouts in India. **(2014)**

Source: IE