



Invocation of Disaster Management Act, 2005 to Deal with COVID-19

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Why in News

Various government authorities have invoked their respective powers under **the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005** to deal with the **novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak** in the country.

Key Points

- **Delegation of Powers to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:**
 - The powers exercised by the home secretary for being the **Chairman of the National Executive Committee (NEC)** under **section 10 of the DM Act (2005)** have been delegated to the Ministry of Health and Family welfare.
 - **Section 10 evaluates the preparedness** at all governmental levels for the purpose of responding to any threatening disaster situation or disaster and **give directions**, where necessary, for enhancing such preparedness.
 - It also **lays down guidelines for, or give directions to, the concerned Ministries or Departments** of the Government of India, **the State Governments and the State Authorities** regarding measures to be taken by them in response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster
 - Thus it majorly **monitors and implements** the national plan and the plans prepared by the ministries or departments of the central government and gives **superintendence power to the officer executing** plans.
 - The delegation would help **to enhance preparedness and containment of novel coronavirus (COVID-19)** in the country.

- **Invocation of Powers by District Authorities:**

- Some of the district authorities in the COVID-19 affected states like Maharashtra have also invoked power under the **DM Act**.
 - The Act gives power to the district administration under **Sections 33 and 34** to deal with any disaster-related situation.
 - Under Section 33 and 34 the district authorities may opt for **requisition powers for any officer or any department at the district level or any local authority** to take measures for **prevention or mitigation of disaster** or to effectively respond to it and such **officer or department is bound to carry out such order**.
- This step will help to create **awareness among the public regarding COVID-19** and will also help to **regulate the medical supply of masks, injections and medicines**, etc.

National Executive Committee

- A National Executive Committee (NEC) is constituted under **Section 8 of the DM Act, 2005** to assist the National Disaster Management Authority in the performance of its functions.
- **Union Home secretary** is its ex-officio chairperson.
- NEC has been given the responsibility to act as the coordinating and monitoring body for disaster management, to prepare a National Plan, monitor the implementation of National Policy etc.

Source: BS