



National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

- 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.

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.

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 Management

Institutional Framework for Disaster Management in India

- The Disaster Management Act, 2005 has provided the legal and institutional framework for disaster management in India at the national, state and district levels.
- In the federal polity of India, the primary responsibility of Disaster management vests with the state government.
 - The central government lays down the plans, policies and guidelines and provides technical, financial and logistical support while the district administration carries out most of the operations in collaboration with central and state level agencies.

▪ National Executive Committee (NEC)

- A National Executive Committee is constituted under Section 8 of DM Act, 2005 to assist the National 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.

▪ National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)

- NIDM has the mandate of human resource development and capacity building for disaster management within the broad policies and guidelines laid down by the NDMA.

▪ National Disaster response force (NDRF)

- NDRF is the specialized force for disaster response which works under the overall supervision and control of NDMA.

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.

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.

Achievements of Disaster Planning in India

- **Cyclone Fani**, was one of the worst cyclones to hit India in last two decades.
 - Odisha's preparedness, efficient early warning system, timely action, and well-planned large-scale evacuation strategies helped 1.2 million people move safely into nearly 4,000 cyclone shelters, thereby saving the lives of vulnerable population in the sensitive coastal region.
 - The United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and other organizations have hailed government and volunteer efforts that have ensured the levels of destruction to keep minimum.
 - Similarly, Andhra Pradesh demonstrated an equally excellent evacuation strategy for millions during **cyclone Hudhud** in 2014.
- There has been significant **reduction in mortality rate** from the loss of over 10000 lives in 1999 during Super Cyclone in Odisha to a mortality of 16 in 2019 during cyclone Fani.
- NDMA runs intensive earthquake and extreme weather events awareness campaigns and provides guidelines regarding natural and man-made disasters.
- NDMA has released Guidelines on School Safety, Hospital Safety and Minimum Standards for Shelter, Food, Water, Sanitation and Medical Cover in Relief Camps. The Authority worked closely with the States in mitigating the impact of Heat Wave and the number of casualties came down drastically.
- NDMA conducts mock exercises for better crisis management during a disaster situation.

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.

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.