



Crowd Management

For Prelims: National Disaster Management Authority, Disaster Management Act 2005

For Mains: Causes of Crowd Disaster/Stampede

Why in News?

The recent tragedies in Seoul, South Korea, and Morbi in Gujarat have once again put crowds and their management under the spotlight.

- [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#) has been mandated, under the provisions of [Disaster Management Act 2005](#) to, inter alia, issue guidelines for the management of disasters that periodically affect the normal life and well-being of the people.

What is Crowd Management?

- Crowd management is defined as the **systematic planning for, and supervision of, the orderly movement** and assembly of people.
- Crowd management involves the assessment of the people handling capabilities of a space prior to use.
- It includes **evaluation of projected levels of occupancy, adequacy of means of ingress and egress**, processing procedures such as ticket collection, and expected types of activities and group behavior.

What are the Causes of Crowd Disaster/Stampede?

- **Structural Failures:**
 - Demolition of interim facilities, vertical stairs, narrow buildings due to illegal structures, hawkers, and parking.
- **Electric/Fire Disasters:**
 - A common cause is **improper use of firecrackers or incorrect wiring** during the celebrations in makeshift kitchens.
 - Electricity supply failure creating panic and triggering sudden exodus.
- **Crowd Behavior:**
 - Minimizing the size of the mass, lack of coordination with management, overselling of the tickets, mass panicking by sudden rush or rumours to get celebrity autographs or freebies.
 - People need at least 1 square yard of space each to control their movements. Most people who die in crowds die from asphyxiation while standing upright, not from trampling.
 - Humans lose consciousness after being compressed for just 30 seconds, they can be brain dead within 6 minutes.
- **Inadequate Security:**
 - Taking drastic measures such as firing teargas due to insufficient deployment of safety teams.

- **Lack of Coordination among Administrative Agencies:**

- Inadequate coordination between the fire service, the police, the shrine management, etc.

What are the NDMA Guidelines on Crowd Management?

- The first step is to **regulate traffic in areas surrounding the pandals and Dussehra grounds.**
 - For pedestrians, **route maps for reaching the venue and emergency exit route should be put up at strategic points.** Barricading to ensure the movement of people in a queue is key to control a burgeoning crowd.
- **CCTV cameras to monitor movement and police presence to reduce the risk of snatching** and other petty crimes should also be on the organisers' agenda.
- **Medical emergencies can occur in claustrophobic spaces.** An ambulance and health care professionals on stand-by can save lives in exigencies.
- On the part of revellers, **familiarising people with exit routes, staying calm and following instructions will help prevent stampede-like situations.**
- In case a stampede breaks out, protect the chest by placing hands like a boxer and keep moving in the direction of the crowd.
- **Organisers should ensure authorised use of electricity,** fire safety extinguishers and other arrangements meeting safety guidelines.
- A list of neighbourhood hospitals would come in handy. Simple precautions like wearing light, cotton clothes and knowledge of basic tricks like rolling on the ground to douse off fire are a must.

Conclusion

- In today's world, crowd management should be the top priority, especially in India.
- A large number of catastrophic events involving large crowds are caused by human error. By planning and implementing proactive measures, these catastrophes can be avoided. Apart from that, it is important to analyse and gain knowledge from previous errors.
- Crowd disasters are a concern for everyone in society. Despite the Government's responsibility in leading the way, the general public also has a major role to play in preventing such disasters in the future.

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