

Indian is still focussing on managing natural disasters rather than on improving resilience. Elaborate.

### Introduction

India is prone to various disasters. About 70% of its coastal areas are prone to tsunamis and cyclones, about 60% of its landmass is vulnerable to earthquakes, and 12% of its land to floods.

**Yet, risk management is still in its infancy.**

### **Examples**

- In the case of Kerala, in 2003, the Home Ministry had proposed the formation of specialist teams to manage disasters using four battalions from the Central Industrial Security Force and Indo Tibetan Border Police. Kerala was required 'to identify a State-level training institution' for the purpose. The project has been forgotten. It has been the same response, even after the Ockhi disaster when the Centre proposed forming a special team and funding.
- We are far behind even in forecasting disasters that occur annually. Even now, after the Kedarnath floods in 2013, Uttarakhand still has few if any Doppler radars to provide early alerts about cloudbursts and heavy rain.
- Heatwaves and its unusualness - no plan for the same
- Risk of Early Locusts Attacks - A new concern.
- COVID Crisis

### **Issues**

- Inadequate Early Warning System + Lack of Pre-disaster Preparedness
- Inadequate and Slow Relief + Lack of Co-ordination+ Slow Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
- Poor Management of Finances for Post-disaster Relief
- Lack of Good governance + Developmental Planning
- Divergence of political and economic commitments due to other competing needs and priorities
- Financial issues - unlisted disasters which are not neatly bucketed in the specifications under the Calamity Relief Fund are restricted to a relief of 10% of the fund's annual allocation.
- Shortage of trained manpower, training, infrastructure and equipment
- Ineffectiveness of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)
- Insufficient levels of implementation - Building codes exists but no implementation
- Each State and district have different costs for labour and construction, making the idea

of a uniform amount for relief redundant.

- Issues with seismically Secure Infra- North Eastern states
- Unsafe building practices in rapidly growing urban settlements
- Overlooking of unnatural disasters
- High priority to response than risk reduction
- Climate change has far-reaching implications for managing disaster risk in India, as the frequency and intensity of flash floods, landslides, droughts, cyclones, and storm surges are expected to increase in upcoming decades

### **Changes in the approach**

- In the past two decades, India's public policy on disaster management has shifted from a focus from disaster management to disaster resilience.
- This new policy approach incorporates pre-disaster issues of prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, as well as post-disaster issues of response, recovery, and reconstruction.
- New initiatives, such as mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development, building capacity through education and greater awareness at all levels, and utilising advanced technologies, have enhanced India's preparedness for each phase of disaster management

### **Specific Steps taken by the Govt Schemes**

- National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project
- Authority National Disaster Management Authority
- Financial Preparedness National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)
- National Crisis Management Committee and Crisis Management Group

### **Capacity development**

- National Civil Defence College (NCDC), Nagpur
- Training of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)
- Disaster Management Centres in the States

### **Plans**

- National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)
- National Disaster Management Services (NDMS)
- National network of emergency operation Centres Integration Expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC)

## Preparedness

- Red Atlas Action Plan Map
- Coastal Digital Elevation Model
- Vulnerability Atlas of India Latest Initiatives Mapping lightning across India.

## International Cooperation

- Asian Minister Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR)
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction •Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
- Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER)
- SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC)
- Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR)

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)

## Way Forward

- Disaster preparedness should be focussed on meeting the immediate contingency, implementing a conceptual, long-term rehabilitation strategy while maintaining an ethnographic understanding. It must be built on anticipatory governance, emphasising studies that embed foresight and foster citizen awareness.
- Building in a culture of preparedness and mitigation
- Early Warning Systems and Communication and Connectivity up to the Last Mile + Emergency Operations Centres + effective response plans at district, state and national levels.
- To strengthen the knowledge and information sharing platform in disaster management.
- Developing a Centralised Database - India Disaster Resource Network should be institutionalised as a repository for organised information and equipment gathering.
- Strengthening the Preparedness Phase - Urban Planning and Zoning + Building Codes and Enforcement + Housing Design and Finance + Flood Proofing
- Estimate the probability of shocks and identify local vulnerabilities and integrate into plans for contingencies, investing in risk reduction, insurance, self-insurance, and disaster response.
- Mitigation Plans and Mainstreaming Disaster Management into the Development Planning Process
- Capacity Building Plan + National, State and District Level Response Plans + Community Level Initiatives

- Frame good macroeconomic policies before and after shocks.
- Operational guidelines of integrating disaster management practices into development, and specific developmental schemes for prevention and mitigation of disasters
- Promoting development of new financial tools + Corporate Social Responsibility + Integrating Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Building capacity of all stakeholders + Addressing gender issues in disaster management planning and developing a strategy for inclusive approach addressing the disadvantaged sections of the society towards disaster risk reduction
- Addressing climate risk management through adaptation and mitigation
- Strengthening the State and District Disaster Management Authorities to fulfil their responsibilities as stipulated in the Disaster Management Act, 2005
- Mechanisms must be designed and adopted for transferring lessons learned for pre- and post-disaster management between communities.
- Given that natural disasters do not always follow national boundaries, cross-boundary issues of disaster management should be addressed through enhanced regional cooperation.
- Coordination with foreign partners - Sendai Framework + CDRI
- Improvement in government policy frameworks to better manage risk and mitigate economic and social costs - Public investment in risk reduction.

## Conclusion

- The above-mentioned initiatives are only an indicative list of actions requiring attention. Every stakeholder involved needs to contribute his bit in order to ensure that the increasing hazards and risks and the vulnerabilities get addressed in a planned and systematic manner, thereby increasing the coping capacities of the communities at large and making them resilient to the impacts of disasters.