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DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

INDIA'S DIRECTION FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

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Context

- India is moving beyond reactive relief efforts to a **proactive, multi-layered strategy** that integrates **prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery,** reflecting a growing recognition of the complex risks posed by climate change, urbanization, and natural hazards.

India's Disaster Preparedness

- India's approach to disaster preparedness has evolved into a robust, multi-tiered framework led by the **Union Home Ministry (MHA)**, with the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** at its core.
- India's strategy emphasizes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response—ensuring that resilience is not just reactive but deeply embedded in national development, anchored in the **Disaster Management Act of 2005.**

NDMA and the Disaster Management Act, 2005

- The NDMA, established under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, operates through **five key divisions:** Policy & Plans, Mitigation, Operations & Communications, Information & Technology, and Finance & Administration.
- Its vision is to build a safer and disaster-resilient India through:
  - A technology-driven, multi-hazard, and multi-sectoral strategy;
  - Empowerment of stakeholders at all levels—central, state, district, and community;
  - Integration of **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** into development planning;

Shift in Policy: From Relief to Resilience

- **Financial Architecture for Resilience**: The **15th Finance Commission**'s allocation of 2.28 lakh crore ($30 billion) over five years marks a pivotal moment in aligning public finance with **DRR.**
  - Rather than focusing solely on post-disaster relief, the Finance Commission divided funding across:
    - Preparedness and Capacity Building (10%);
    - Mitigation (20%);
    - Response (40%);
    - Reconstruction (30%);
  - It ensures that resilience is embedded into every stage of disaster management—from early warning systems to rebuilding efforts.
- **Building the Budget-to-Project Pipeline:** The Commission identified **five priority areas** to ensure efficiency and accountability in DRR financing:
  - **Prioritising multi-hazard challenges** across India's diverse regions.
  - **Integrating scientific mitigation concepts** into fiscal planning.
  - **Avoiding duplication** with existing central or state schemes.
  - **Strengthening inter-ministerial and Centre-State coordination.**
  - **Establishing light-touch regulatory mechanisms** for timely project implementation.
- By 2025, **inter-ministerial and Centre-State appraisal committees** were operational for all region- or hazard-specific projects, ensuring a transparent and science-driven approach.

Progress in Reconstruction and Mitigation

- **Reconstruction Initiatives:** Over the past two years, the MHA approved **₹5,000 crore** in reconstruction packages for **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, and Kerala**.
  - These projects focus on rebuilding climate-resilient infrastructure and assessing damages caused by extreme precipitation events.

- **Nature-Based Mitigation Programmes:** Under the **20% mitigation fund**, projects worth **₹10,000 crore ($1.2 billion)** have been approved to promote **nature-based and sustainable solutions**.
  - These efforts built upon the **National Cyclone Mitigation Programme (2011–22)**, which successfully reduced coastal vulnerability through cyclone shelters, embankments, and early warning systems.
  - **Initiatives include:**
    - **Revitalising water bodies and green spaces** to mitigate urban flooding.
    - **Monitoring glacial lakes** using remote sensing and automated weather stations.
    - **Applying bioengineering techniques** for slope stabilization in landslide-prone areas.
    - **Rejuvenating beels** (wetlands) along the Brahmaputra River.
    - **Preventing forest fires** through fuel evacuation and water body restoration.

Strengthening Preparedness and Capacity Building

- **Institutional and Community Training:** Preparedness and capacity-building funds (5,000 crore) have focused on:
  - **Modernising fire safety infrastructure.**
  - **Training 2.5 lakh volunteers** under the *Apda Mitra* and *Yuva Apda Mitra* programmes.
  - **Expanding research and training** through the **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)**.
    - NIDM now offers a **standardized curriculum** across **36 streams** of disaster management, with the goal of mainstreaming DRR education down to the **panchayat level**.
- **Expanding the Knowledge Network:** The **327-member university network**, along with the **NDRF Academy** and **National Fire Service College**, plays a crucial role in training public servants, conducting mock exercises, and promoting hazard-specific awareness and school safety programmes.

Coastal Resilience and Vulnerable Communities

- At the ICDRI 2025 summit, India spotlighted the v**ulnerability of coastal regions and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).**
  - With nearly 90% of global trade moving by sea and coastal GDP projected to double by 2030, the stakes are high.
- India is supporting SIDS with **resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and water security measures,** while advocating for a global digital repository of best practices.

Enhancing Early Warning and Communication Systems

- Technological innovation has dramatically improved India's **early warning capabilities**, reducing casualties and improving community preparedness.
- The **multi-media Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** delivers timely alerts in regional languages, ensuring last-mile communication even in remote areas.

International Cooperation and Global Leadership

- India's commitment to the **UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** is evident in its international advocacy.
  - Leadership in **G-20, SCO, BIMSTEC**, and **IORA** initiatives.
  - During the **G-20 presidency,** India spearheaded the creation of the **first Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group,** focusing on:
    - Early warning systems;
    - Disaster-resilient infrastructure;
    - Financing for DRR;
    - Resilient recovery;
    - Nature-based solutions;

- These platforms help India **exchange best practices** and **develop global frameworks** for climate resilience and sustainable risk management.

Conclusion

- India's approach to disaster risk reduction represents a **paradigm shift** — from reactive disaster response to **proactive resilience-building**. Through robust financial planning, scientific integration, and international cooperation, India is constructing a **future-ready DRR ecosystem**.
- By emphasizing community participation, nature-based solutions, and technological innovation, the nation is progressively **de-risking its complex hazard landscape** and positioning itself as a **global leader in climate resilience**.

Source: TH

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Critically examine India's evolving approach to disaster resilience. How does the shift from reactive relief to proactive risk reduction reflect broader changes in governance, finance, and community engagement?

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