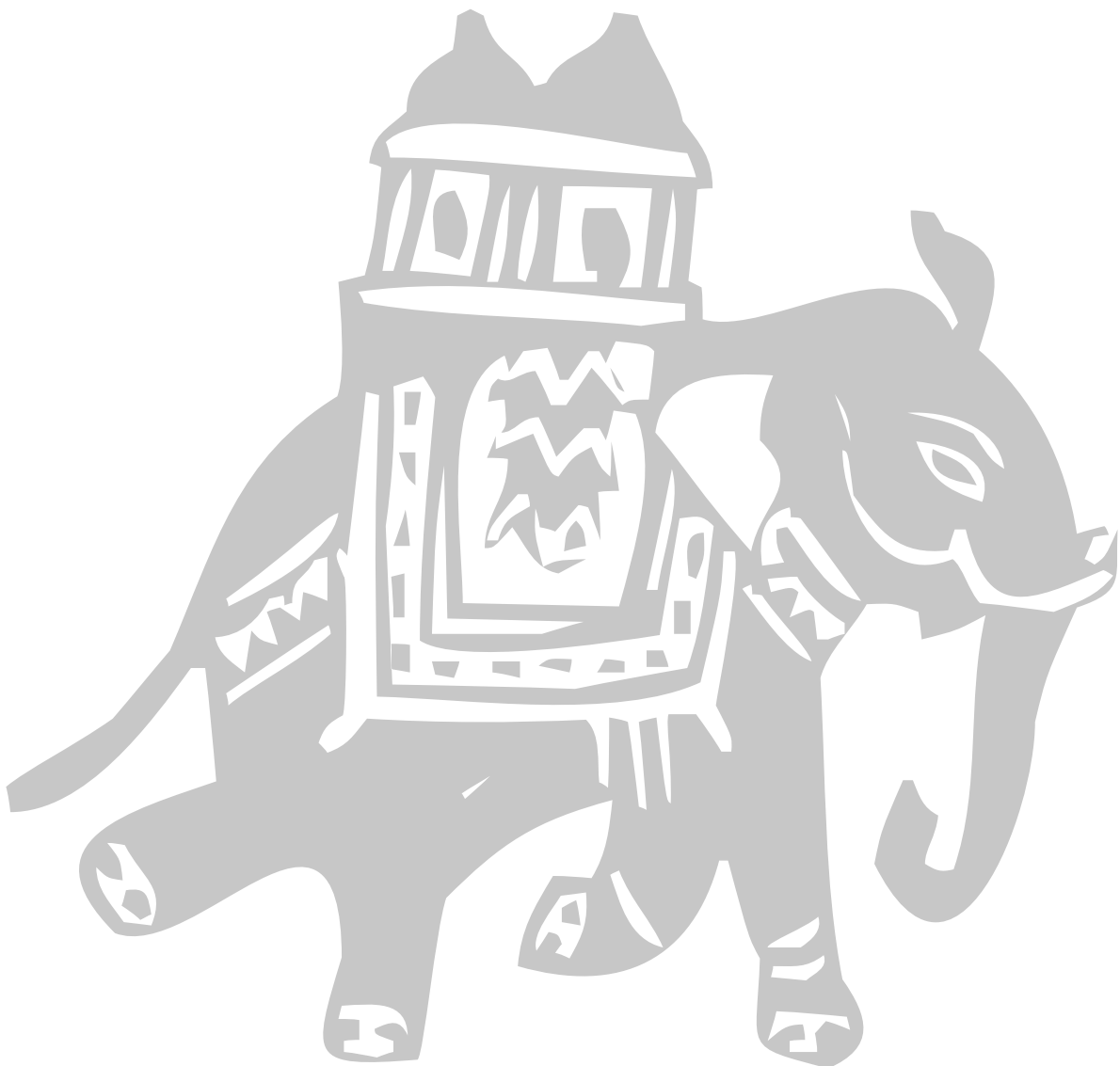




Emergency and Humanitarian Action

Country Report

India



India



HAZARD PROFILE

India is among the world's most disaster-prone areas. It is vulnerable to wind storms spawned in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, earthquakes caused by active crustal movement in the Himalayan mountains, floods brought by monsoons, and droughts in the country's arid and semi-arid areas. India has also become much more vulnerable to tsunamis since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.¹

Almost 57% of the land is vulnerable to earthquake (high seismic zones III–V), 68% to drought, 8% to cyclones and 12% to floods.²

Natural disasters

Earthquake: Of the earthquake-prone areas, 12% is prone to very severe earthquakes, 18% to severe earthquakes and 25% to damageable earthquakes. The biggest quakes occur in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Kutch, Himachal and the North-East. The Himalayan regions are particularly prone to earthquakes.

Flood and drought: About 30 million people are affected annually. Floods in the Indo–Gangetic–Brahmaputra plains are an annual feature. On an average, a few hundred lives are lost, millions are rendered homeless and several hectares of crops are damaged every year.

About 50 million people are affected annually by drought. Of approximately 90 million hectares of rain-fed areas, about 40 million hectares are prone to scanty or no rain. Rainfall is poor in nine meteorological subdivisions.

Cyclone: About 8% of the land is vulnerable to cyclones of which coastal areas experience two or three tropical cyclones of varying intensity each year. Cyclonic activities on the east coast are more severe than on the west coast.

Landslide: Landslides occur in the hilly regions such as the Himalayas, North-East India, the Nilgiris, and Eastern and Western Ghats.

Natural disasters in the recent past

Disaster	Place
Flood: 2004, 2005	Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Orissa, Uttaranchal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra
Earthquake: 2001; 2004; 2005	Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu and Kashmir
Flood: 2005	Maharashtra, Kashmir, Shimla, North-East region
Landslide: 2004	Kashmir, Shimla, North-East region
Tsunami: 2004	South India
Heat wave: 2004	Delhi, Haryana, UP, Punjab



Human-induced disasters

- Chemical spillage/pollution, industrial explosions, fires, mine disasters, terrorism
- Train and road accidents
- Civil strife and insurgency

Warning systems: Forecasting and warning systems have been put in place for various natural disasters. For earthquake, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) operates a network of 36 seismic monitoring stations. The national network of seismological operations is being upgraded and modernized.

The IMD is also responsible for cyclone tracking and warning. There is a special Disaster Warning System (DWS) for dissemination in the local languages of a cyclone warning through INSAT to designated addresses at isolated places.

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has a flood forecasting system that covers 62 major rivers in 13 states, and has 157 stations for transmission of flood warnings on a real-time basis. There are 55 hydro-meteorological stations in the 62 river basins. A VHF/HF wireless communication system is used for data collection with microcomputers at the forecasting centres.

The IMD has divided the entire country into 35 meteorological subdivisions and issues weekly bulletins indicating normal, excess and deficient rainfall. The National Crop Weather Watch Group monitors drought conditions by means of remote sensing techniques based on the vegetative and moisture index status.

EXISTING DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

National policies and legal framework

Disaster Management Act, 2005

- Landmark legislation for disaster management (DM)
- Emphasis on mitigation aspects for the first time
- Constitution of apex body on DM for planning and coordination of all aspects of DM
- Facility for accepting foreign funding for capacity building
- Provision for penalties for offences related to DM
- Has brought in general awareness among people and aroused their interest in this important facet of DM.

A Disaster Management Policy has been drafted and is awaiting approval from stakeholders.

Disaster management in the health sector

The Emergency Medical Relief Division of the Directorate General of Health Services in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is the technical unit meant for the management of crisis situations. The Division is headed by the Director, Emergency Medical Services and Relief (EMR). In crisis situations, the Director reports/receives instructions directly from the technical chief (Director General of Health Services [DGHS]) and Administrative Head of the Ministry (Secretary, Health and FW). The Secretary, Health and FW has empowered the Director, EMR to represent the MoHFW in different Crisis Management Groups at the national level. The emergency health sector focal points at national, state and district levels are an integral part of the crisis management groups at the respective levels.



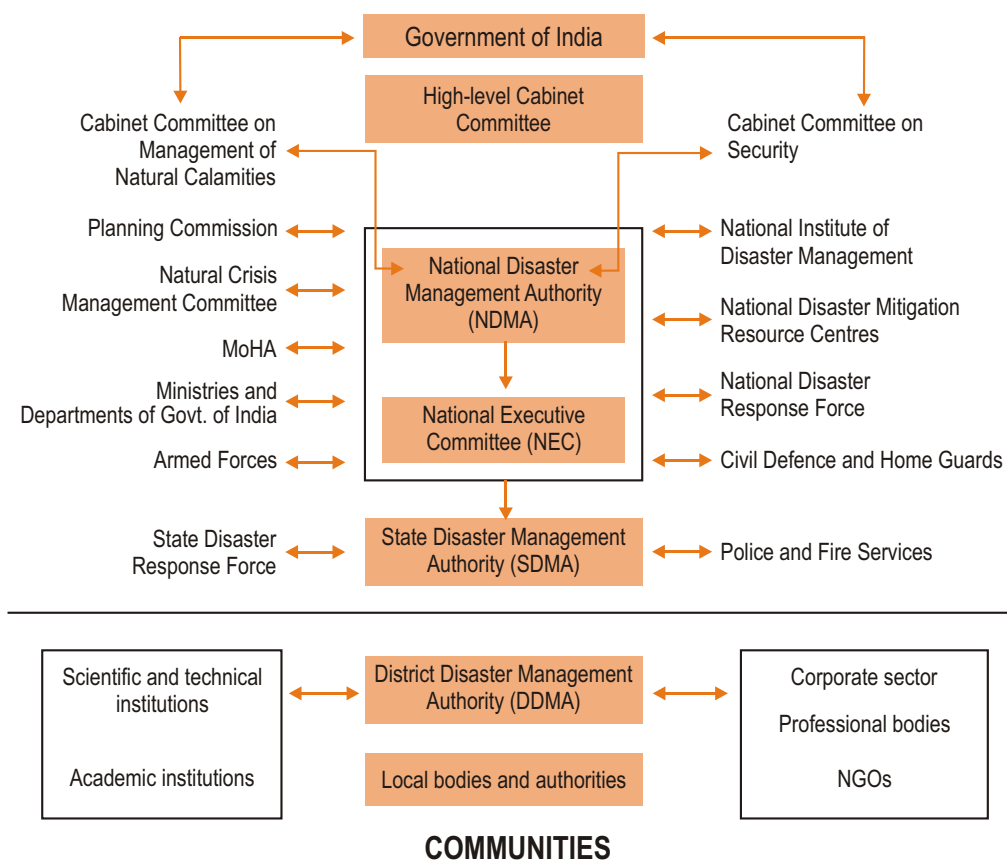
The Director, EMR coordinates with other health sector partners such as the Director of Health Services of the state governments, stores division under the Central Government, vaccine-producing institutes, Central Government hospitals, National Institute of Communicable Diseases and Director, Malaria Unit. The objective of the coordination is to review crisis situations from time to time and meet those needs that state governments cannot. For this purpose, continuous dialogue and communication are maintained with them. At the State level, a joint director or a deputy director of the state health services under the Director of Health Services is responsible for crisis management, coordination, monitoring and implementation of emergency activities in the state as laid down in the state health sector contingency plan.

At the District/PHC level, the chief medical officer/Civil Surgeon is responsible for implementing and coordinating health sector activities.

Disaster management in the non-health sector

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is the apex body that lays down policies and guidelines and also plays a nodal role in initiating institutional measures for prevention, mitigation and preparedness. The NDMA ensures coordination and implementation of a synergized disaster response.

National Disaster Management Structure

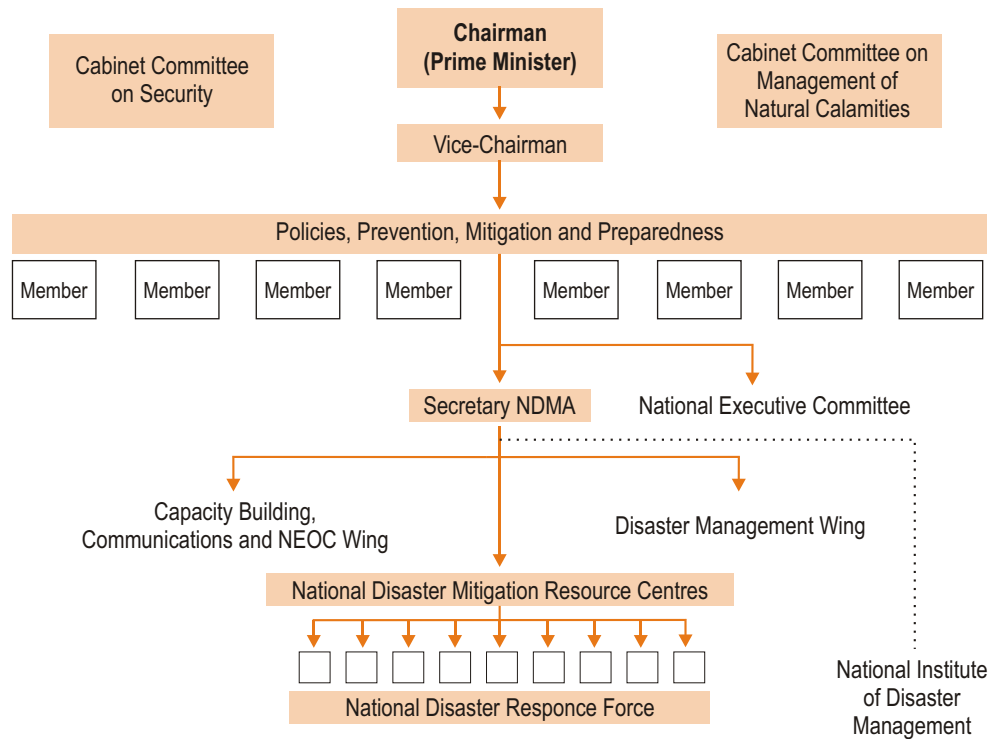


Constitution of the NDMA: The NDMA comprises

- Chairperson – Prime Minister, Ex-officio
- Vice Chairperson – status of Union Cabinet Minister
- Members – Eight, status of Union Ministers of State



National Disaster Management Authority



Cabinet Committee on Management of Natural Calamities: It deliberates on the institutional and legislative measures needed for an effective and long-term strategy to deal with major natural calamities. It is the highest political body chaired by the PM.

- Members are the Union Cabinet Ministers of Home, Finance, Agriculture, Power, Water Resources, Railways, Environment and Forests, Rural Development, Health and Family Welfare; Deputy Chairman Planning Commission is a special invitee.
- The Vice Chairman, NDMA recommends the special invitee.

Cabinet Committee on Security: This Committee takes policy decisions on matters of national security, including internal security. The Chairman is the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister, Union Finance Minister, Union External Affairs Minister are members. The Chief of Staff Committee is a special invitee.

High-level Cabinet Committee: This Committee examines recommendations of the Central Team and the financial allocations to be released by the Finance Ministry. The present Chairman is the Union Agriculture Minister, and the Union Home Minister and Union Finance Minister are members. Other members include the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the Vice Chairman, NDMA (proposed).

National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC): The NCMC implements the decisions of the Cabinet Committees, monitors progress, and generates and/or diverts resources. The Chairman is the Cabinet Secretary and all Secretaries of Union Ministries/Departments are members.

Central Ministries/Departments

- Disaster Management is a multidisciplinary process.
- All Ministries/Departments have a key role in assisting the NDMA.
- Some Ministries are Nodal Ministries for specific disasters, such as the MoHA, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Agriculture and Health.



- Each Ministry/Department makes its Disaster Management Plan.
- Each Ministry/Department is responsible for disaster response.

CRISIS	NODAL MINISTRY
• Natural disaster (except drought) and civil strife	Ministry of Home Affairs
• Drought	Ministry of Agriculture
• Biological disaster	Ministry of Health
• Chemical disaster	Ministry of Environment
• Nuclear accidents and leakages	Department of Atomic Energy
• Railway accidents	Ministry of Railways
• Air accidents	Ministry of Civil Aviation

National Executive Committee (NEC): This is the Executive Committee of the NDMA and is mandated to assist in its functions. It also ensures compliance with the directions issued by the Central Government and is responsible for preparing a national plan and getting it approved by the NDMA. The NEC makes available to the NDMA such human and material resources as required by it for handling a threatened disaster, emergency response, or rescue and relief.

National Institute of Disaster Management: The NIDM is responsible for capacity building, training, research, documentation and development of a national-level information base. It functions within the broad policies and guidelines laid down by the NDMA. It assists in imparting training to trainers, DM officials, NGOs, etc. and will also synthesize research activities in future. The NIDM will be made a Centre of Excellence at the national and international level.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): The NDRF consists of 8 battalions, with 144 self-sustaining teams that render an effective response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster. Four battalions are for natural disasters and four for nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) disasters. The NDRF Battalions will impart basic training to the State Disaster Response Force in their respective locations.

National Disaster Mitigation Resource Centre (NDMRC) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): The NDMRC is co-located with the NDRF battalions. These organizations serve as repositories for relief stores for 72–96 hours for 25 000 people.

State level: The State Disaster Management Authority has the Chief Minister as Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and seven Members, with the Chairperson of the State Executive Committee as an Ex-officio Member.

District level: There are DDMA in each State. The Chairperson is the Collector, the Co-Chairperson is an elected representative. The CEO of the District Authority, SP, CMO and two others are Members.

Local level: Local authorities include the Village Panchayat, Development Block and Municipal Boards/Corporations. They ensure that resources related to DM are so placed as to be readily available for use in case of disaster, and construction projects under it conform to laid-down standards and specifications.



Arrangement for financial relief

Schemes for financing expenditure on relief and rehabilitation following natural calamities are governed by the recommendations of Finance Commissions appointed by the Government of India (GoI) after every five years.

- Each state has a corpus of funds called the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF).
- Funds are administered by a State-level Committee, headed by the Chief Secretary of the State Government.
- The size of the corpus is determined according to the vulnerability of the state to different natural calamities and the magnitude of expenditure normally incurred by the state on relief operations.
- The corpus is built by annual contributions of the Union Government and the concerned state governments in the ratio of 3:1.
- States are free to draw upon this corpus in the event of any natural calamity.

If intervention at the national level is warranted, the Union Government can supplement the financial resources needed for relief operations through the National Fund for Calamity Relief.

WORK OF WHO

WHO provides technical support for the following:

- Preparation of the National Health Sector Disaster Contingency Plan. The Draft plan is ready and awaiting approval.
- A Draft Training module on mass casualty management is awaiting approval.
- Training is being provided on Hospital Preparedness and Emergency Response (HOPE).
- Training is also being provided on the Multi-User System for Emergency Response (MUSTER).
- The Emergency Control Room of the GoI is being strengthened.

Among other major activities, WHO liaises with the MoHFW for their emergency management programmes. It provides technical support for the development of a model state-level Health Sector Management Plan. Technical support is also being provided to strengthen capacity for emergency preparedness and response.

FUTURE PLANS OF WHO

WHO will provide support to the Government in the following areas:

- Strengthen health sector emergency preparedness
- Strengthen intersectoral action for risk and vulnerability reduction within the framework of the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction, and respond to the health needs (including nutrition as well as water and sanitation) in emergencies and crises.
- Support a global alert and response system for public health emergencies.
- Introduce a National Health Resource Inventory (NHRI) at the national level, to develop and map a comprehensive database at the state and district levels as well.
- Supplement the existing efforts by the Government and other UN agencies in developing health-based resource portals.



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¹ADRC *Natural Disasters databook 2005*

²http://www.saro.who.int/en/Section23/Section1108/Section1418_5777.htm