Disaster Response

What is the issue?

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- Recent floods in parts of eastern and western India have left many dead and displacing thousands.
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- This has increased the need for a massive capacity-building programme to deal with frequent, destructive weather events.
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What actions are required?

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- Protocols followed by **State governments** to **deal with floods** need an urgent review.
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- Catastrophic events, such as the Chennai flood of 2015, necessitate a review of the protocol followed by State governments in controlling flows from dams and reservoirs.
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- Some states have not been able to use **disaster relief funds** as intended.
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- The Centre has asked states to set off the unutilised portion when making fresh claims which is unfair for people in urgent need.
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- **Other actions** people need on the ground include short-term housing, food, safe water, access to health care and protection for women, children and the elderly.
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- With neither **social support** nor **financial instruments** available to rebuild lives, alleviating financial losses of the victims is crucial for a return to normality.
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- It is essential to look at the **public health** dimension as many without the

coping capacity develop mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder in the wake of such catastrophes, and need counselling.
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- A review of the deployment of **National Disaster Response Force** teams near water bodies is required.
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- This is to be coupled with data compiled by the Central Water Commission, which identifies the hotspots where better management and perhaps additional reservoirs can mitigate damage.
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- Given the unprecedented events like even drought-prone regions in Gujarat and Rajasthan encountering floods, governments' response is of crucial importance.
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Source: The Hindu

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