

Infrastructural Challenges before Kerala

What is the issue?

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- Kerala has been severely affected by the floods due heavy rainfall
- The reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and restoration of livelihoods pose a daunting challenge for the State government.

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What are the losses for Kerala?

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- Initial estimates put the loss at Rs. 20,000 crore but officials feel the extent of the damage could be more than twice the figure.
- The preliminary estimate of the crop loss is pegged at Rs. 1,345 crore, More than 3,00,000 farmers suffered damage to various crops spread over 56,439 hectares.
- It is significant that a huge part of the destruction happened to private assets, the floods caused widespread damage to houses and property. According official reports 7,000 houses have been destroyed and 50,000 damaged in the floods.
- Traders and owners of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises are also badly affected.
- Apart from the damage to assets, it is the loss of livelihood support that is bound to be traumatic for thousands of these people.

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What are the challenges before the state?

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- With virtually no experience in handling a disaster of this magnitude, the middle and lower middle class sections will find it difficult to overcome the human tragedy

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- Mobilising resources for a project on this scale remains a challenge for the economy of the State that leans heavily on the diminishing remittances by a large diaspora.

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- The government may not have enough resources even to rebuild public assets such as roads, hospitals, schools and bridges.

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- Unlike the lower income groups which come under the government's support mechanism or the higher income class which is capable of absorbing the impact, middle class families will find themselves incapable of rebuilding their shattered lives.

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- It is also significant that most of these families inhabit vulnerable areas prone to floods and landslips.

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- More than the damage and loss of infrastructure, it is the impact on livelihoods, incomes and human development that will take time to rebuild.

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What is the status of funds collected so far?

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- The Central government announced an interim relief of Rs. 600 crore for the State against a demand for Rs. 2,000 crore as emergency assistance.

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- The Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund has mopped up Rs. 535 crore by way of donations by individuals, institutions and organisations across the world.

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- The Agriculture Department has proposed an assistance of Rs. 233.8 crore to compensate farmers.

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- The comprehensive crop insurance scheme is expected to limit the impact of the floods on the farm sector.

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Source: The Hindu

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