National Disaster Status

Why in news?

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister has requested Prime Minister to declare the destruction caused by heavy rains in the State as a national disaster.

Himachal Pradesh Rain	
Causes	**Impacts**
• Flash flood in Mandi and landslide in Shimla. • Cyclonic disturbances in the northern states, including Uttarakhand and parts of Uttar Pradesh. • Excessive tourist flow has destabilized roads and land, due to which landslides occurred.	• The state had suffered losses of Rs 10,000 crore due to rain-related incidents this monsoon. • According to state emergency operation centre, 418 people have died, 39 are missing since the onset of monsoon.

How are states assisted during natural disaster?

As of now, there is no executive or legal provision to declare a national calamity.

- **Disaster Management Act 2005**- It defines a "disaster" as "a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from *natural or manmade causes*, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or damage to, or degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be *beyond the coping capacity of the community* of the affected area".
- **Disaster Management**- India envisions the development of an ethos of Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness and Response.

Institutional Mechanism	Authority	Head
	National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Prime Minister
	State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)	Respective Chief Ministers
	District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA)	Either District Magistrate or District Collector

- **National Disaster Response Force**- It has several battalions or teams, which are responsible for on-ground relief and rescue work in several states.

What is Disaster Response Fund?

- **Fund mechanism-** The funds for the NDRF and SDRFs are allocated by the Government as a part of budgetary allocations.
    - **NDRF**- National Disaster Response Fund is mentioned in the Disaster Management Act 2005.
    - **SDRFs**- State Disaster Response Fund are the primary funds available to State governments to be used *only for providing immediate relief to the victims* of notified calamities.



- **Role of Finance Commission**- Funds for immediate relief are recommended by the Finance Commission (FC).
    - The 15th FC adopted a new methodology for state-wise allocations, based on factors like past expenditure, risk exposure hazard and vulnerability of states.
- **Fund contribution**- The Central Government contributes *75%* to the SDRF in general States and *90%* in North Eastern and Himalayan States.
- Annually, it is released in *2 equal instalments*.
- **Primary responsibility**- The *State government* is primarily responsible for undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the event of a disaster.
- **Severe calamity**- If the fund requirement for relief operation is beyond the funds available in SDRF account, additional central assistance is provided from NDRF.

What is a severe calamity?

- A calamity is declared to be of “rare severity”/”severe nature” based on undefined criteria, but factors such as the intensity and magnitude of the calamity, level of assistance needed, etc. are looked at.
- **Classification-** The *State government* needs to submit a memorandum indicating the sector-wise damage caused by a disaster and its requirement of funds.
- An *inter-ministerial central team* will assess the damage and requirement of funds and submit its report.
- A *high level committee* must approve the quantum of immediate relief to be released from NDRF.
- The *Disaster Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs* will then provide support and monitor the utilisation of funds.
- **Benefits of such a declaration**-
    - **Calamity Relief Fund (CRF)**- The CRF is set up, with the corpus shared *3:1* between Centre and state.
    - **National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF)-** When resources in the CRF are inadequate, additional assistance is considered from this fund, *funded 100% by the Centre.*
    - **Cocessional loans**- The relief in repayment of loans or for grant of fresh loans to the persons affected on concessional terms, too, are considered once a calamity is declared “severe”.

References

1. Indian Express- Disaster relief fund in India
2. NDMA- Response to disaster relief

